



# streettalk

## Homeless to Harvard Speaker Inspires Students

Liz Murray was an inspiration to the Street School students she met and spoke to about the challenges she has faced in her life. Street School hosted the Young Presidents' Organization of Tulsa's meeting on October 9 for its members who brought Ms. Murray to Tulsa. Murray spoke to the audience about her life and the importance of the high school and its staff that turned her life around through their acceptance. She commended Street School for being the program it is and for being so similar to the school that saved her life.

Murray was the child of drug addicts who she began supporting at age 10. She was homeless at 15 after the death of her mother, and living on the streets fending for her life. Determined not to be defined by her circumstances, she recognized education as the key to a fresh beginning and a new life. She earned her high school diploma in just two years, and won a scholarship to Harvard University that would turn a penniless girl into a well-educated young woman with a bright future.

Murray's sincerity, maturity and grace amazed students. With her examples of hard work, determination and daily commitment to achievement, she inspired everyone. That same gutsy strength that pulled her from the streets now transforms the lives of others in need of inspiration to overcome their own obstacles.

Murray's inspirational story was captured on Lifetime Television's Emmy-nominated original film, *Homeless to Harvard*. She was also among the first people to receive Oprah Winfrey's "Chutzpah Award."

One Street School student moved by the movie was Jennifer Dayton. She remembers watching the movie a few years

ago at age 14. At the time, she didn't have plans to finish school and didn't think she would do well in high school.

After seeing the movie, Jennifer thought again about going to school because she realized its importance. She felt as though she had so much against her having attended only one year of school in seventh grade. Jennifer said, "I knew I was behind and I knew I needed one-on-one help to catch up. I had heard about Street School through an article I read in the newspaper and checked into it."

"Because of Liz's story, I went back to high school at Street School. The movie made me rethink going to school because of the approach Liz took, and how she went for it," said Jennifer who is now in her second year at Street School and well on her way to earning the credits she needs to graduate.

Jennifer got to meet and share her personal story with Liz. The connection was immediate and they exchanged phone numbers and email addresses. Jennifer asked Liz how you get through the struggles of going back to school and college. Liz said, "It was the little things. Like getting up, turning the door knob, and going out the door. Taking it one step at a time while asking herself, What if? Then I take the next step."

Jennifer said, "I like Street School a lot. Many of my teachers have worked with me one-on-one to help me catch up on what I've missed. Like Lola (Street School math teacher) who has helped me determine my TCC class schedule, and has given me study books for taking the ACT."



Left to right: Liz Murray and Jennifer Dayton – student.

Jennifer now plans to go to law school and become a lawyer because she finds it very interesting; especially human right issues such as freedom of speech government. "I want to help people, and make a difference," she said.

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Street School is a tuition-free, non-profit alternative school of choice and therapeutic counseling program for students in 9th – 12th grade.

# Street School Staff

Lori McGinnis, Ed.D.  
Executive Director

## Teachers

Laura Abbott  
Mike Brungardt, MS  
Kim Camp  
Lola Conley  
Anais Garcia  
Sheila Jones  
Julie Moeller  
Donna Shelton  
Stephen Zedler

## Counselors

Wilton Cuevas,  
LPC, LADC  
Jana Emerson  
Pat Moran, M. Ed.  
Tanith Reans, LCSW  
Pam Sinor, LPC  
Maureen TeRuki,  
MSHR

## Administration

Michelle Carter  
Counseling  
Administrative Assistant  
Glenda Lollis  
Receptionist  
Lorraine McReynolds,  
MA, NCC  
Program Director  
Dawn Randall  
Administrative Assistant  
David Ulrich  
Development Director

## Member Agency



# Pop Culture Class

Social studies instructor Stephen Zedler teaches a Pop Culture in America class to his students each Friday – a day in which staff provide additional courses other than those in the core curriculum. These mini-courses and therapeutic groups are offered one day a week to accommodate students' needs and interests. Some of the groups offered are anger management, substance abuse, and women's issues through the counseling department. Mini-courses include Key Club, which is a community service outreach group, and HIV-AIDS and pregnancy prevention, which is a peer education group. This scheduling gives students choices and provides staff with opportunities to teach subjects they are passionate about.

Zedler said, "This class goes back to Socrates and the idea of the unexamined life. If you don't understand your environment, then you are probably impacted by it in ways you are unaware of, and maybe in ways you don't like. You have a measure of control if you understand the world around you." This has genuine meaning for our students, as many of them feel like they have no choices about what happens to them and simply react to their environment based on instinct.

