



## Nashville Opportunities Industrialization Center

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June 2005

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In Nashville for 37 years.*

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# OIC NEWS

## DR. FANCHER TO ADDRESS OIC

On Sunday, June 26 Dr. Evelyn P. Fancher, Retired Director of the Libraries at Tennessee State University and former Research Librarian for the Kelly Miller Smith Collection in the Vanderbilt University Library, will speak at the Nashville Opportunities Industrialization Center Commencement Exercise. Sixty-five (65) have completed the program at OIC and will be receiving their diplomas. Even though training is free at OIC, that does not mean that there is no cost to the customer. Each successful graduate must pay a significant amount in time, energy and effort, often at a great sacrifice. Every graduate has faced sometimes what have seemed insuperable obstacles to success.

Dr. Fancher, a native of Birmingham, Alabama has in her lifetime faced many major challenges. Her ability to meet those challenges and overcome them makes her an especially appropriate person to address the Class of 2005, and she brings a compelling message. Her professional career has included service as a high school science teacher and librarian; and as a university library researcher and library director.

Parallel to Dr. Fancher's professional career, Fancher has been a dedication to rendering service designed to make the various communities in which she was located better places in which to live. She is a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and has served as a member of the local chapter's executive board. As a member of the Nashville chapter of The Links, Inc., Dr. Fancher has served as president and has provided leadership for some of the Links'



DR. EVELYN FANCHER

various service facets. Her service as Director of the Links' "Project Lead: High Expectations" was quite notable. This project targeted the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse by teens and the reduction of teenage pregnancy in the Edgehill community. As a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, she has served as Chair of the "Career Smorgasbord," which is designed to acquaint teenage girls with the world of careers and preparation for them. As a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, she chaired the "My Sister's Closet" project, which has provided appropriate apparel for OIC graduates interviewing for a job. Other types of community services that Dr. Fancher has rendered have included leadership in Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts organizations; Member of the Advisory Council of Senior Citizens, Inc. Foster Grandparents project; and member of the Executive Committee of the Tennessee Commemorative Women's Suffrage Commission. Dr. Fancher has had a major interest in the religious dimension of life. In 1996 she formed an organization named The African-American Church Historians Association and is currently its president.

Her numerous awards include the Mary Catherine Strobel Award as "Volunteer of the Year" and the Tennessee Library Association's Centennial Pin for significant contributions to the Association. She has received awards from the Howard Congregational Church, Saint Luke's AME Church, Saint Peter AME Church, and Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church for outstanding service to church, community and humanity.

LES GEMMES, INC will provide the reception for the grads, Dr. Fancher is President.

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS WHOSE SUPPORT IS KEY TO OIC SUCCESS:**

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**NASHVILLE OIC CELEBRATES 37 YEARS OF HELPING OTHERS HELP THEMSELVES AT ITS ANNUAL GALA**

The Nashville Opportunities Industrialization Center celebrated thirty-seven years of GED preparation and of job training and placement services at its annual Gala Dinner on March 31, 2005, at Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art. The planning committee was very pleased with the overwhelming support and participation from the community. Quenton I. White, Commissioner of

Correction, was honored as the recipient of the Lion of Zion Award. The Lion of Zion Award commemorates the dedication to job training and job placement of OIC's late founder and champion, Reverend Leon H. Sullivan.

This year's event received recognition in the *Tennessean* and in Nashville's major social magazine, *Nfocus*. The evening began with welcoming remarks from Laura Barnes and Tom Epperson, OIC Board Members and Annual Gala Co-Chairs. New Board member, Will Morrow was the evening's Master of Ceremonies.



