



# islesWorks

*Fostering self-reliant families and healthy, sustainable communities*

## January 2017

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Dear Jacquelin,

I live, work, and worship in the great city of Trenton, New Jersey. On a daily basis, I see and experience the impact of Isles Youth Institute on the community. Our school serves an often ignored population in urban areas--dropouts. In a city with a nearly 50% dropout rate, Isles Youth Institute provides an invaluable service to the community, and as Managing Director, it is my duty to ensure we provide our young people with every opportunity to be "game changers."

In an effort to provide an enriched experience, we've implemented a blended learning model that allows students to work in partnership with staff to achieve their goals. Students use a customized, self-directed online program in combination with targeted, direct classroom instruction and one-on-one tutoring. This model is proving to be the most effective way to ensure student success.

I'm also excited to tell you about our new "Leadership Academy." This innovative classroom series will equip students with real world skills that empower them to be leaders of change in their community. Students will grow their problem solving skills, be able to better navigate difficult environments, become more civic-minded, and encourage their siblings, friends, and neighbors to also become positive change agents in their communities.

At Isles, we know we can't achieve all we set out to do alone, and that is why we continue to partner with local and national organizations to provide life changing and *life affirming* opportunities for our students. Below, you will read about Sha'Kiera Davis, one of twenty recipients of the 2016 Helene.D Stoneman Scholarship from YouthBuild USA.

On a daily basis, Isles Youth Institute helps young people like Sha'Kiera develop a plan to improve themselves and the world they live in, and we're so grateful to have supporters like you take part in this vital work.

In community,

[Shenette Gray](#)

Isles Youth Institute Director

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## Student Spotlight: Sha'Kiera Davis



*Congratulations to Sha'Kiera Davis, 2016 Helene D. Stoneman Scholar*

When Sha'Kiera joined Isles Youth Institute (IYI) in April 2014, we knew that we'd see great things from her. Motivated by her two young children, Sha'Kiera received her High School Equivalency Diploma and Certified Nursing Assistant license in June 2016. Since then, Sha'Kiera obtained employment as a CNA and was admitted into an Associate's program for Nursing at Mercer County Community College.

Earlier this year, we learned that Sha'Kiera's hard work was paying off: she was selected as one of only twenty 2016 Helene D. Stoneman Scholars by YouthBuild USA. This scholarship will help support Sha'Kiera's educational and career aspirations. Sha'Kiera credits the support of IYI staff, her peers, and her family for her success, noting, "I always planned to follow my mother's footsteps to become a registered nurse. My education and hands on learning have taught me what I needed to know."

Not only does Sha'Kiera plan to continue working as a CNA while she attends school, but she also tells us, "I plan to involve myself in a lot of community service and possibly be able to give back to an inner city clinic to help those in need."

We have great confidence in Sha'Kiera's success as we have seen firsthand her positive disposition, eagerness to learn, and commitment to her long term goals. She

embodies so many of the qualities we foster at IYI, and we are so glad the Helene D. Stoneman Scholarship will help her on her journey.

## Welcoming New Isles Board Members

Isles is pleased to welcome five new members to our Board of Trustees in the new year. The skills and insights they bring to the table--from higher education, finance, law, and business--will enhance Isles' ability to continue to improve our services, expand our reach, and work across sectors to make even greater progress towards fostering self-reliant families and healthy, sustainable communities.

**Christopher Cramer**, Vice President of Business Development for CytoSorbents

**Gary Gray**, Director in Global Wealth Management Finance at Bank of America

**Karen McGuinness**, Associate Dean for Graduate Education at Princeton University

**Willard Stanback**, Lawyer and Principal of Willard Alonzo Stanback P.C.

**Melanie Willoughby**, Chief Government Affairs Officer of the New Jersey Business & Industry Association

[Visit our website](#) to read their full bios.

## #Isles35th



**Debby D'Arcangelo**

*Council for Relationships, CEO*

"The more things change at Isles, the more they seem to stay the same. Although the organization has grown significantly in the number of programs offered and people served, Isles hasn't changed its essential mission of helping people help themselves. It continues to be a cutting-edge organization which never stops learning and helping others--people and organizations--learn."

Read the full [#Isles35th](#) interview [here](#).



**CEO Corner**

*January 2017 update*

"Back in 1994, Isles was rehabilitating old, vacant single family homes scattered across Trenton. Families that wanted to own their first home purchased these efficient, low-cost houses that helped stabilize families and communities. But while we redeveloped homes, another challenge and opportunity arose..."

Read Marty's full January 2017 update at [the CEO Corner](#) of our website.

## We Met Our Goal!



Thanks to friends and supporters like you, we hit our Rise to 35 campaign goal!  
For an update on all of the great things we've accomplished this year, [click here.](#)



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