The emphasis of the Pop Culture class is media culture, and how it impacts human behavior as we move away from the printed word and toward video as the dominant medium for communicating information. Students view documentaries like "The Merchants of Cool" and will be reading Kalle Lasn's book Culture Jam. They will also watch television shows and listen to popular music, but do so with a critical eye toward understanding both the intentional and unintentional messages sent by them.



Collin Heritage, student, and Stephen Zedler

# A Bridge to Success

Street School student, Alexander Rumley, has been hired in the "Bridges" work-study program co-sponsored by Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Alexander is the first Street School student hired in this program. He will work at the TPS bus barn in the clerical area, where staff will train him in graphic arts and bus routing.

TPS and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation developed the Bridges program to move students involved in work-study programs operating inside the schools out into jobs in the community. Their purpose is to provide skills that will serve the students in real time jobs both during and after high school. The students receive apprenticeship type training and mentoring to help them make good behavior, work issue, and life choices. TPS provides the training staff and work site, while federal tax dollars pay for the program through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.



Alexander will work during the first part of the day, earning \$5.85 hourly and work-study class credit. He will complete his day in regular classes at Street School. The position will last throughout the year, and offer an option to continue the following year. *We congratulate him on his success!*

# Make a Difference – Mentor!

Ralph Gum has been a mentor for seven years. He's mentored four students; one for three years. He's volunteering again this year with his new mentee Grant Schellhorn. Ralph sees genuine long term value in mentoring because it helps shape students' futures.

Ralph got involved with Street School when members of his church helped clean coins that were donated to Street School from a fountain. He found that his personal experiences as a teenager related well to those of Street School students needing mentors and decided to volunteer. Ralph lived on his own since he was 16, and experienced some tough high school years. But a positive Boy Scouts leader helped him when he needed it. Ralph said, "How we can really help others without getting involved? I wish more people volunteered as mentors because it helps, and you can

see that you're making a difference."

Ralph is married with two children who are both in college. He was the first in his family to go to college, and has been



Ralph Gum with student Grant Schellhorn.

a pharmacist now for 32 years. He said, "It's great to have students I've mentored stop by the pharmacy since they've left Street School to catch-up and talk about their futures."

Community volunteers who serve as mentors play a significant role in a young person's life. A Street School mentor is a trusted person who cares, listens, and is influential as a positive role model. They are a person who instills a sense of self worth, and establishes an open line of communication by spending quality time with youth. A mentor is not a surrogate parent, but rather a friend who is directing and modeling leadership and community involvement; and a person with a positive attitude who strives to motivate and nurture self-esteem within the student.

Interested in being a mentor?  
Call 833-9812.



## Youth Leadership Tulsa Names Street School Student for New Class

Alana Hunt, Street School student, was named a member of the 2007-08 Youth Leadership Tulsa class. Alana is a senior who is currently attending Tulsa Technology Center in the mornings and Street School in the afternoons. She plans on becoming a pharmacist and will begin her college education at Tulsa Community College next fall followed by the doctor of pharmacy program at the University of Oklahoma.

Youth Leadership Tulsa offers area high school students the opportunity to develop and strengthen their leadership skills and understand the importance of leadership to the community. Participants meet from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for monthly sessions. Through activities, field trips, service learning projects, and guest speakers, students develop teamwork skills, explore their leadership potential, discover the community, learn about area

non-profits, expand their horizons, connect with students from other schools, and decide what's next.

Leadership Tulsa is a nonprofit community organization that identifies and develops leaders who impact the community through service.  
*Congratulations Alana!*

## Street School Mission Statement

Street School, Inc. is a private, non-profit alternative education and therapeutic counseling program whose mission is to create a supportive community for students who have chosen to continue their education in a non-traditional setting. Our comprehensive and individualized services enable students to reach their own potential and become responsible and productive adults.

# Your Gift Locks in Success

Just like your typical school, student lockers line the school's hallways. But, at Street School, student lockers reflect Street School's program of dropout prevention, intervention, and recovery. Our lockers hold not only a student's jacket, but their dreams of a high school diploma made possible because of a second chance in our alternative program.

The *Lock in a Student's Future* campaign changes lockers in need of a face-lift into works of art. This year, four OSU Okmulgee graphic design students, with the assistance of their instructor James McCollough, are teaming up to conceive, design, and paint the locker mural. Our sincere gratitude goes to Mr. McCollough and his students: James Kirk, David Hummel, Michael Cuckler, and Trey Thaxton. As our students, staff, volunteers, and funders walk the hallways they are reminded by the billboard-like murals of the values Street School teaches youth – mutual respect, personal accountability, direct communication, and community.

