

# Interstages E-Newsletter

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## New School Year Successfully Underway

On September 25th, Interstages officially opened its doors for another exciting school year! Although we are in our second semester of operation, this will be our first time running the program for the full length of the school year. The program opened for the first time in February of this year and ran until mid-June, when the students were released for summer recess. During the summer, Interstages took steps to build on the success of the pilot semester. The two most significant changes include the expansion of the program from four to five days a week and the addition of our first paid staff member, Rosemary Ndubuizu.

Rosemary, who fills the position of Program Coordinator, has been a tremendous asset to Interstages. As a Stanford graduate with a major in the Politics of Educational Reform with a minor in African and

African American Studies, she brings a great deal of relevant experience and an abundance of creative ideas to the position. As Program Coordinator, Rosemary is responsible for translating Interstages curriculum into daily lesson plans, community outreach, and managing the recruitment, training, and screening of volunteers and new staff members.

Hiring our first paid staff member could not have been possible without the financial support of several grants awarded to Interstages in the past month (see page 3). However, in addition to generous financial support, Interstages has equally benefited from key partnerships and in-kind services from other organizations.

So far, this school year is off to a great start! We have expanded the program to serve more girls, and we are looking forward to a highly successful year.

## Interstages Launches New & Improved Web Site



Thanks to the generous efforts of Mediastudio's design team, the Interstages website has been given an amazing face-lift! The new site, designed by volunteer Eve Bell-Simon, will increase public awareness and support for Interstages.

Mediastudio, Inc. is a local web development firm that specializes in developing brands and campaigns for other organizations and nonprofits. They have built over 100 websites for clients ranging from government agencies to small nonprofits.

Additionally, Mediastudio hosts a 24-hour Create-a-thon every year to assist local nonprofits without the manpower and funds to pay for communication services by providing graphic design, print and web layout, branding, and event marketing. Each year, Mediastudio receives hundreds of applications from nonprofits requesting help with marketing communication challenges. Out of those applicants, Interstages was one of only 11 nonprofits chosen to participate in CreateAThon 2006.

Interstages worked with Mediastudio to create a website that captured the vision and personality of our organization. Check it out at:

[www.interstages.org](http://www.interstages.org)

## Washington Times Recognizes Afterschool Program



Last month, the *Washington Times* featured Interstages in an article about partner Greater DC Cares. With 16,000 volunteers working with more than 400 nonprofit organizations, Greater DC Cares provides volunteers for capacity-building projects, particularly through *pro bono* consulting.

The article by Keyonna Summers highlights how Greater DC Cares' services impact Interstages' efficiency. It features a brief program description, interviews with students and staff, and several pictures of students on-site at Hillcrest Recreation Center. This *Washington Times* article is Interstages' first major press notice and represents an amazing opportunity to introduce our organization and mission to thousands of readers. To read the article, visit the *Washington Times* online at:

<http://www.washingtontimes.com>

## Interstages Director Featured As Guest Speaker

Noel Tieszen, the Executive/Program Director of Interstages, Inc., recently participated as a featured speaker at a panel discussion at the Foundation Center in Washington, DC. The panel, which included directors of 3 District nonprofits, discussed organizational lifecycles and other relevant issues for start-ups. As a recent graduate of the Strengthening Partner Initiatives (SPI) training program, Noel spoke about her challenges and suc-

cesses in starting Interstages along with her co-founder, Herb Scott. Noel advised the audience to emphasize building a solid organizational infrastructure from the beginning.

The Foundation Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the nonprofit sector by advancing knowledge about U.S. philanthropy and providing resources about the grant process.

## Yards for Youth Raises Money For Local Nonprofits

Interstages is proud to participate in the 2006-2007 Booz Allen Hamilton-Redskins Yards for Youth program. Participating nonprofits benefit from funds pledged for offensive yards gained by the Redskins during the 2006-2007 football season.

How can you help us reach our goal? Pledge a specific amount of money for each offensive yard gained during the 2006-2007 Washington Redskins season or make a one-time set contribution to support Interstages.

You can get involved at any point during the season by signing up at [www.yardsforyouth.org/interstages](http://www.yardsforyouth.org/interstages).