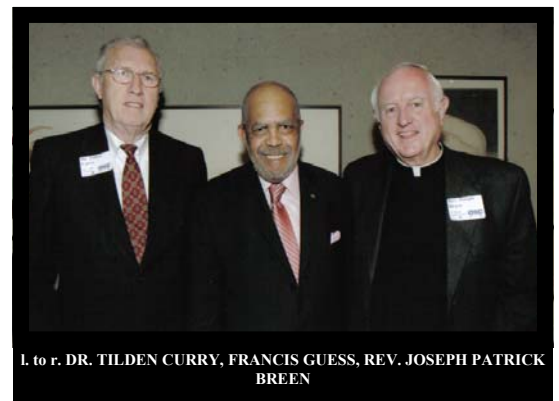
**L. to r. CHAIRMAN CHARLES TRAUGHBER, MELVIN PEACOCK, LARRAINE GERELICK, WILL MORROW**

The invocation was given by Rabbi Shana Goldstein from The Temple. President and CEO Margaret McClain acknowledged the support from many in the community who have aided in the enormous success over the past



**L. to r. MARGARET MCCLAIN, LOUISE KATZMAN, COMMISSIONER QUENTON WHITE**

six years and the continuation of our mission, to provide superior employment training and placement services to individuals who seek a better quality of life. Charles Traughber, Chairman of Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole, introduced his friend and colleague, Commissioner Quenton I. White as this year's recipient of the Lion of Zion award. Commissioner White accepted the award with gratitude and vowed to continue striving to be worthy of such recognition.



**L. to r. DR. TILDEN CURRY, FRANCIS GUESS, REV. JOSEPH PATRICK BREEN**

Three graduates of the OIC program then spoke briefly, telling the story of struggle, despair, hope and success. One student was a 46-year-old female from Croatia who is attending GED classes at the satellite program at St Luke's Community House. Another, student was a 35-year-old female from Nigeria who graduated from the computer classes and is now working to help others find employment. The last student was a 36-year-old male who was a native of Nashville and an ex-offender. He completed the computer classes and attributed his current employment to OIC. Reverend Victor M. Singletary, OIC Board of Directors Chairman, provided closing remarks honoring the accomplishments of OIC and enumerating the opportunities for service that lie ahead.

## OIC DEVELOPS STRATEGIC PLAN TO ENSURE ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

On May 7<sup>th</sup> 2005 the Nashville Opportunities Industrialization Center board of directors concluded a two-day strategic planning session to ensure another successful year for OIC. For the second year in a row the meetings were facilitated by Cissy Mynatt from the Center for Non-Profit Management, who has become an important part of the annual strategic planning meeting. During the two day session the board identified six major strategic goals, developed strategies for those goals and set performance targets to measure the success of those goals. Below are brief summaries of the strategic goals along with strategies to achieve them.

- Expanding and strengthening GED preparation and job training and job placement were bundled together as one strategic goal. To achieve these goals OIC will seek to increase the number and diversity of referral sources, and identify which programs are most successful in meeting customer needs.
- Increasing and diversifying funding sources was another important strategic goal set out by the board. Strategies to achieve these goals include pursuing federal and state grants, continuing the awards dinner, expanding the individual giving program, and seeking increases in corporate support.
- Continuing to build a board of strong leaders and to strengthen the committee structure to support achieving OIC goals was identified by the board as an important strategic goal. Strategies to achieve these

goals included organizing efforts to recruit board members, defining specific jobs for board members when they are recruited and leveraging relationships with other professional organizations.

- Increasing community awareness of OIC and support for our mission was identified as a strategic goal. This will include measuring the increase in private contributions, response to the annual event, and the number of hits on our Nashville OIC website. OIC will also seek to optimize its media coverage.
- OIC will continue to recruit, retain and develop a strong team of staff and volunteers. This will include a continuous review of job descriptions/qualifications for staff positions, and recruiting additional volunteers.
- Ensuring that OIC will have the facilities, equipment, and business systems to achieve its goals was discussed at length during the planning project and was made part of the strategic plan.

Achieving these aggressive goals will be both challenging and rewarding to OIC and its customers. Due to the successful outcome of the session the board of directors will continue to use this strategic planning format to set the course for achieving goals that will lead to further success of the Nashville OIC. By focusing on OIC's strengths and continuing to identify opportunities to improve, OIC will continue to provide a vital service to the citizens of Nashville who seek to improve their lives through OIC's programs.

