



Church Hill Activities & Tutoring

Opening Homes, Transforming Lives, Rebuilding Communities

A How-To Guide for Gift-Receiving

I love Christmas. I always have. I love giving gifts. When I was a kid, I could not wait for people to open presents, so I would find stuff (cookies, old toys and general junk) around the house and put them in my older brother's stocking on Christmas Eve (I would then urge my brother to go and get the awesome stuff from his stocking). It really does feel great to give. Thanks to the generosity of a variety of people reading this newsletter, CHAT is able to provide real gifts (not like the junk I gave my brother) for about 100 kids involved in our program.

All of you understand how wonderful it is to give. You do it all the time. This Christmas season, however, I want you to receive a gift from CHAT. This is when I tell you a check has been sent to you for a million dollars. If you get that check, don't cash it. That is not the gift. Instead, the kids in CHAT remind me of the right way to receive a gift. Their attitude in gift-receiving offers sound advice and a gift to us all. When the kids write their

Christmas lists, they are filled with excitement and anticipation. You can see it in the frantic way they scribble the words on the paper. And when we deliver the gifts, they don't sit there and say, "Whoa! That gift is way too nice for me. I just can't accept that." No, they just smile or squeal and get to the task of enjoying the gift. You see, we have gotten very confused about the focus of Christmas. True, Christmas is not about materialism and possessions. But it is not about gift-giving either. Christmas is about gift-receiving. The God of the Universe sent the most extravagant gift imaginable, His only Son. This is what we celebrate. We are excited. We are anticipating. We are expecting to receive a gift we neither deserve nor can ever repay. So, take a lesson from the CHAT kids this year and enjoy the gift you have been given on December 25th. And... thanks for the many gifts you have given us.

Percy Strickland — Founder and CEO



Merry Christmas!
From Santa, his elf,
and Dashawna!

CHAT's Christmas Wish List



Check out ways to donate online at www.chatrichmond.org/donate. Contact chris.whiting@chatrichmond.org with questions.

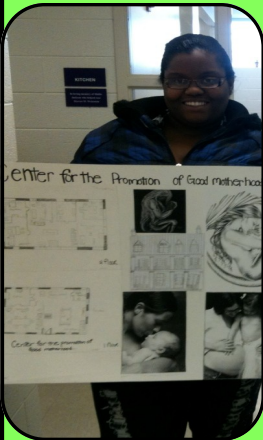
SPECIAL THANKS

- **BLUE SKY FUND** for partnering with CHAT to provide an outdoor education club, including rock climbing at Peak Experience and backpacking at False Cape State Park.
- **RHONDA DUNBAR**, a special ed teacher, for her many volunteer hours at the CHA.
- **NEW HANOVER PRES** for organizing "Operation Drumstick" providing 15 CHAT families with a delicious thanksgiving meal.
- **REDEMPTION HILL** and the many volunteers who served 250+ people at CHAT's annual neighborhood Thanksgiving and Halloween parties.
- **ALEXANDRA SPITZER** and **COLLEGIATE** for sponsoring a second annual Pumpkin Patch trip.
- **ED** and **DEBBY READ** and **CMDA** for organizing another **UTURN** sports and games night.
- To the **60+ VOLUNTEERS** who serve regularly at CHAT tutoring, life skills classes, and Bible Studies.



CHURCH HILL ACADEMY

Cultural Art and Government Project



This marking period many of our students researched and studied civil injustices, both past and present, in a cross-curricular project between art and government. During their government class, they each collected research, wrote a paper and developed a presentation on past civil injustices in our country with particular focus on voting discrimination. Some students chose to research women's suffrage, while others focused on African American suffrage during the civil rights era. One student even merged the two topics and researched women's roles in the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In their art class, students had to identify civil injustices they see in their community today and create a piece of art that would clearly demonstrate how to alleviate the injustice. Their honest assessments of the shortcomings of their community were humbling and their vision for change was inspiring. Through these two assignments,

students were able to draw upon courageous acts of the past to create a plan for hope and change in the community around them. Check out Imani in the picture above displaying her art project "Center for the Promotion of Good Motherhood" with a plan to support mothers throughout the Church Hill neighborhood. Keep up the good work!

Student Highlight - Tre

What are your favorite hobbies? Football, basketball, sleeping, chillin'.

What is your favorite class and why? History, because I like to learn about my heritage and how my ancestors were before and during slavery.

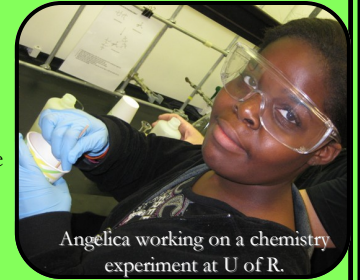
Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Hopefully I will be on stage as a comedian because I love to make people laugh.



First year Academy student, Tre, gets interviewed.

Chemistry Field Trip

In November, all Academy students took a field trip to the University of Richmond's organic chemistry labs where Professor Rob Miller led them in a chemistry exploration. They experimented with polymer chemistry to make slime, nylon and snakes. They also had the chance to witness just



Angelica working on a chemistry experiment at U of R.

how reactive hydrogen gas is (BOOM!), as well as just how much potential energy is stored up in a little gummy bear (which was revealed through the formation of light, heat and noise). Thank you to University of Richmond for this opportunity. And a special thanks to Dr. Rob for engaging our students and getting them excited about chemistry.

Wacky Wednesdays Reflections

Wednesday evening is my favorite time of the week. Why? Because I see 38 kids participating in amazing life-skills classes such as sewing (my old shorts are good as new!), photography, hip-hop dance (the kids have been teaching me a few new moves), carpentry (I hope the bedside tables are for sale), poetry, and cooking (I can testify that their work tastes "mmm mmm" good!). CHAT also has an outdoor adventure club (led by CHAT staff Adam Burgess), which recently enjoyed a weekend camping trip to False Cape State Park. Upon

return, Adam said, "We had perfect weather as we hiked 15 miles round trip through tall reeds and beautiful Virginia coast line. One highlight was when we saw the sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean, a first for all our participants. Our new outdoor enthusiasts also enjoyed sleeping under the stars both nights." Below are some pictures highlighting the cooking, outdoor adventure and Nehemiah's workshop "Wacky Wednesday" classes.

- Murray Withrow, Program Director



Doug, Eliza, and Destiny making tacos.



Outdoor Adventure Club at False Cape State Park



Matt helps Donnisha on her fresh pair of stilts.



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