



NEWS FROM THE CITY NEIGHBORS FOUNDATION

JUNE 2022

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

City Neighbors Class of City Neighbors High School Class of 2022



We celebrate the City Neighbors High School graduating class of 2022! They have had the most extraordinary high school experience and have persevered, showed resilience, and triumphed – and are off to bright futures.

We celebrate our students who were accepted to dozens of higher education institutions like McDaniel College, Muhlenberg, Morgan State University, North Carolina A & T, Howard University, American University, Coppin State University, University of Maryland, Penn State University, Hampton University and many more. And, we celebrate our students joining apprenticeship programs, the armed services, and the world of work.

Cheyenne Zahrt Named Baltimore Sun's Principal of the Year



Cheyenne Zahrt is principal of City Neighbors High School. She was named best principal in The Baltimore Sun's Best 2022 Readers' Choice Contest. (Barbara Haddock Taylor/Baltimore Sun)

Best School Principal

Cheyenne Zahrt, City Neighbors High School

Congratulations to City Neighbors High School Principal, Cheyanne Zahrt, who was recently named the Baltimore Sun's Principal of the Year! Check out the article [here](#)

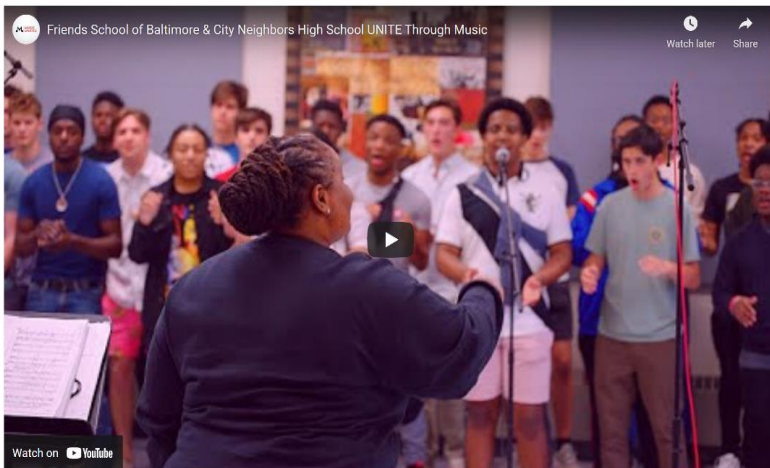
CNHS 12th Grader Receives 12th Grader of the Year Award!

City Neighbors High School Senior, Tianna Hunt, received the Maryland Alliance for Public Charter School's 12th grader of the year--a state-wide award.

"Tianna is a dynamo who seeks and seizes opportunities to an unparalleled degree. In just this past year, her accomplishments include poetry publications and national spoken word competitions, presidencies of both our National Honor Society and Diversity Club, an editorial board position with Charm (a literary magazine and arts opportunities organization), an advisory role with the district central office's Bmore Me project, and a fellowship with iCivics (a national nonprofit founded by Sandra Day O'Connor)."



Unity Through Music



On April 22, 2022, the choirs from Friends Schools of Baltimore and City Neighbors High School united through the power of music! Students met for the first time, rehearsed together, shared a meal, and performed a rendition of the heartwarming Bill Withers classic, "Lovely Day."

<https://music-united.org/unitythroughmusic/>

Welcome New City Neighbors School Leaders

This year, we welcome new Principals to City Neighbors Charter School and City Neighbors Hamilton. We are deeply grateful to Kate Seidl, outgoing Principal of CNCS, and Shyla Rao, outgoing Principal of CNH of their tireless work over these past years – especially as they navigated our communities through the Covid pandemic and kept the beating heart of City Neighbors alive and thriving. Both Kate and Shyla have long histories with City Neighbors, and they will continue to be part of the City Neighbors family as they take on their next chapters in life. After a long, community-centered hiring process, we have found incredible school leaders to take the baton from Kate and Shyla and help move us forward into the future!



