



NEWS FROM CITY NEIGHBORS FOUNDATION

OCTOBER 2019

An update on the work of City Neighbors Foundation, our City Neighbors schools, and our work to impact public education everywhere

The First Day of School Tradition



On the first day of school at City Neighbors, every student, grades K-12, is given a single flower before they enter the building. Students bring these flowers to their classroom and place them in a class vase, creating a full bouquet – a symbol of our classroom communities.

Happy 2019-20!

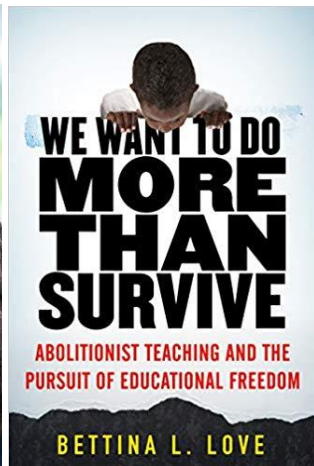




**The 9th Annual Progressive Education Summit – January 25, 2020
Registration and Call for Workshops Open October 15!**

The 9th Annual Progressive Education Summit will take place on Saturday, January 25, 2020.

This year, we are thrilled to welcome Dr. Bettina Love as our Keynote Speaker.



Dr. Bettina L. Love is an award-winning author and Associate Professor of Educational Theory & Practice at the University of Georgia. She is the author of the book *We Want to do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom* (Beacon Press) and *Hip Hop's Li'l Sistas Speak: Negotiating Hip Hop Identities and Politics in the New South*. She passionately, and with resolute and bold inquiry, argues that the U.S. educational system is maintained by and profits from the suffering of children of color. Instead of trying to repair a flawed

system, educational reformers offer survival tactics in the forms of test-taking skills, acronyms, grit labs, and character education, which Love calls the educational survival complex. Her work has appeared in numerous books and journals, including the *English Journal*, *Urban Education*, *The Urban Review*, and *Journal of LGBT Youth*. In 2017, Dr. Love edited a special issue of the *Journal of Lesbian Studies* focused on the identities, gender performances, and pedagogical practices of Black and Brown lesbian educators.

Continuing Our Work with our Friends at Calvin Rodwell Elementary/Middle School

Through a grant from the Goldseker Foundation, City Neighbors is excited to enter our sixth year of partnership with Calvin Rodwell Elementary/Middle School. This year, we will be working with ten teachers in the implementation of a Project-Based Learning afterschool program. Teaching teams will be launching the program with project studies on architecture (K-2), urban development (3-5), and social media (6-8).



Join us for DIY PD Sessions at City Neighbors!

For one hour, up to 30 participants can choose two of four short peer-to-peer learning sessions – each led by one of our attendees and focused on a strategy, approach, or problem of practice. After those learning sessions, everyone gathers, has the opportunity to make a simple, delicious dinner together to go or enjoy with their colleagues. And it's free!

DIY PD sessions are held from 5-6:30 (after work, but early enough to not interfere with your evening).

Sessions are held at City Neighbors Charter School, 4301 Raspe Avenue.

The first DIY PD Session will take place on Monday, October 14 at 5 pm. Register [here](#).

And be sure to mark your calendars for the second DIY PD Session:

Monday, December 9 at 5 pm. Registration opens soon!

Enrollment Season is Open!

City Neighbors is accepting student applications for the 2020-2021 school year.

Check out Open House schedules, application instructions and timelines, and other enrollment information [here](#).

Introducing Gwendolyn Unoko, Director of Community Programs



This school year, Gwendolyn Unoko joins the City Neighbors team as the Director of Community Programs for the City Neighbors Foundation and City Neighbors High School. As the Director of Community Programs, Gwendolyn leads the City Neighbors High School Internship Program and helps lead public education impact and advocacy efforts at the City Neighbors Foundation.

Gwendolyn comes to City Neighbors with rich and varied experience. She most recently served as a Community Schools Coordinator with Child First Authority at Calvin Rodwell Elementary/Middle School. She previously served as Project Manager at Johns Hopkins University in International Health and Infectious Disease Program. Gwendolyn is a former President of the Board of Directors of City Neighbors Charter School and has served as the Progressive Education Summit Coordinator for the last three years.

In addition to her Bachelor's Degree from Troy State University and her Masters Degree from Johns Hopkins University, Gwendolyn also holds certificates in Advanced Youth Development, Youth Program Quality Assessment, Facilitative Leadership for Social Change, and Standards for Quality for Family Strengthening and Support.

Gwendolyn can be reached at gunoko@cityneighbors.org.

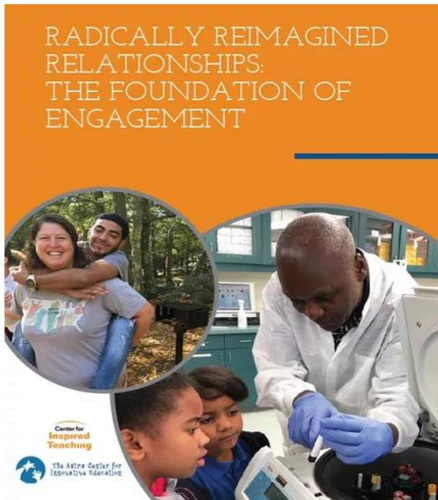
Congratulations to City Neighbors' own Mr. Toops!