### A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS WHOSE SUPPORT IS KEY TO OIC SUCCESS:

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# OIC STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

## BY ELAINE KUHN

### JASON ALEXANDER\*

**Jason Alexander** is an experienced young man. Now twenty-six years old, he has worked in the catering world as a banquet server, traveled the world from Australia to Germany to Italy, and worked as an aide to a handicapped man. But he has also dropped out of school, run away from home, fathered and lost a child, stolen car radios, and ended up in jail for 24 hours on misdemeanor charges.

But Jason Alexander is also a smart young man. He took one look around him at court, and decided that this was neither where nor whom he wanted to be. He says, "That was the end. I decided then I'm going to earn my money right so the only way they can take it away from me is if I don't pay my taxes. I said, 'uh, uh – I'm going to do it right the first time.'"

Now Jason Alexander is on the right track. The case worker for an employer of his told him about OIC, and Jason decided to earn his GED. He came to OIC, and within one month, Jason had passed the test, breaking the OIC record for the shortest amount of time for earning the GED. He is also the current OIC class president, and is looking forward to his graduation ceremony on June 26<sup>th</sup>. His family is very excited for him, but he says his grandmother in Gary, IN, is the most excited. His mother and his younger brothers will be on hand to witness his graduation; in fact, Mr. Alexander is proudly handing out invitations in a quest to fill the church by himself!

Jason Alexander is going to college. He is interested in Accounting and Aviation, and wants to be a pilot. He is applying to Fisk and to Spartan University in Tulsa, OK, and says that whoever gives him the best deal will get him. He is thankful that Ms. Guthrie, who told him about the Pell Grant, took time to help him find a way to finance his schooling.

Jason Alexander credits his mother with the words of wisdom he lives by. "Life is a stage, and we are all actors," he quotes. "You have to learn your part and play it well to have things turn out right." With the help of OIC, that is what he is doing. He is grateful to Ms. Adams, his teacher, to Greg Gosset, who is "good to talk to," and to Mr. Cartwright, whom he calls "my wind-down coach. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be here."

### DAMITA JAMISON\*

For Damita Jamison, Nashville is the middle of her life. Born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1960, Ms. Jamison graduated from high school there, was married in 1979, and divorced in 1982. That year, a visit to a friend in Nashville showed her a "friendly place" as she describes it, so she stayed. She attended a medical career college in Nashville, doing studies in both technical and home health. She also worked in literacy for Metro Nashville Public Schools, and at Cohn Adult Learning Center. After that, she worked at Fisk for several years as a purchasing agent and finally as Interim Director of Auxiliary Services. Unfortunately, she lost her job this past January.

One day, visiting with a Fisk friend, she noticed the OIC sign outside the building. She immediately made a U-turn and came in. She decided that she needed computer courses to make herself more attractive as a job candidate, so she took the Microsoft 2000 program. During the course, she says, she was "just playing around" with the Power Point program, and created a presentation called, "How to Be a VIP." She showed this presentation, which focuses on finding jobs and building self-esteem, to Mr. Young, who showed it to Ms. Guthrie and Ms. McClain. And now you, too, can view it, as it has been incorporated into the OIC web site.

Damita Jamison has had good luck visiting friends, and good luck with OIC. This spring, she went to Bemidji, MN, to visit another friend. While driving around, she spotted another OIC sign, and stopped to check out that organization. Not only did she succeed in making connections between the two organizations, but she has also found herself a new job and a new location – Ms. Jamison will begin working at the Bemidji OIC this July. The Nashville OIC will miss her and the volunteer work she has done here, and she says she will miss the great bunch of OIC people who work so well together, who made her feel useful and who boosted her self-esteem when she needed it. But she is ready to make the next move, thanks to the skills and personal support she has received from Nashville OIC.

# OIC STUDENT TESTIMONIALS BY ELAINE KUHN

## **CHERLYL MARKS\***

"I am a care giver," says Cheryl Marks. "It's always been that everyone else's needs came first. I spend 20 years of my life making everyone else happy. Now it's about me." Ms. Marks is from Nashville, and graduated from McGavock High School. She had her first son in 1989, and her second in 1991. Her mother fell ill, and she cared for her until her death in 1995. Then she cared for her father, who died in 2001. In the meantime, she entered a treatment center in 1997 to overcome drug addiction. In 2003, she heard about OIC from a friend, and signed up to learn computer skills to step up from her cashier job. She has been coming two times a week, and will graduate from the soft skills training at OIC in June.