Ms. Brigette Cottman is the new Principal a City Neighbors Charter School. Ms. Cottman possesses a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Psychology from Morgan State University and a Masters of Arts in teaching/Special Education from Goucher College. She recently completed the New Leaders program and has earned her Administration I and II certificates from the state of Maryland. Ms. Cottman began her teaching career as a Special Education teacher. After eleven years in the classroom, Ms. Cottman became the Special Education Lead. From there, she served as the Assistant Principal at Violetville Elementary School and, most recently, at Fort Worthington Elementary/Middle School. Ms. Cottman brings many qualities and experiences that make her an excellent school leader for CNCS. In addition to her deep experience in K-8 education, Ms. Cottman helped to lead project-based learning work at her previous school and is a strong advocate for the arts. She brings deep experiences in restorative practice as well as Special Education and Universal Design for Learning.



Mr. Jabari Bush is the new Principal at City Neighbors Hamilton. Mr. Bush possesses a Bachelor of Science in Urban Childhood Education from Long Island University and a Masters of Arts in Teaching - Administration/Supervision from Johns Hopkins University. He started his career as an elementary school teacher in grades 2, 3 and 5 for seven years in the classroom. After serving as Educational Associate in Baltimore City Public Schools for two years, Mr. Bush has served as the dedicated Assistant Principal of City Neighbors High School for the last six years. He also served on the Advisory Board of Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, participated in the 2018 Greater Baltimore Committee Leadership Cohort, and on the Baltimore City's Mayor's Steering Committee on Education and Recreation. Mr. Bush comes to this position well-versed in project-based learning, arts integration, and the City Neighbors approach, with deep experience in cultural and operational leadership.

Welcome New Assistant Principals and Educational Associate



Ms. Deon Avery will serve as our new Assistant Principal at City Neighbors High School. Ms. Avery has been an educator for nearly 15 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts from Towson University in Spanish Language and Culture, a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Johns Hopkins University, and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in School Administration from Towson University. Ms. Avery possesses her Administration 1 and II Certification. Ms. Avery worked with Baltimore City Schools from 2007-2017, primarily a Spanish Teacher, but also served as a Team Lead, Mentor Teacher, School Family Council Chair and Student Support Tea Chair. Since 2017, Ms. Avery has worked with Anne Arundel County Public Schools and Baltimore County Public Schools in a variety of roles including Department Chair, Professional Developer, Spanish Teacher, and Equity Team Professional Developer.



Mr. Brynn Toops will also serve as our new Assistant Principal at City Neighbors High School. Mr. Toops has been an educator for over 10 years. He has a Bachelor of Science from Towson University, a Masters of Educational, School and Counseling Psychology from University of Missouri, and a Certificate in Administration and Supervision at Loyola University Maryland. Mr. Toops served as the Social Studies teacher at City Neighbors High School from 2012 through 2021. In Fall 2021, Mr. Toops became our Intervention Lead at City Neighbors High School, and implemented a new intervention school-wide approach from scratch. Mr. Toops brings a strong knowledge of project-based learning and arts integration through his practice at City Neighbors, including the development of the "*Who Deserves a Monument*" project adopted by the district, and has helped construct curriculum and coach teachers in their project-based, arts-integration practice.



Ms. LaShawn Bowser will serve as the Educational Associate at City Neighbors Hamilton. Ms. Bowser holds her Bachelor Degree in Liberal Arts from Morgan State University and is currently completing her Masters in Education from MSU. Ms. Bowser started her journey into education after working as a residential counselor at a Diagnostic Center for youth. Ms. Bowser is entering her 12th year in schools, and her seventh at City Neighbors Hamilton. While here, Ms. Bowser served as a Teaching Fellow, taught Music, and most recently taught 1st grade. In addition to her work at City Neighbors Hamilton, Ms. Bowser has co-led our City Neighbors Teaching Fellows Program and our DIY PD at City Neighbors Program, and has served as a City Neighbors consultant to other schools on best child-centered, pedagogical practices.

DIY PD at City Neighbors: For Adults and Children!



City Neighbors Foundation is pleased to announce the dates for 2022-2023 DIY PD @City Neighbors series. DIY PD is a free, emergent, community-based professional development event for up to thirty participants. Connect with educators committed to child-centered, authentic education. Short twenty-minute workshops on a strategy or problem of practice. And, for our in-person events, dinner!