We are enormously proud of City Neighbors High School educator, Mr. Brynn Toops, who co-authored the *Who Deserves a Monument?* project, and has been teaching it to our high school students for years! Baltimore City Schools recognized his great work, the power of Project-Based Learning, and is bringing it to schools throughout Baltimore. See Baltimore Sun article [here](#).

Check Out our Blog

Rooted in our commitment to the grass-roots, cooperative nature of our schools, our blog was revamped last year to highlight many voices throughout our community. [Check out new blog posts](#) from Business Manager, Stephanie King (City Neighbors Foundation), Parent, Levar Michael (City Neighbors Hamilton), and Special Educator, Michelle Tavares (City Neighbors High School), with new posts added regularly!

City Neighbors Hamilton Highlighted in “Radically Reimagined Relationships”



The Astra Center for Innovative Education, an organization from the Boston area has partnered with the Center for Inspired Teaching in Washington DC, to conduct a year-long study highlighting schools and practices nationwide that are successful in contributing to student engagement. The study highlighted 28 schools nationwide, including public, charter and private schools.

They have published their findings [here](#).

City Neighbors Hamilton is proud to be one of 28 schools nationwide to be highlighted in this study!

From the press release:

City Neighbors Hamilton in Baltimore is one of the schools featured in the report, which highlights the school’s commitment to deeply knowing each student, respecting the creativity and capability of children, and creating authentic, project-based learning experiences.

“I put students on the same level as me, they are teachers too!” says middle school math teacher Randy Johnson. “I share my life stories with them, especially in my middle school years- flaws, failures, strengths, and successes. I pull in as much real-world application as possible; we discuss current events that relate to their lives.”

First grade teacher LaShawn Gardner comments, “Every single encounter with a child, no matter its measure, is an opportunity to leave a long-lasting and meaningful impression. As educators, we are deeply committed to seizing those opportunities every day in and out of our classrooms. When children leave our school, we hope they can rely on all the positive encounters they've experienced to help maintain their sense of value and importance in the world.”

Check Us Out!



City Neighbors Presents To the World

Progressive Education Network Conference, Removing Barriers to Learning in the Progressive Classroom

In October, City Neighbors presented at the National Progressive Education Network Conference in Minneapolis on *Removing Barriers to Learning in the Progressive Classroom*.

This ninety-minute workshop threaded concepts of workshop model teaching with Universal Design for Learning, helping educators from throughout the country consider how to maximize student independence in the classroom while removing the barriers to learning that often inhibit learning for students with disabilities.

Megan Doyle, 3rd grade teacher, Tracy Pendred, 4th and 5th grade Math & Science teacher, along with Lisa Carey, Assistant Director for Excellence in Innovation at Kennedy Krieger Institute, collaborated on the workshop.

CAST Conference, Harvard University, Universal Design for Learning

This past summer, City Neighbors presented twice at the CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology) Symposium at Harvard University!

Kimberly Spears, 4th and 5th grade ELA teacher along with Lisa Carey, Assistant Director for Excellence in Innovation at Kennedy Krieger Institute, presented, *UDL as a Tool for Equitably Developing Expert Learners*. Tracy Pendred, 4th and 5th grade Math and Science teacher, presented *Working It! Using a UDL Workshop Model to Develop Expert Learners*.

Each of these workshops shared our work to bring Universal Design for Learning to our elementary classrooms.

NAREN Conference, Pod: Changing Lives

At City Neighbors High School, our Pod model anchors our program and approach to helping all students be “Known, Loved and Inspired.”

The Pod model creates groups of approximately seventeen students who meet every day with the same adult pod adviser over their entire four years at CNHS. Pods work to help students create family at school, navigate the social-emotional travails of adolescence, meet the academic demands of high school, and consider their futures.

In October, City Neighbors educators and students will present together at the NAREN (National At-Risk Education Network) conference in Baltimore, sharing the Pod model with other educators from around the region and nation.

National CREDO Study Results Confirm Charter Schools are Good for Baltimore

This summer, CREDO (the Center for Research in Educational Outcomes), a non-partisan education research group out of Stanford University, published the first-ever study on the impact of charter schools in Maryland – and the results are profound.

In the last school year of the study, 2016-2017, students in Maryland public charter schools gained an additional 47 days of reading and 59 days of math achievement. The study goes a step further to aggregate findings specifically for urban public charter school students (Baltimore). These results showed even greater gains for charter students. Students experiencing poverty gained an additional 30 days of math achievement per year. Black students gained an additional 41 days in reading and 47 in math achievement per year. LatinX students gained 41 days of reading and a stunning 77 days of math achievement. The study goes as far to state that the results for charter schools in Maryland are notably better than the same study has found in other states across the country.

Check out the Baltimore Sun Op-Ed, co-authored by Mike Chalupa, Director of City Neighbors Foundation, and Kona-Facia Nepay, Executive Director of the Baltimore International Academy, [here](#). Check out the CREDO study [here](#).

Welcome New Educators to City Neighbors!



Our three City Neighbors schools are excited to welcome new educators to the City Neighbors teaching community. To join our community, teachers go through an extensive hiring process that includes several visits and interviews, and work with almost every constituency in our school. Once hired, teachers new to City Neighbors participate in an in-depth induction process that includes a summer orientation, ongoing cohort workshops through the first half of the school year, and two years of one-on-one mentorship by an experienced City Neighbors teacher. We look forward to having these professionals at our school for many years to come!