

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR



Hazelwood School District Counselor and Social Work Lead **Jazell Thomas** has been named the 2019-2020 St. Louis Suburban School Counselor Association Advocate of the Year. Thomas, a Hazelwood East High School graduate, has worked in the Hazelwood School District since 1998. As Social Work Lead, she has been instrumental in establishing training opportunities for district staff, serving on various committees, leading professional development, and involvement in numerous other initiatives.

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WHAT
WILL
POWER
THE
FUTURE?



NAME Jason Posely
DEGREE Physical Therapy

2017 CHS Alum

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Participation in Maryville's Multicultural Scholars program has increased by 54% over last year. Jason, a current Physical Therapy major, is just one of many students who will power the future.

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Healthcare Careers



Arie Bennett Patient Access Lead

Where do you work? I am the Patient Access Lead in Radiology at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

Where did you go to school? I graduated from Hazelwood East High School in St. Louis. I then

earned a Bachelor of Science in Banking and Finance from Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, North Carolina, and a Master of Health Care Management from Jones International University, Denver, Colorado.

What does a patient access lead do? My job is different from day to day. I could be in the radiology department in the morning, and then I cross over to the Emergency Room towards the evening or night. But the bulk of my responsibilities include registration, making sure that the front desk staff, along with myself, are registering patients correctly and in a timely manner.

Why did you choose this career? When my father's health started to decline and some of my own personal health issues happened, I was going to many medical appointments. I was in contact with a lot of different people with different roles and that is what made me decide upon pur-

What is your favorite part of the job you have? I enjoy interacting with different people and getting to meet people from all over the world that come into our hospital for care and services. My vacation list has grown since working here! I also love that I can be a listening ear to parents and patients when they come in. My coworker said, "You are like a Dr. Phil over there." LOL I have grown to know and learn about so many different medical conditions while working here and I can say that some of the children that walk through here are super heroes and they remind me on a daily basis to never give up on myself, even when I might want to.

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Chauncey Granger

was the focus of “Inspiration by Example,” a program celebrating the lives of St. Louis-area African-American trailblazers at the Missouri History Museum. He is the

principal of Hazelwood East High School and has more than 20 years of experience in education in various roles including truancy officer, special education teacher, adjunct professor at Lindenwood University, and assistant principal.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Blazing their own path

Teenage entrepreneurs look to inspire more young girls into starting their own businesses

By Charlotte Beard

In these latter years, more youth are coming on the scenes as entrepreneurs. Unlike school guidance counselors 20 to 30 years ago who were still only encouraging students to focus on obtaining a job in Corporate America, Aunya McElroy, Jury Elementary School counselor in the Hazelwood School District encourages youth to consider entrepreneurship early in life.

McElroy invited 18-year-old entrepreneur, Kaniya Slusher, a Ferguson-Florissant McCluer High School graduate and clothing design business owner, to facilitate her workshop for girls, "Design Me a Donut: An Entrepreneur Workshop." The workshop took place at Jury on Jan. 30.

Slusher, who hopes to facilitate the workshop at other schools, states that the workshop allows attendees to explore their passion and "niche." In addition, she incorporates some of her fashion design sketches into the workshop which allows the girls to have some hands-on training in that arena.

"Also, they get to design a donut," stated Slusher. "It is a subliminal message with the plain donut being them now and the topping (is) what I am installing into them (during the workshop) to be the best version of themselves."

In addition to an actual donut pastry that attendees are designing, Slusher shares her background and business knowledge with attendees which includes a Q and A.

"Their parents got to sit in as well," Slusher stated of the workshop at Jury Elementary. "After the workshop I did an evaluation sheet so I could get some data on how beneficial it is to young girls. The girls loved it. They wanted it to be for more days. It was a little sad seeing the girls ask me to come back the next day and knowing that it was a one-day event, it kind of urged me to want to get this out as much as possible so I can



Photo courtesy Hazelwood School District

(From left) Tamia Coleman-Hawkins stands next to Aunya McElroy, Jury Elementary School counselor and Kaniya Slusher.

do more days at these schools with these girls. Some girls come from homes where no one ever asks them what they want to do in their future, they've never heard of the things that I speak of with them, or the importance of entrepreneurship, or (how to) figure out their passion."

When asked about her first venture or what motivated her to become an entrepreneur, Slusher stated, "I never said, 'I want to be an entrepreneur,' because I saw other people doing it - I honestly didn't see anyone doing it. I just always wanted to make my own money. I used to work at flea mar-

kets selling CDs; I used to do a (variety of things). My first experience as an entrepreneur was doing my first fashion show. It was very successful, and it was an amazing event, so I just continued it. I continued to educate myself with sewing. Now I don't have to sew and can have someone do it for me and (I) make my designs. Starting off, I had to educate myself in the industry I was wanting to partake in."

Slusher shared that her first fashion show was at the age of 13, where she modeled

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clothes. Following her first show she began to design clothes. Though she doesn't include the experiments of her preteen years as part of her entrepreneurial track where she was selling "slushy" jars and doing bake sales, she states that those beginnings gave her knowledge for what she is doing now.

