

# The Voyage

Paul Cuffee School ▴ A Maritime Charter School for Providence Youth ▴ Summer 2017 ▴ Vol. 15 Issue 2

## Greetings from the Head of School

Christopher J. Haskins

**D**EAR FRIENDS OF PAUL CUFFEE SCHOOL: I had the pleasure this year of meeting a marine surveyor at our annual Grade Five Boat Design Competition. I learned that a marine surveyor inspects ships to assess and monitor their condition; a marine vessel has to maintain high standards because of the nature of its voyage.

A public charter school is similarly held to high standards and subject to inspection. Every five years the School applies for charter renewal. Recently we submitted our renewal application and hosted a visit by the RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; we will receive a report by the end of the school year. One of the questions central to this process is, "What does the School do to carry out

its mission?" Thanks to the hard work of our teachers, administrators, and support staff, we have a comprehensive and compelling answer.

Central to our mission is preparation for higher education, lifelong learning, and active citizenship. Over the past few years we have aligned our curriculum to the

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Mr. Haskins (far left) joins upperclass "mates" on the tall ship *Mystic*.

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

**Kehinde (Kenny) Oladosu**

*PCS Class of 2014*



**IT WAS JUST THREE YEARS AGO** that Kehinde (Kenny) Oladosu, a High Honors student, stood at the podium on graduation night and shared her thoughts on being a member of Paul Cuffee School's historic first graduating class. Now the "Voice of the Class of 2014" is finishing her junior year at URI, majoring in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Kenny's interest in URI began when, as an 11th grader, she participated in URI's summer Engineering Academy. Once at URI, she chose a pre-engineering program and was accepted to the College of Engineering in her second year.

Eager to gain practical experience, she interned the next summer at the RI Department of Transportation in the materials department. Now she looks forward to the possibility of a career in transportation. In a state whose thousands of miles of highway are constantly in need of upgrading and whose bridges are

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# Greetings from the Head of School

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Common Core State Standards, a more demanding set of expectations in mathematics and English language arts, focusing on readiness for college and careers. We are delivering carefully designed instruction in special education, helping to close the gap between students with learning disabilities and their non-disabled peers. We are fostering a culture of literacy and love of reading by focusing on vocabulary development and deepening comprehension. We have invested in technology to advance learning in and outside of the classroom.

These priorities are supported by high-quality professional develop-

ment and training for our talented teaching and support staff. And, as you can see from the contributions in this issue, we do all of this with a sense of fun and adventure.

Our charter renewal visit will identify what we are doing well and what we could do better. Just as a ship must be fit to navigate the sea, a public charter school must be in top shape to prepare our students to navigate life. I look forward to updating you on this report in the next issue of the *Voyage*.

In the meantime, whether on water or on land, I hope you have an enjoyable summer! 🌊



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

(continued from front page)

deemed “the worst in the nation,” her choice seems wise.

Coming to Cuffee in 9th grade laid the groundwork for Kenny’s college readiness. She cites Mr. Quirk’s homework packets and Ms. Thoma’s syllabi as tools that helped her stay on top of her work, balance her academic and social life, and prepare for the rigors of college. She notes that college offers no do-overs or extra credit; you have to take

charge of your own performance, which means, “You have to know where you are, grade-wise.”

College is not all work, though. This spring Kenny took time to tour the new African American Museum in Washington, DC. “I was inspired by the history represented in such an amazing setting. It was an eye-opener,” she says. “People of all races, cultures, and colors were there, experiencing the same inspiring view of history.”

As a firm believer that “your past leads to your future,” Kenny is taking the right steps in her education to pave the way to a bright one. 🌊

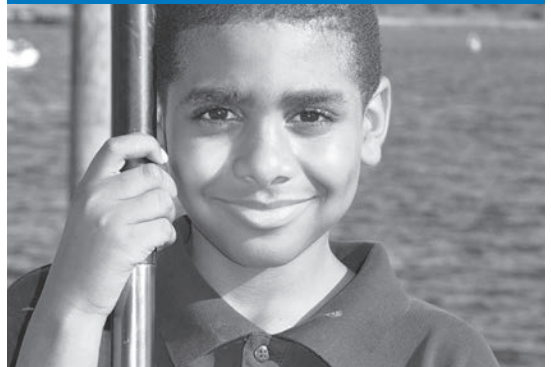


The David Burnham Maritime Fund, in honor of the late David Burnham, Founding President of the Board of Trustees and an avid sailor, awards fellowships to rising juniors and seniors for life-changing maritime experiences. This June, on the third anniversary of Mr. Burnham’s passing, students still remember his sincere concern for their education and welfare.