Mark your calendars for the following dates and look for registration links as the dates approach:

Wednesday, October 19, 2022	5:00 - 6:15 PM
Thursday, December 8, 2022	5:00 - 6:15 (Virtual)
Tuesday, February 28, 2023	5:00 - 6:15 PM
Wednesday, April 26, 2023	5:00 - 6:15 PM

DIY PDs are in-person unless otherwise noted.

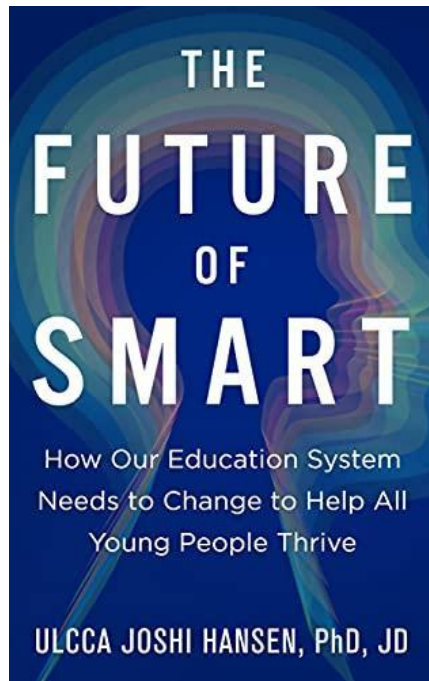
2nd Grade DIY PD

In June 2022, 2nd grade students at City Neighbors Charter School held their own student DIY PD in their classroom. Students volunteered to share their expertise in mini-workshops with one another.

Workshops included: *Koala Bears, How to Be Lazy, How to Create Art, How to Make a Surprise Note, How to Add, and How to Do a Tree Pose!*



City Neighbors Highlighted in the New Book



Our City Neighbors schools were named in a recent book, *The Future of Smart: How Our Education System Needs to Change to Help All Young People Thrive*

“Our best efforts at improving education have failed to improve the lives of children, or change society for the better. This is no accident: the current system ignores our deepest knowledge about how human beings thrive.

Being ‘smart’ today is still about sorting kids based on how well they absorb and retain knowledge. We need education to reflect a different set of values: interdependence, community, diversity, and deep, dynamic learning.

We need it to align with human development, facilitate learning for different kinds of brains, and prepare young people for a changing society and evolving workplace.”

City Neighbors Charter School Receives a Grant for Green Renovation

City Neighbors Foundation received a \$148,880 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to conduct a complete green renovation of the City Neighbors Charter parking lot, located in northeast Baltimore City. Installations include 1270 sq. ft. of micro-bioretenation, 1679 sq. ft. of pervious paving, and a 105 sq. ft. rain garden, all of which will be open for exploration by students, their families, and the general public.



Mark Your Calendar for the 12th Annual Progressive Education Summit



THE PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION SUMMIT REUNION – IN PERSON!

The 12th Annual Progressive Education Summit – January 21, 2023

Please mark your calendars for the 12th Annual Progressive Education Summit on
Saturday, January 21, 2023!

We are excited to roll up our sleeves with our 2023 Summit Steering Committee to create a day of joy, challenge, and inspiration – all rooted in our shared commitment to child-centered, democratic ideals of education.

Working with Partners Across the City and Region



Fort Worthington Elementary/ Middle
Community School #85
342 followers • 54 following



Dorothy I. Height Elementary School

School Number
61

Through a grant from the Maryland State Department of Education, City Neighbors Foundation had the honor of working with several schools across our region, supporting their development in child-centered, authentic learning practices. This one-year professional development consultation partners teachers and leaders at City Neighbors with teachers and leaders at participating schools to deepen and root a particular child-centered, democratic practice of teaching and learning.

We were honored to work with dynamic and powerful educators and learn from our partners at **Fort Worthington Elementary/Middle School** in Project-Based Learning, **Dorothy I Height Elementary School** in Arts Integration, and **Watershed Public Charter School** in Project-Based Learning.

If your school is interested in working with City Neighbors, please contact Gwendolyn Unoko, Director of Community Programs, at gunoko@cityneighbors.org or check us out [here](#) for more information.