You can *Lock in a Student's Future* with a gift to Street School and be a part of this unique one-of-a-kind campaign that raises money to fund Street School's award winning and nationally recognized program. Please call 833-9813, email [urichda@tulsaschools.org](mailto:urichda@tulsaschools.org) or visit our website at [www.streetschool.org](http://www.streetschool.org) to sponsor your locker today.



Lockers unveiled November 28, 2006, graphics courtesy of Walsh Associates.

# Students Donate Art to Festival of Trees

For the fourth year, Street School students have created a work of art for the Festival of Trees. The 2007 Festival of Trees is the Philbrook Museum's 23rd annual event. This year the festival celebrates the exhibition, Frank Lloyd Wright and the House Beautiful with objects to brighten any home or garden.

With the support of art teacher Laura Abbott, students created a two sided tree with circular decorations. Students individually created each circle with larger circles forming the base of the sculpture and progressively smaller circles displayed one above the other. Street School's tree is on display during the festival, which is at the Philbrook Museum of Art November 16 through December 2.



Meliza Meza

# Leadership Class Supports the Rain Forest

Students in Kim Camp's life skills leadership classes raised money to support the Rain Forest Alliance organization. In harmony with Street School's six-week educational theme of nature and extinction, leadership class students chose to support the rain forest.

As a service learning project, students went through a selection process of brainstorming and assessing the need that exists and what they could do to help. Leadership class students working in two teams of 9, planned, organized and implemented fundraising events for their peers within the school.



Pictured left to right: Shana Avison, Cortney Cole and Justina Coffey.

The goal of the leadership class is for students to gain an understanding of their role in the community, learn the characteristics of a leader, and gain the experience and wisdom of a decision

maker. Students experience practical application through writing a step-by-step action plan to achieve their project's goal. Leadership class encourages students to execute a service learning project that is meaningful, educational, and fun. Camp said,

"Raising money for others is meaningful in many ways, but students learning and retaining knowledge through integrated, practical, real life experiences is the best way students learn and build character."

# Happy Thanksgiving Street School Thanks You

The 26th annual Street School Thanksgiving luncheon will be held for Street School students, their families, volunteers, and supporters. This annual "family" gathering is chaired by Howard Doak with Cityscape Home Mortgage. Street School board members and staff will serve guests a free Thanksgiving meal made possible through generous donations from Street School supporters. This tradition is an example of how Street School is much more than a school – it's family. Please join us Tuesday, November 20th, between 11:30 – 1:00p.m. at Street School. Call 833-9800 to provide us with your name and number of guests.

# Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Gina

Gina Carroll is the current president of Street School's board of directors. Gina's life experiences have prepared her well for this position, and she credits her personal challenges and that of her brother's for her success.

Gina was introduced to Street School in 1980 when her brother enrolled and was embraced by the program. She knew something significant entered his life, which began to transform him the first day he arrived at Street School. It was at that point she knew she would someday give back to the program. "His life turned around," she said. He had found a place of acceptance, where someone really cared and actually extended a piece of themselves, offering a "hand up" in the world. "He had counselors that really cared about him." And in turn, he began to care about himself and the possibilities in his future. "Street School clearly provides the support needed for a young person to begin visualizing their future – imagination, belief and expectation," said

Gina. With Street School's help, Gina's brother gained enough confidence to participate in athletics, get a job, and return to his traditional school in time to graduate 1982.

Gina's passion for Street School also comes from her own experiences growing up as a teen, and having to work hard to overcome obstacles to be successful. Her background is similar to that of your typical Street School student. Gina wants students to know that she relates to them because of her young life of uncertainty, and wants them to know there are people who genuinely care and will be there with a helping hand. Just like Street School was, reaching out and making an impact to her brother, her family, and ultimately on own her life.



Gina Carroll

"Street School helps youth with a hand up rather than a hand out," said Gina.

Because the Street School program is comprehensive, it helps the whole student, and she believes the mentoring program is critical to the program's success.

Gina has worn many hats as a Street School volunteer for the past eight years. She has helped organize Street School's annual fundraiser, chaired an Open House, and managed the renovation of

the school's counseling offices. Gina is the principal and owner of National Construction Services. She is married and the proud mother of two children – Sierra, who is a senior at OSU studying physical therapy, and Hunter, who is a high school senior who plays soccer and is the kicker on the Owasso high school football team.