Ms. Marks has a very clear-eyed philosophy of life. "It's OK to step out of your comfort zone," she says. "If you never step out, it never changes. You've got to step out. You've got to be really tired to change. If you are comfortable in the familiar, you won't change, but if you get tired of it, you will try to better yourself." Ms. Marks knows this is not easy, and that it takes sacrifices. She had to explain this to her boys after she gave up her job so she could concentrate on school. Christmas would be slim, she told them, and there would be many lean times, but she was doing this so both she and they could have a better future. And her boys, 13 and 15, agreed to support her in her quest.

Cheryl Marks is now a returning senior at TSU, working toward a degree in Social Work. She will graduate on December 18<sup>th</sup> of this year, and is looking forward to finishing so she "can say it's Done!" She credits the staff at OIC with helping her meet this goal. They are "very supportive people, genuinely concerned about your well-being. If you need help with your homework or need to use the computer, they are there." Cheryl Marks is there, too. Her life experiences have given her wisdom and understanding. At OIC, she found the opportunity to learn new skills so she can continue her care-giving on another level as she makes a better life for her family and herself.

## **ALINA WILSON\***

Alina Wilson, 32 year old, single parent achieved against all odds. Ms. Smith enrolled at OIC in the Adult Education class in early Fall 2004. She is a mother of five. They range in age from 4-17 years old.

She never had an opportunity to attend high school, but she had the desire. Alina came to Nashville, Tennessee from Saginaw, Michigan to raise her children. She encountered an abundance of obstacles, including the most devastating of all – the death of her father. Alina had to travel all the way to where her father lived, in Van Nuys, California.

When she arrived in Nashville, she came to OIC. She had a grade level of eleven plus in reading. She struggled with her math at times; however, she managed to build up her confidence over a period of time. She scored slightly below 500 on her practice GED.

Alina continued to persevere, she did numerous hours of independent study at school and at home. Alina is very independent and scored the first time with flying colors. She is in the process of enrolling at Tennessee State University in the field of education.

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS WHOSE SUPPORT IS KEY TO OIC SUCCESS:**

Betty T. Jones  
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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

At the strategic planning meeting on May 7, OIC established branding as a public relations goal for the coming year. The name Opportunities Industrialization Center ties us to the national and international organization founded by the late Reverend Leon H. Sullivan.

Reverend Sullivan was a brilliant man. Almost surely he picked the name Opportunities Industrialization Center only after serious consideration. Is it possible for us to reconstruct his reasoning? "Opportunities" is surely appropriate. And "Center" describes a place where the business of education, training and job placement takes place. But what about "Industrialization?" Industrialization is derived from "industrialize." We use the word industrialize frequently. We say that China is in the process of industrializing. What we mean by that is that China is moving from being a backward agrarian society to a modern industrialized society. All know that industrializing is absolutely essential for a country if it is to bring the benefits of industry to its people. The Gross National Product of China has doubled every six years for the last two decades. The population has grown some, but the fact is that

every man, woman and child has on average eight times the income, eight times the goods and services that same person might have had just twenty years ago.

We know that such rapid growth brings problems, but China will begin now to have the resources necessary for solving the problems. Not many of us would give up our industrial society and return to the agrarian life that occupied perhaps half the population of the United States as little as a century ago and more than 90% in 1800.

What does it mean for an individual to industrialize? Why is it different for an individual from what it is for a society to industrialize? The person becomes part of industry rather than not being part of industry. We used to think of industries as manufacturing complexes, but what about the healthcare *industry* or the tourist *industry* or the banking *industry*? When a person moves away from living on charity to getting even a low-paying job in the fast foods *industry*, that person has a new life. That person is producing needed goods and services that benefit society, whereas before the same person was only a drain on the economy and on society.