CITY NEIGHBORS CLASSROOMS AT WORK



Juxtaposition in 12th Grade AP Literature

Seniors in AP Lit talked about juxtaposition in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*. The author often mixes contradictory tones, images, language, and even events to create tension and discomfort in the reader--which is exactly what the soldiers he writes about faced. His writing style enables the reader to put ourselves in their shoes, if only in a small, protected way.



Students analyzed that juxtaposition and interpreted it as they saw fit into an art project. These photos show Tianna Hunt's clay sculpture and Caitlyn McGuire's drawing, both depicting a checkers game board and a fallen soldier--a reflection of the mix of games and violence often seen in the book.

The 11th Grade Interview Project

In the interview project, we developed deep, meaningful questions and listened closely to the stories others told us. Along the way, we explored ways writers shape stories from an initial act of listening.

We investigated interviews and interviewing, and we experimented with the raw materials of questions and answers to craft coherent, meaningful profiles that reveal the depth of people all around us.





Inquiry Learning in High School Art

This year the high school art students followed an adapted Inquiry model to help them work in a manner that more closely resembles the way artists work. Students developed their own driving questions around subjects they were interested in learning more about. Next students introduced their initial thoughts, then researched their question until they were ready to brainstorm ways of using what they learned as a catalyst for art work. Students spent time experimenting with media before starting the final creation.

Middle School Math in the City Neighbors Fabrication Lab

The 8th grade math class took a field trip to the City Neighbors Fabrication Lab. Each student designed and built a passive speaker to fit their phone. They used the lab's miter saw, drill press and band saw to build their speakers out of plywood. For many students it was their first experience with woodworking.



1st Grade: Can We Prevent Extinction?

As a part of our yearlong project on endangered animals, first graders were moved to action on behalf of the animals we studied. This year, we did an in-depth study on the major causes of endangerment and the most critically endangered animals. We worked hard to answer the question "*Can we prevent extinction?*". After our research, students determined that preventing extinction is possible, and the best way to do so is by protecting animal habitats.



Students created and designed advocacy stickers with their animal of study, a bit of its habitat and a slogan to help others understand the importance of protecting them. All proceeds from the sale will go to support endangered animals and wild life.

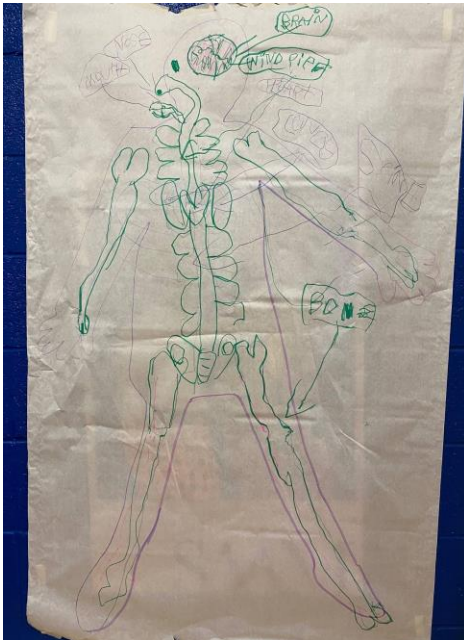
4th Grade Monarch Project

Fourth graders are sitting around a Monarch butterfly mural on our very own playground at CNCS discussing the insects that were spotted in designated areas of our playground.

Students observed bees, crickets, ant farms, and other very interesting insects. This was an introduction to our Monarch Madness Project!



Kindergarten “What’s Inside” Project



Kindergarten worked to answer the question “What’s inside?”. We began by sketching the different parts of citrus fruit before moving to what’s inside of us. The children drew life sized pictures showing what they knew. After researching the human body through nonfiction texts, they used collage techniques to make body vests showing what they learned about the organs inside their torsos.



4th and 5th Graders and Natural Disasters

Fourth and fifth graders from City Neighbors Hamilton spent the spring exploring and researching natural disasters. We learned about what causes different disasters, where they are historically located, and the impacts they have on people.



Throughout our natural disasters study, students have wondered about ways to prevent or warn people prior to a disaster. We created structures with marshmallows and toothpicks to mimic tall buildings and tested their ability to withstand earthquakes using Jello.

[Learn More about City Neighbors Foundation](#)