## STUDENT PROFILE

### Isaac Miles A Star is Born

Meet Isaac; a senior who came to Street School in the spring of 2006. He said, "Street School is a place where you can start over," having gotten a second change for a high school education after dropping out for two months. Isaac said, "If it hadn't been for Street School, I wouldn't be able to graduate, and I've done this with the support of everybody. The staff are more like my family to me."

Isaac's life skills classes are his favorite. These classes give him the opportunity to be a leader as well as work as a team. He's learned the value of listening, being reserved, and putting his outgoing "star" like qualities into positive things. He helped orchestrate several student fundraisers, and starred as "Street School Man" in a school play by being a part of the United Way Teens' Way program.

His life skills classes have also given him the opportunity to volunteer and help the disabled children at The Little Light House, and participate in an internship with the Benham Engineering Company. During his internship, Isaac learned how to read blue prints, was exposed first-hand to bridge and building construction, and learned about a variety of different engineering professions. The internship was the experience he needed to help him know exactly what he wants to do. Isaac plans to graduate from Street School and continue his education at OSU-Okmulgee before finishing at OSU-Stillwater with a degree in engineering.



## Street Facts

### Did you know:

- On average, 16% of Street School students test as talented and gifted.
- On average, over 73% of Street School graduates begin college after graduation.
- In the last school year, 144 teenagers attended Street School.
- Street School students mentor Hoover Elementary School students every week through the Reading Buddies outreach program.
- 71% of Oklahoma's prison inmates did not graduate from high school.
- Street School helped 46 students continue their education last year with grants through our scholarship program.
- Street School is a school of choice, so all students who attend the school do so voluntarily.

# Thank You Day of Caring Volunteers!

Street School greatly appreciates the time, effort, and resources donated on United Way's Day of Caring to improve our school. On September 7, employees from Bank of Oklahoma, Hogan & Slovacek, NAF Americorps, ONEOK, University of Tulsa, UPS Freight, Whirlpool, and Williams, came out in force. Over 60 volunteers along with Street School students worked together painting classrooms and the gym, landscaping, building cabinets, and mounting televisions in each classroom. It was a great team effort. Street School students, the board of directors, and staff can not thank these companies and their employees enough for all their good work. **Thank you!**

## Member Agency



Back row left to right: J.L. Hightower, ONEOK; Brandon Brazeel, Whirlpool; Nick Cooper, BOK. Front row left to right: Bruce Kline, Williams; Tamy Celestine, UPS Freight; Tawna Wheeler, Hogan & Slovacek.



**The OUTSIDERS**  
Street Party

**SAVE THE DATE & JOIN THE PARTY!**

**Saturday, April 5, 2008**  
**Crowne Plaza Hotel**  
**7:30 pm**

Come as you are or better yet, come as a "Soc" or "Greaser" for The Outsiders themed fundraiser benefiting Street School. Dance to the music of the Mid Life Crisis Band and enjoy a full buffet.

Register or learn more at [www.streetschool.org](http://www.streetschool.org) or call 833-9813.

## Save the Date

Please mark your calendars and save the date for THE OUTSIDERS Street Party fundraiser benefiting Street School – theme courtesy of S.E. Hinton.

Join Street Party chairs Juley Roffers and Jim Langdon of Langdon Publishing on Saturday, April 5, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza hotel.

Come as you are or better yet come as a "Greaser" or a "Soc" as we join together supporting Street School with a great evening of fun, food, dancing, and your favorite music by the Mid Life Crisis Band.

For more information or to make your reservation, go on-line at [www.streetschool.org](http://www.streetschool.org), or call 833-9813, or email: [urichda@tulaschools.org](mailto:urichda@tulaschools.org).

## One Challenge Met and Another Announced

Thank you for your support in helping Street School start its new endowment. Through a very generous \$100,000 gift from the Bezael Foundation, along with contributions from the Sam Viersen Family Foundation, Jess L. and Miriam B. Stevens Foundation, Canada Company, Inc., Meinig Family Foundation, and many others, the Tulsa Community Foundation (TCF) endowment challenge has been met!

We can't thank these donors enough for helping us meet our short term endowment goal of meeting the TCF endowment challenge. We have now set our sights on reaching our long term endowment goal of raising \$2 million dollars, and have been given another exciting challenge.

