

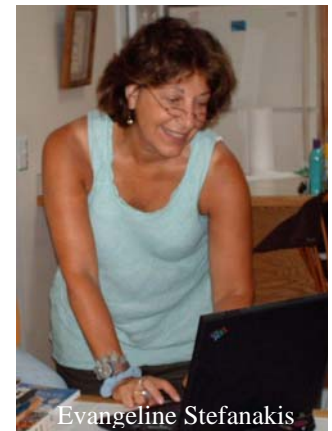
Day two of the retreat featured two presentations. The first presentation, an introduction to Universal Design for Learning and the use of Assistive Technology, was conducted by Evangeline Stefanakis from the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston. The day's second presentation was given by Rosa Figueroa, a hearing officer from the Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education Appeals. (BSEA) Her presentation focused on organization and planning as advocacy strategies for families who must represent themselves without the benefit of an attorney (pro se) in the special education appeals process.



On the final day of the retreat, Urban PRIDE executive director, Charlotte "Dee" Spinkston facilitated a web-based video conference and wrap-up discussion on "Next Steps in Special Education Parent and Community Support". The video-conference was co-facilitated via webcam with Roger Holt from Parents Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK) in Billings, Montana. Roger talked about how parents can use the no/low cost technology and the internet to participate in real time special education training sponsored by PLUK as well as other web-sites. We wrapped up with a discussion about changes in the Federal special education law (IDEA 2004). We discussed activities, workshops, parent support and community organizing activities that can be undertaken over the next school year. The purpose of these activities would be to inform and support parent and community engagement in the education of all students, and particularly students with IEP's in Boston Public Schools. We finished up the retreat with lunch, after which the parents headed home on the Martha's Vineyard ferry.

The Youth Retreat

Following the Parent Leadership Retreat, Urban PRIDE held its inaugural Youth Leadership Retreat from August 6-9, 2006. On Sunday evening, after a long day of travel, youth participants were treated to a seafood dinner. The main dish was lobster, a culinary first for some of the participants. The overall tone and pace of the youth retreat was laid back, with a mixed agenda that included work and play during the day, and relaxed evenings with group games, late night videos and even Salsa dancing, led by one of the youth participants. The main objectives of the youth retreat was to support the youth participants to consider their short and longer term goals, and to explore and better understand themselves as learners and young adults, and begin to document these learnings in the form of a digital portfolio. A digital portfolio is a multi-media, electronic presentation in which each students' strengths, experiences, preferences, personal reflections, goals and dreams are showcased in a creative and unique manner. Each portfolio is designed by the student him/herself, and will incorporate personal profiles, inventories, images, self-portraits, audio and video clips. The portfolio building process will be ongoing, and serve several purposes, including to inform and guide the IEP and transition planning process, and to support youth to be more active and informed participants as members of their own IEP teams. The digital portfolio can also be used as a





Carlos and Shannon

tool for students who are applying to colleges and jobs, as a supplement to the traditional school transcripts and résumé.

Day one of the youth retreat, we traveled “up island” to the town of Aquinnah. There, Evangline Stefanakis, joined us once again, and, supported by Urban PRIDE staff, youth participants began creating the personal profile of their own digital portfolio. The personal profile is intended to communicate not only a student’s accomplishments, but also who he/she is as an individual, family and community member. The energy, focus, and level of engagement among the youth was remarkable (even on very few hours of sleep!). Each worked in their own way and pace to personalize a profile for their digital portfolios.

On Tuesday, Dee led a training for the participants on how to use Inspiration, a software program that helps students to plan, research and complete projects successfully. With integrated diagrams and outlines, they create graphic organizers and expand topics into writing. This encourages learning in multiple modes, which in turn helps students gain a better understanding of concepts and knowledge taught.

In the afternoon, we enjoyed lunch and free time in the town of Oak Bluffs, followed by pizza & movie night. On Wednesday morning, we wrapped up the retreat by reflecting together as a group what we learned and how we would use the knowledge we had gained. After we had tidied up the house, we made our way back to the mainland by ferry.



A morning and afternoon of great work was rewarded when we spent the rest of the day enjoying the perfect weather and pristine beaches of Martha’s Vineyard at Aquinnah.

The New Frontier Youth with intellectual disabilities have not had many chances to go to college. This is changing as individuals across the country begin to create opportunities for these youth to reap the benefits of postsecondary education. This website will provide information and links to anyone interested in finding out more about the possibilities. The site is divided into sections for [students](#), [family members](#), and [professionals](#) and features the following:

[Searchable database](#) of postsecondary education programs that support youth with intellectual disabilities, designed to allow individuals to submit information about additional postsecondary education programs.