The endowment is just shy of its ambitious goal of \$250,000. Help us reach our goal by making a secure donation online today at <https://donations.paulcuffee.org/donate-now/>.



Thank You  
for a Year of Smooth Sailing



To each of you who contributed to the Annual Fund or the David Burnham Maritime Fund; who provided grants to enhance the educational experiences of our students; who volunteered your time and talents to enrich students’ learning; and who sang, read, baked, or rendered other invaluable services to our school, we are profoundly grateful. We hope we can count on you again next year.



# Middle Schoolers Build Confidence and Friendships on Thompson Island

by Leslie Brackett, Director of Wellness Program

**O**N A BRISK DAY IN MAY, the 8th grade class rose early to catch a 6:45 a.m. bus to the Boston Harbor Islands. Despite the unseasonably cold weather, the students all arrived on time and eager to start their adventure. They were headed to their middle school culminating field trip at Outward Bound's Educational Center on Thompson Island.

Part of the Boston Harbor Islands National Park system, Thompson Island is a 170-acre island approximately one mile offshore of Boston. It is one of the most ecologically diverse of the Harbor Islands, with a mixture of rolling hills, orchards, salt marshes, and wetlands. The Outward Bound Educational Center uses this natural space as a medium to teach challenge and discovery courses. This field trip was a chance for the 8th graders to celebrate their time together while furthering their leadership skills and connecting with nature.

On arriving in Boston, students boarded a small ferry to take the 25-minute ride to the island. The wind, water, and wake made the start to the day an exciting time. On the island, students spent the day hiking, exploring, and working in teams. Among the rolling hills and waterfront areas, the facilitators led groups of students through progressive teamwork exercises that gradually led to each group forming a cohesive and trusting unit. As the day went along, there were opportunities to further test these skills with a series of low-ropes challenge exercises.



8th graders Roma Taitwood and Gerson Menjivar examine bivalve shells indigenous to Thompson Island.

Each team had ample opportunities to explore the wetlands and coast of this beautiful nature preserve. Students found crabs in the tide pools, learned the importance of the coastal ecology, and even had time to skip rocks and contemplate the beauty of the shore. For many, this was one of the highlights of the trip.

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2017 graduates Anita Uzoamaka and Emely Cruz celebrate at June's graduation ceremony

## Congratulations, Class of 2017!

### PCS's class of 2017 was admitted to...

- |   |  |                                 |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| The University of Akron*                  | Keiser University*                     | Plymouth State University*      |
| Anna Maria College                        | Lasell College                         | Providence College              |
| University of Bridgeport*                 | Lyndon State College                   | Quinnipiac University*          |
| Clark University                          | Lynn University*                       | Rhode Island College            |
| Columbia College Chicago*                 | University of Maine at Presque Isle*   | University of Rhode Island      |
| Community College of Rhode Island         | University of Maine*                   | Roger Williams University       |
| Curry College                             | Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts* | Salve Regina University         |
| Dean College                              | University of Massachusetts Dartmouth* | University of Southern Maine*   |
| Framingham State University*              | Nazareth College*                      | Stonehill College               |
| Franklin Pierce University                | New England College                    | The New School - All Divisions* |
| Hofstra University*                       | New York Institute of Technology*      | Western New England University* |
| Iona College*                             | Newbury College*                       | Wheaton College, Massachusetts  |
| Johnson & Wales University (Denver)*      | Nichols College*                       | Wheelock College*               |
| Johnson & Wales University (North Miami)* | Northeastern University*               | Xavier University of Louisiana* |
| Johnson & Wales University (Providence)   | Pace University, New York*             |                                 |

*\*indicates college acceptances that are new for this year*

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## Thompson Island *(continued from prior page)*

As 8th grade student Yeniel Canales reflected, “As I was looking at the water, I realized how relaxed I felt. I realized that I should take more time to get outside. It can really help me.” Giving our students the opportunity to connect with the natural world provides them with an important resource. Not only can it further their ecology education, it can teach coping and life skills as well.



*8th Grade Advisor Patrick Nigro (far left) leads his group on a hike around the island.*

Paul Cuffee strongly encourages experiential education, especially in a maritime environment; this trip was a wonderful way to use these teaching methods for our 8th graders. The students improved their collaboration and problem-solving skills, had a chance to connect with nature, and came home with memories of an adventure with their classmates. As they prepare to leave middle school and enter high school, these students will have enhanced teamwork skills and an appreciation for the environment to carry into their future.

This maritime experience was funded by a grant from the Carter Family Trust. 📍

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