The Bezael Foundation will contribute an additional \$50,000 to the Street School endowment when we raise an additional \$100,000 for the endowment.

Street School is excited to have taken the steps necessary to make our program's future even more successful than we are today at meeting the needs of Tulsa's at risk youth by starting an endowment, and we ask for your support.

Your contribution will impact generations to come as we strive to develop tomorrow's leaders today. We invite you to join in our mission by supporting Street School's dropout prevention, intervention, and recovery program as the need for our services is without question.

Please help us reach our \$2 million goal and meet the Bezael Foundation endowment challenge. If you can help us meet this challenge please contact David Urich at (918) 833-9813 or email him at [urichda@tulaschools.org](mailto:urichda@tulaschools.org).



# Strong Results Shown In Annual Management Report

Street School, whose youth services program includes alternative education, behavioral health, community outreach, and the First Time Offender Program, outlines exemplary results in the Annual Management Report.

Student surveys were very positive and reflect a successful program. Students responded to the counseling client satisfaction surveys with an average score of 4.7 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the best. It was also reported that 98% of the students reported that they felt Street School had a positive affect on their lives.

Exit statistics were compiled at the end of the school year. There were 144 youth who attended Street School in the 2007 school year. The average number of days absent from school before entry into the Street School program was 42 per year as compared to 12 per year after entering our program. The average GPA before entering

Street School was 1.0 as compared to 2.8 after completion of the school year. Seventy-six percent of our students planned to attend college, a university, or technical school upon completion of high school. The remaining 24% planned to either work full time or enter the selective service. Seventy-four percent of the students said that they get along better with their family members, and 93% percent report getting along better with their peers since entering Street School.

To read the entire report, please visit the Street School website at [www.streetschool.org/resources](http://www.streetschool.org/resources).

## Bequest Reminder

Your dropout prevention, intervention and recovery program needs your support. Have you considered including Street School in your will?

## English Class Fights Graffiti

In Sheila Jones's English class, students hone their business letter writing skills while addressing a community problem. "Tagging" and graffiti are too common place and Street School students want to see it removed. Street School students agree with Mayor Taylor's pledge to beautify Tulsa, and in response, each student wrote a letter to the Mayor about the graffiti and offered to help address the problem. Students were excited to each receive a reply letter from the Mayor commending them on their efforts to keep the city clean and safe.

Jones took students around the Street School community where they found 11 examples of graffiti. They took pictures and made a list of each location. Students then shared this information with the mayor requesting the graffiti be removed. Street School students have taken an active role in finding the graffiti, as well as, taking ownership in their community. They want to be proud of their city and community.

The goal of the class was to learn business letter writing skills and to evoke appreciation for the community and take ownership in their surroundings. "We'd like to improve the beauty of Tulsa," said Micheal Pigeon, English student. "We want visitors to see that our city isn't just great but beautiful as well."



James Weber & Micheal Pigeon

# Thank You Tulsa Run!

Street School was this year's Tulsa Run beneficiary. The annual event was held on October 27. "We truly appreciated being chosen as the beneficiary, and we were excited to help make the 30th anniversary a success," said Lori McGinnis Street School executive director.

Street School students, board members and staff sincerely thank the Tulsa Run and its presenting sponsors: Bank of Oklahoma, Tulsa World, SemGroup and Alamo for selecting Street School as the beneficiary. Street School received \$30,000 as the beneficiary. This support will help fund Street School's youth services program enabling students to graduate and become contributing members of our community.

The Tulsa Run began in 1978 with a challenging and scenic course running through historic downtown Tulsa and the scenic River Parks. This Tulsa tradition is still going strong and each passing year only adds to its interesting history. Celebrating its 30th year, the Tulsa Run is Oklahoma's oldest run, and 30 runners were recognized for completing every Tulsa Run. Approximately 8,000 participants took part this year.



Left to right: Kiera Cole and Lance Moerles.

## Street school

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Street School Thanksgiving . . . Nov. 20
- Thanksgiving Break . . . . . Nov. 21 – 23
- Winter Break. . . . . Dec. 21 – Jan. 2
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day . . . . Jan. 21
- President's Day . . . . . Feb. 18
- Spring Break . . . . . March 17 – 21
- THE OUTSIDERS Street Party . . . April 5
- Memorial Day . . . . . May 26
- Last Day of Classes . . . . . May 28

**Contact us: Street School, Inc. • 1135 South Yale Avenue • Tulsa Oklahoma 74112**  
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