[Middlesex Community College](#), MASSACHUSETTS

Transition Program - Disability Support Services

[Cape Cod Community College](#), MASSACHUSETTS

Project Forward

[Lesley University](#), MASSACHUSETTS

Threshold Program

[Berkshire Hills Music Academy](#), MASSACHUSETTS

Transition Program

[Quinsigamond Community College](#), MASSACHUSETTS

Community Opportunity Program, South High Community School

[Becker College](#), MASSACHUSETTS

[Massasoit Community College](#), MASSACHUSETTS

Latch Program

Web Resources

www.ThinkCollege.net

www.transitiontocollege.net

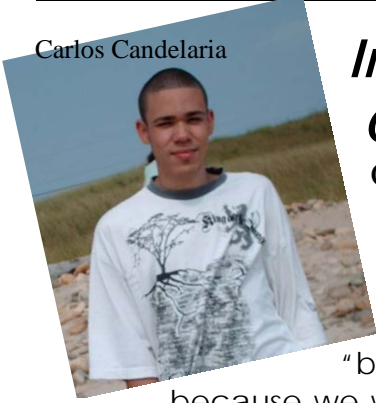
www.education.umd.edu/oco

www.transitioncoalition.org

www.STEPS-Forward.org

www.heath.gwu.edu

Carlos Candelaria



Interview with the "Most Chillin'"

Carlos Candelaria

Conducted by Shannon Batten

Carlos attended the Urban PRIDE's Urban Advocates Youth Leadership Retreat in Martha's Vineyard. At the end of the retreat, when we were giving out awards to all the participants, Carlos won the award for "bein' the most chillin'" of all the participants. We gave him that award because we were impressed by the ease with which he made friends with the other participants, none of whom he'd known before, and we also appreciated how willing he was to try out new and different things. Here he shares a little with us about his experience on Martha's Vineyard.

S: "Carlos, could you tell us a little about yourself, like where are you from, and where do you live?"

C: "I'm from Boston, I was born here at the Boston Children's Hospital. When I was younger, I lived on West Concord St., now I live in the Villa Victoria neighborhood."

S: "Where do you go to school and what grade are you in?"

C: "Right now, I go to Charlestown High, and I'm in the eleventh grade."

S: "What is your favorite hobby?"

C: "I love to play video games, especially ones about cars and racing."

S: "Do you have a favorite car?"

C: "The Nissan Skyline is pretty cool, but they don't have those in America. It's a Japanese sports car. If I had a lotta money, I'd go to Japan and buy one, bring it back to Boston."

S: "Do you have any particular goals for the future?"

C: "First I'd like to get my driver's license, but my long term goals are to learn how to work on cars, so I can be a mechanic, and maybe to learn how to design video games."

S: "That sounds good. Now let's talk about the retreat. What did you think about it before you came? Did you have any ideas about how it would be?"

C: "Mainly I was curious to see how it would be. I didn't really know what to expect."

S: "Did you have a good time?"

C: "Yeah, sure."

S: "What did you like the most?"

C: "Mostly, I liked exploring new places. I'd never been to Martha's Vineyard before. It's a very nice place. The town of Oak Bluffs was fun. It had a lotta cool stores, pretty girls, and a great video game arcade."

S: "What did you learn at the retreat?"

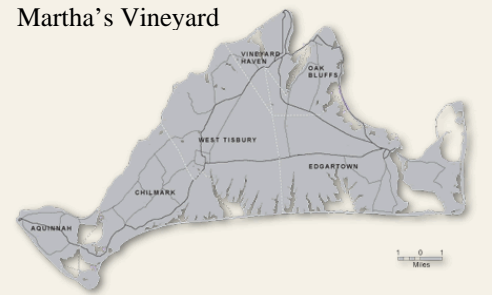
C: "I learned that Martha's Vineyard is bigger than I thought, but not that big. When we were playing that game 'Two Truths and a Lie' I also learned that Dee sang on TV. That's pretty surprising."

S: "Did you learn anything at the retreat that you can use in school?"

C: "The Digital Portfolio was pretty helpful, doin' that helped me to think about my goals in life, what I want to learn in school."

S: "Thank you Carlos for your input."

Martha's Vineyard



Announcements and Events

~Dudley Library Grant ~

Urban Pride has received a grant from the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Fund to do monthly training sessions at the Dudley Library in Roxbury. For more info call 617-338-4276.