**Booz Allen Hamilton**

**YARDS FOR YOUTH**  
yardsforyouth.org

“One of the things that has helped Interstages thus far is our focus on a solid organizational infrastructure”

- Noel Tieszen  
Executive/Program Director

# Grants & Partnerships Help Strengthen Capacity

For any nonprofit, the process of securing grants and strategic partnerships with more established organizations is an essential and on-going task. For new organizations like Interstages, the primary challenge lies in persuading potential funders and partners to make an investment without the benefit of a lengthy track record. Early supporters play a vital role in inspiring future investment.

As announced in our July newsletter, Interstages received its first grants earlier this year from the World Bank's Community Connections Fund and the Spring Creek Foundation. With a successful pilot semester and these two investments under our belt, our list of partnerships, funders, and honors continues to grow.

In October, Interstages received four new grants from The Palmer Foundation, The Humanities Council of DC, The Philip L. Graham Fund, and the Escheated Estates Fund. Although each of these organizations is dedicated to their own specific causes, they all emphasize support for organizations

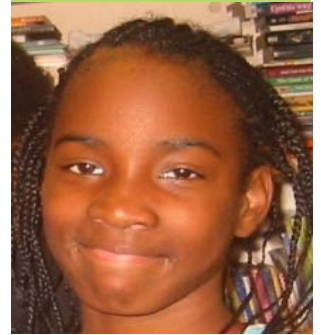
that address issues concerning education, youth, or low-income communities.

In addition to grants, Interstages has established partnerships with several local organizations in the past few months. The most important of these partnerships is Fair Chance, an organization committed to increasing the effectiveness of community-based programs serving low-income youth and families and DC. By providing capacity building services such as strategic planning, board development, and fiscal management, the Fair Chance partnership offers exciting opportunities to build sound organizational infrastructure and long-term sustainability.

Other key partners include DC Learns, a coalition formed to raise awareness about literacy issues in the district, Greater DC Cares, and the Capital Area Food Bank.

## Spotlight On:

### Shakiera



**Q:** What do you like best about Interstages?

**A:** I like Fridays because it's our fun day and we get to do group activities, like the one we did about why Black women are beautiful.

**Q:** What do you like to do for fun?

**A:** I like jumping rope, going to the gym with my mom, and running track.

## Interstages Wish List & Volunteer Opportunities

Want to help? There are many ways that you can support Interstages. Here are a few things on our wish list that you may be able to provide.

- Video camera
- Bean bag chairs
- Zipper binders
- Electric keyboard and other musical instruments
- Van

If you would like to join the Interstages family, we would love to have you! Contact us at [info@interstages.org](mailto:info@interstages.org) or (202) 824-0740 for more information on volunteering. We are currently seeking volunteers for the following positions:

- Tutors/Mentors
- Music Teachers
- Tech Support
- Administrative Assistant
- Guest Artists
- Bookkeeper



## *Our Mission*

*Interstages provides opportunities for early adolescents in low-income neighborhoods to discover talents, develop and strengthen skills, and heighten self-awareness, setting the stage for a successful transition into young adulthood.*

### **Exclusive focus on early adolescence**

Interstages specifically supports 6<sup>th</sup>-, 7<sup>th</sup>-, and 8<sup>th</sup>-graders as they navigate this challenging stage and make decisions that can affect the rest of their lives.

### **Academic personalization**

Interstages not only helps each student create and implement detailed academic plans but also monitors and supports student progress toward personalized goals.

### **Connecting to history through arts**

At Interstages, students study the arts in historical and cultural context, so they begin to connect to history and view arts as both social indicators and tools for social change.

## **Introducing...Our Newest Board Members**

### **Bashar Mardam-Bey**

As Vice President of Operations at MarketBridge, Bashar brings practical business sense and much-needed marketing experience to Interstages' executive team. MarketBridge is a local firm that specializes in designing, building, and managing high-growth sales and marketing channels for Fortune 500 companies. During his ten years of experience working for the company, Bashar earned an impressive track record of client work and operational excellence.

Prior to joining MarketBridge, Bashar worked for CNN America and Smith Barney. He holds a BSFS at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and is fluent in three languages.

### **Neonu S. Jewell**

Neonu is an associate in the International Trade and Customs Group at Thompson Hine LLP. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Neonu spent several years with a Fortune 500 company, focusing on foreign and domestic taxation and corporate finance. She holds a B.S. and M.B.A from Florida A&M University and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.