Slusher's inspiration for fashion comes from a family member. "I had a cousin that modeled; I always saw her in shows," stated Slusher. "So, I always wanted to model. When I was trying to make some money for the summer, I was just brainstorming ideas. In my mind it just popped up – a fashion event. When I did it, I found out that was something I couldn't live without doing. I researched all night and educated myself within the industry. I kept planning more shows and kept doing more fashion events. I went out and networked young and early and independently. And it led me to better opportunities along the years."

In addition to creating logos as residual income, Slusher uses her other passion for sculpting and enhancing eyebrows to fund her Varamel online fashion store (@varamelofficial on Instagram). She shared that her hate for the job she once had at McDonald's and finding it to not be enough to fund her fashion venture, led her to an opportunity to use her natural skill in a salon whose owner also taught her additional skills. Eventually she began to branch out from the salon to provide services independently, as well.

Slusher, who was recently interviewed on STL TV's City Corner, shared that long-term she would like to be involved in more speaking events, facilitate more 'Design Me a Donut' workshops, and collaborate with a global organization. In addition, she has hopes to obtain her own brow shop in her present community and incorporate her personal brand into luxury fashion shows.

The workshop at Jury also showcased 13-year-old Tamia Coleman-Hawkins, founder and CEO of Mia's Treats Delight. Coleman-Hawkins, seventh-grader at Hazelwood Northwest Middle School, has been operating her business since she was eight years old.

At the workshop she spoke to the attendees about being a young entrepreneur and girl boss.

"I started baking with my grandma when I was four," shared Coleman-Hawkins. "All my life my mom's been telling me to be my own boss when I (become) an adult. When I was in the third grade I took an economics class at a gifted school. After that class I told my mom that I didn't want to wait until I became an adult to start my business; I wanted to start it then."

Coleman-Hawkins' treats can be found featured on her Facebook and Instagram pages (@miastreatsdelight).

Coleman-Hawkins has the support of her mom to do the business from their home. The only stipulations for her running the business from home is that she cannot ship products and there is a limit on how much money she earns.

As a young entrepreneur, Coleman-Hawkins juggles school and management of her business.

"I usually only take orders over the weekend because of school," stated Coleman-Hawkins, "unless I'm out of school or on a break. I make extra batter if I have an event, or if I have a lot of orders, I make a lot of batter (on the weekend) so that I have it during the week in case someone does (place an) order. Then we can just put it in the oven and deliver it. During the week my mom puts a lot of cookies in the oven so that I can do my homework."

In addition to being her own boss, Coleman-Hawkins expressed that charitable causes are important to her. Currently she serves on the 2019-2020 Kid Board of Directors for KIDBOX (www.kidbox.com), a kid board that was also served by Naomi Wadler, the D.C. elementary student who became known for her speech at the March for Our Lives in 2018. KIDBOX is an online subscription clothing box of name brand apparel and accessories, hand selected by the KIDBOX team. For every \$98 KIDBOX that a patron keeps, the organization donates new clothing to children in need. It is stated that Coleman-Hawkins shared items to take home from KIDBOX with workshop attendees.



Photos courtesy Hazelwood School District

Top photo: Tamia Coleman-Hawkins presents at the "Design Me a Donut: An Entrepreneur Workshop" at Jury Elementary School.

Bottom photo: Jury Elementary School students attend the "Design Me a Donut: An Entrepreneur Workshop."

As Coleman-Hawkins grows Mia's Treats Delights, she would like to use the business to help end the fight on homelessness, as well as other charitable causes.

"Eventually I do want to get a brick-and-mortar (for Mia's Treats Delights). I want to have my cookies in stores."

In addition to Coleman-Hawkins' Facebook and Instagram pages, she can be followed on Twitter at @MiaTheKidBaker or reached by email at miastreatsdelights@gmail.com. In addition to Slusher's Instagram page, she can be followed on Twitter at @KaniyaSlusher.

COMMUNITY NEWS

HSD Social Work Lead named SLSSCA Advocate of the Year



Photo courtesy Hazelwood School District

(From left) HSD Superintendent Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart stands with Jazell Thomas and HSD Assistant Superintendent Matt Phillips.

Hazelwood School District Counselor and Social Work Lead Jazell Thomas has been named the 2019-2020 St. Louis Suburban School Counselor Association Advocate of the Year.

Thomas, a Hazelwood East High School graduate, has worked in the Hazelwood School District since 1998 when she began as an elementary counselor at Grannemann Elementary School.

As Social Work Lead, Thomas is responsible for overseeing the district's 94 school counsel-

ors, social workers, and home school communicators.

She has been instrumental in improving the scope of social work in the Hazelwood School District by establishing training opportunities for district staff, serving on various committees, leading professional development, and involvement in numerous other initiatives.

Thomas will be formally honored at the SLSSCA Awards Ceremony on Feb. 6.