Training Dates ~

- **Oct. 12**, Thursday, 5:30-7:30pm: Changes in the Special Education Law: What Parents Need to Know
- **Oct. 28**, Saturday, 10:00am-1:00pm: C-PASS Consumer Forum
- **Nov. 16**, Thursday, 5:30-7:30pm: Understanding Your Child's IEP
- **Dec. 9**, Saturday, 10:00am-1:00pm TBA
- **Jan. 11**, Thursday, 5:30-7:30pm Topic TBA
- **Feb. 8**, Thursday, 5:30-7:30pm Topic TBA
- **Mar. 10**, Saturday, 10:00am-1:00pm TBA
- **Apr. 26**, Thursday, 5:30-7:30pm Topic TBA
- **May 17**, Thursday, 5:30-7:30pm Topic TBA
- **June 9**, Saturday, 10:00am-1:00pm TBA

The mission of the Fellowes Athenaeum Trust Fund is to support the role of the Dudley Branch Library to provide a variety of literary services and learning experiences for the Roxbury community. The vision for the Dudley Branch is to see it enlivened by a wide array of activities for library visitors: discussion groups, resource workshops, exposure to higher education, and learning in the arts. In keeping with the tradition of the Athenaeum as 'a literary association for the promotion of learning', the goal is to strengthen the Dudley Branch as a source of information, activities, and interactive learning experiences. The Fellowes Athenaeum Trust engages in community partnerships that innovatively address the pressing needs of Roxbury's children, youth, and families, and is proud to support Urban PRIDE in its mission to empower and inform youth and families to achieve their highest potential for learning and leading productive lives.

C-Pass Consumer Forum

Hosted by the NAACP at Dudley Library



Saturday, October 28, 10:00am-1:00pm

The C-Pass forum is an opportunity for elders and people with disabilities (or their family members) to voice their opinion about Massachusetts' personal assistance services and support systems. This includes the services offered not only by state agencies, such as DMR, but also any organization that serves the needs of the elderly and disabled. Consumers are encouraged to give feedback about their experiences with these agencies at the forum. The intent of the forum is to affect changes to improve services based on the feedback of consumers. MASS C-PASS is designed to ensure that elders and people with disabilities succeed at community living. These statewide forums specifically target traditionally un- and under- served racial, cultural, ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004 Web Site (Part B)

In August 2006, the U.S. Dept. of Education released Part B regulations of the 2004 reauthorization of *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B. A website has been created: <http://idea.ed.gov>, to provide a "one-stop shop" for information about *IDEA* and its regulations. The website provides searchable versions of the regulations, as well as other laws, such as the *No Child Left Behind Act* and the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*. The site also includes information on several other topics and a variety of other information sources, including a "Q-and-A Corner" for questions to be submitted.

~ Call in Conference and Web-Based Trainings ~

The "Parents, Let's Unite for Kids!" (PLUK) provides ongoing free web-based training sessions on various issues in real time via the free internet technology Skype as well as conference call in trainings via telephone on a toll free number. Below are listed some of the upcoming conference call trainings and web-based Skype videoconference trainings. To register for the PLUK sessions, call Erin, Sandy, or Bobbie to at 406/255-0540. Or you can email Erin ecartwright@pluk.org, Sandy staylor@pluk.org or Bobbie bthurston@pluk.org. You will be given a toll free phone number and an access code for conference calls. Materials can be downloaded from the website www.pluk.org. To set up a Skype account for the videoconference, go to www.skype.com.



October 13 & November 13, 2006

How to Improve Parent-School Relationships - Conference Call Training

Educators are From Mars. Parents are From Venus.

Date: October 13 (repeated Nov 13)

Time: 10-11:30 am EST

Cost: *Free

Location: PLUK office or by phone

Who Should Attend: Anyone interested in learning about building positive working relationships.



November 28, 2006

Special Education Basics for Parents - Conference Call Training

Resources will include: books, videos, websites, and more!

Date: November 28, 2006

Time: 10:00-11:45 am EST

Cost: *Free

Location: PLUK office or by phone

Who Should Attend: Anyone interested in learning about the Special Education process.



October 11, 2006

YOU ARE INVITED TO AN ONLINE EVENT

WestEd's SchoolsMovingUp Web site will feature another free Online Event, "Using Flexible Technology to Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners," on Wednesday, October 11 from 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

Making the general curriculum accessible to all students is an important aspect of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). During this interactive presentation the presenters will introduce a Web site, Technology to Support Diverse Learners, to show how some existing technology resources already available at most schools — talking text, Web resources, graphic organizers, and word processors — can be used to help give students access to the curriculum as well as to help differentiate instruction. The presentation will include examples from schools and districts using standard technology to tailor instruction for diverse students.

See the Online Events page on SchoolsMovingUp for further information, including specific topics to be addressed by this event, at <http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/onlineevents>.



Check Out Our New Web-Site!

On Monday, October 16, Urban PRIDE will officially launch its new and improved web-site- www.urbanpride.org. The website will include updated information on scheduled trainings and other events and other parent and community support activities, updates on the special education laws and research based practices in special education, information on Boston Public Schools, and leadership opportunities for both families and youth in special education.

You will also be able to send requests for information to info@urbanpride.org. We hope you will visit our website on its launch day, Monday, October 16th, 2006 and come back often for updated information.

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