



AIM HIGHLIGHTS

Aim High Achiever Heads to the White House!



Aim High Alumni and TA Rodrick Brown has been selected to attend Michelle Obama's "Beating the Odds" summit on Monday, July 18th. The summit aims to bring together college-bound students from all walks of life so they can focus on expanding educational resources for all students. Rodrick was nominated by Big Brothers Big Sisters. He is one of 140 students nationwide who will attend the summit, and one of only two Missourians chosen.

Rodrick is excited to travel to D.C. as this will be his first plane trip and his first time traveling outside of Missouri and Illinois. He is especially looking forward to his opportunity to hear Michelle Obama's story and for his chance to ask her a question.

He said he is familiar with her speaking about the struggle of being "black and brilliant" and he wants to ask her how that struggle has shaped the person she has become.

Rodrck is no stranger to success himself as he is already an accomplished poet. He credits Aim High with helping him begin his journey as a writer. "Aim High helped grow my confidence in my writing skills and public speaking. Without Aim High I never would have chosen to pursue writing because I never would have gained the confidence from Aim High over these past eight years." He says eight years because Rodrick spent four years in the program as a student and the last four years he has come back each summer as a teaching assistant. This fall he will continue to pursue his passion for writing at Florissant Valley Community College in their Journalism and Mass Communications program. After he earns his associate degree, he plans to transfer to a four year university.

Congratulations Rodrick and we cannot wait to hear all about your trip!

Teacher Spotlights!



Ms. Rebecca Ford is a 7th grade English teacher at the Villa site. During the school year, she works at Crossroads College Prep. This is her third year as an Aim High teacher.

What is your favorite part of teaching at Aim High?

The chance to work with middle schoolers. It is really fun to get to know the kids.

How has teaching for Aim High impacted your life?

Working at Aim High has helped me to think about the ways that each student's situation and background influences how they learn. Each student has dreams and it helps as a teacher to know about their goals.

What makes the Aim High program so special?

Definitely the students. There is also a great sense of community among the teachers. The TAs also put in a lot of work to make the summer special.

Why do you come back to teach each summer?

Good question. I feel like I get to help kids change the way they see themselves as learners which is really important work.



Dr. Kemba Metropoulos is an 8th grade English teacher at the Priory site and has been with Aim High since 2008. During school year, she teaches English at Parkway Central Senior High School.

What is your favorite part of teaching at Aim High?

There is nothing better than seeing my students come back every summer and on Saturday sessions. I love hearing about how their school year is going, talking about their families and watching them grow up into wonderful people.

How has teaching for Aim High impacted your life?

I've met so many wonderful people through Aim High and have had such meaningful experiences. Aim High challenges me to try to be better. I want to be the best teacher I can be. My hope is that my students' experience in my class challenges them to learn and grow as a person while having fun in the process. Each year I think about how I could improve the experience my kids have in my room or in their elective. The program encourages creativity in the classroom which only enriches our experience. Never settling is the Aim High way, and is also my motto.

What makes the Aim High program so special?

The students, staff, teachers' assistants, and donors make Aim High special. We all want the same thing, to make a positive impact on our St. Louis community today and in the future. The fact that we focus on kids in middle school is special to me as those are critical but challenging years for our kids. If we can encourage them to stay positive and think about their future at this time in their lives, that is quite an accomplishment. Our focus on the love learning and character makes the program unique as well.

Why do you come back to teach each summer?

I love the moment when the light bulbs go off for my kids. I'm overjoyed when they tell me about how they are ahead of the curve, because we prepared them for the next grade level. The best reason to come back each summer is to watch the kids become more confident, more excited about school, and to see how they have grown over the school year. When I see former Aim High students graduating from high school or college, volunteering, working, or just living their dreams, I know I want to be part of that experience for some one else and help facilitate that for another Aim High kid.



Ms. Stephanie Oteng is an 8th grade math teacher at the Burroughs site and has taught for the Aim High program for 10 years. During the school year, she is a math specialist for 4th-6th grade at City Academy.

What is your favorite part of teaching at Aim High?

I like that I can be creative with the curriculum. It allows me to teach in a way that's unusual, where I can go with the flow and not be confined.

How has teaching for Aim High impacted your life?

It has allowed me to see society from a different lens beyond my personal experience. It has shown me that inside we're all the same and have the common desire to be accepted for who we are as human beings.

What makes the Aim High program so special?

I love the co-site directors. The Aim High leadership cares about the mission and vision of the program and they remember that children are children and they give all of them a fair chance. They want children to see the possibilities that life has to offer. The Aim High program is a great segue for what is possible and achievable and helps students to not get discouraged when challenges come their way and it does so in a safe and nurturing environment.

Why do you come back to teach each summer?

We have wonderful, bright, energetic, engaging, charismatic, and fun-loving children. I feel like working here is a gift for me because when I see these kids at Aim High it makes me feel good about the potential of the future of our children in our society.

July 14th is Summer Learning Day in St. Louis!



We are thrilled to announce that this **Thursday, July 14th is Summer Learning Day in St. Louis!** We requested recognition of this special day from the office of Mayor Francis Slay and he agreed that summer learning is important and should be celebrated!

Save the Date - Friends and Family Days



Please visit us this summer for Friends and Family Day!

St. Louis Priory School July 19th 9am-10am

John Burroughs School July 19th 11am-12pm

Villa Duchesne School July 20th 10am-11am

Connect with an Aim High Achiever and learn more about the impact of Aim High!