## OIC CLASS MEMBERS DEVELOP POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

On April 11, 2005 at 10:15 a.m. three class members of OIC Computer Soft Skills training class made a presenta-



tion to the staff and class members using skills acquired in the Information Technology (IT) class where they learn PowerPoint. LaShanda Shepard and LaQuita Williamson employed PowerPoint's sound effects and automatic timing feature to show the benefits of attending OIC job train-

ing classes.

The origin of the presentation came out of three students' conversation as they discovered what could be done using the skills being learned. On

the scheduled presentation date, Damita Hairston, the third member of the team, was unable to attend the class. Ms. Williamson and Mrs. Shepard forged ahead knowing that failure to



# OIC Career Corner

In today's job market it is best for one to have a skill, trade or education in order to compete in the fast growing and ever changing technology industry.

OIC is here to help prepare those who are seeking to advance and enhance their job marketable skills. It's important to be prepared to search for employment. OIC provides job readiness workshops twice a week Mondays and Wednesdays at 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 Noon. These workshops are for the students who attend OIC and former graduates of OIC. Drop-ins are welcome as well to come and receive help with resumes and to look at the job board.

Many students will graduate on Sunday, June 26, 2005 who have worked hard to learn computer technology, computer soft skills, GED, and obtained jobs. Congratulations to all of the students and clients who worked through their barriers and persevered to obtain their goals.

They are now stepping into a new future of possibilities. Many will start their own businesses, attend college or trade schools and/or gain full employment.

The doors are always open at OIC for former graduates to return for upgrading skills or job placement assistance.

## OIC BRINGS ABSTINENCE FORUM TO THE COMMUNITY

On June 17 at Watkins Park Andre Lindley of Coldwell Banker-Barnes coordinated an abstinence forum. Mr. Lindley is an affiliate broker with an interest in our youth of today and their survival. As a businessman and father of two he became aware that many young people were becoming victims of irresponsible sex. Environments influence how youth think, and an excellent way to shape attitudes toward sex is to come together in forum-type settings. Forums give youth an opportunity to discuss openly correct behavior and to encourage students not to mimic some of what they see on T.V. and in movies.



Andre Lindley of Coldwell Banker-Barnes

OIC in collaboration with presenters from the State Health Department, TSU, Nashville Cares, Friendship Baptist Church and Watkins Park sponsored the Abstinence Forum for Nashville's Youth to enhance the chances of positive outcomes for 11- to 18-year olds.

The topics of the forum were Abstinence Education, The Rights of Others, Helping Youth Prepare for Healthy Dating Relationships, and Promoting Youth as Role Models. The five-hour forum also included food, fun, a basketball shoot-out, fellowship, and prizes!

### A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS WHOSE SUPPORT IS KEY TO OIC SUCCESS:

Helen and Gerald Noffsinger  
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Park Center  
Pearl High Class Reunion  
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 Nancy Zoretic  
 Anonymous  
 \* Deceased

**EVENT SCHEDULE**

6th Annual Kelly Miller Smith Memorial Prayer Breakfast  
 Saturday, October 29, 2005

Annual Recognition Dinner  
 Thursday, March 30, 2006

6th Annual Basketball Camp  
 June 8-12, 2006



Nashville Opportunities Industrialization Center

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**TED "THE HOUND" MCCLAIN INSTRUCTED THE 5TH ANNUAL BASKETBALL CAMP**

Nashville OIC held its 5th Annual Basketball Camp, for children ages 8-14 years of age, during the week of June 13-17, 2005. Ted McClain, who received his third Hall of Fame honor this year from the Metro Nashville Public Schools, conducted the instructional basketball camp as head coach and coordinator. Ted, is an inductee of the TSU Hall of Fame and the State of Tennessee Hall of Fame.



**LEGENDARY TED "THE HOUND" MCCLAIN**

The former TSU and NBA Star conducts the free camp at Watkins Park each year. He is partial to the John Henry Hale area where he grew up. Ted stressed the importance of getting an education, being disciplined and mastering a skill.

Ted also coordinated and conducted the basketball shootout for the Abstinence Forum. The competitive nature of the basketball competition led into the discussion of Disciplining Yourself. Lunch, t-shirts, prizes, and gift bags were provided to the participants.