

Views from New Heights



A collection
of life
stories from
New
Heights
participants

Young
parents share
their
challenges
and successes
-- in the
classroom
and at home.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



DC | DEPARTMENT of
HUMAN SERVICES

New Heights Program

From daycare to doctor’s appointments, new parents—of all socio-economic backgrounds, races, ages, and ethnicities—face challenges every day. For expectant and parenting students, these challenges can be especially overwhelming.

Expectant and parenting students have the added responsibility of providing for their children while juggling school, preparing for college or careers, and mapping out a plan for their future. The New Heights program supports them and their families to reach these goals.

13 Public High Schools Host New Heights Program

Anacostia High School	Ballou High School	Ballou STAY
Cardozo Education Campus	Columbia Heights Education Campus	Coolidge High School
Dunbar High School	Luke C.Moore High School	Roosevelt High School
Roosevelt STAY	Washington Met. High School	Wilson High School
	Woodson High School	

Students enrolled in the New Heights program learn to juggle the many tasks associated with being a parent and staying on track to finish high school. They find resources for childcare, health care, housing and job training, and attend workshops that provide information and guidance on prenatal care, parenting tips, financial guidance, and advice on healthy love and family relationships.

Offers Support and Hope

Program Participants Share their Stories

Jewel -- Dunbar High School

Jewel became a victim of human trafficking at age 14. After a night of abuse by her pimp, she made a daring escape knowing that if caught, she would be killed. She got away with the help of a metro bus driver who allowed her on the bus without paying. Jewel then reported her story to the police and helped prosecute and convict her pimp. Fearing for her safety, Jewel was sent away to live with relatives in another country. In that country, she faced more abuse and ridicule as word spread that she was “sexually active.” She was taken advantage of by men she was supposed to trust. Jewel returned home to complete her senior year of high school. She became pregnant and promptly joined the New Heights

program. At New Heights, she gained support, friends, and information that helped build her confidence. She was connected to various community-based organizations and received more intensive support through their programs. Jewel graduated from high school in June and will begin at the University of the District of Columbia in January 2014.



****Note: Students' names have been changed.***

Latasha — Roosevelt High School

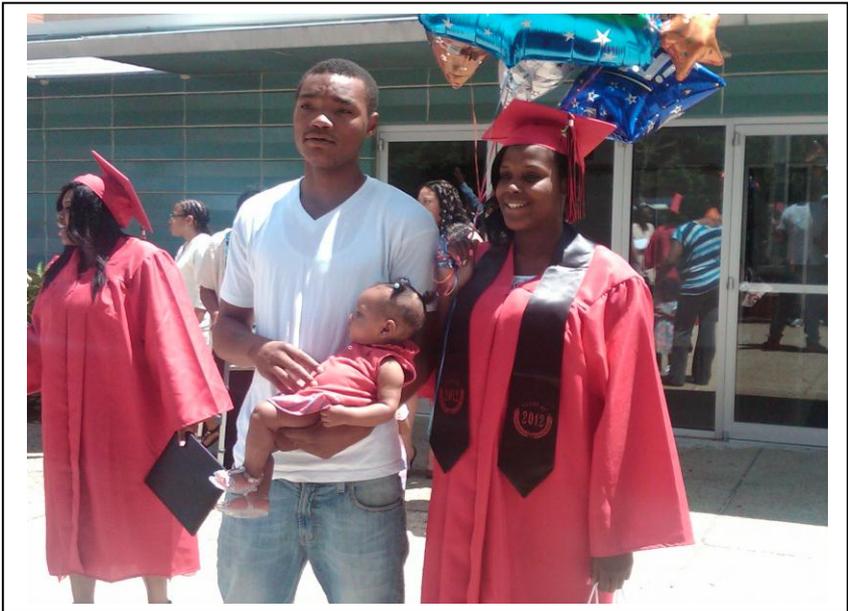
When Latasha was 16 years old she found out she was pregnant. She was very uncertain about her life and her future, but she was determined to have her baby. Over a period of time, she developed a trusting relationship with the school's New Heights coordinator, who provided her with support and resources when she faced the inevitable challenges of balancing life as a teen mom and a student. Making matters more complicated, Latasha battled postpartum depression during the months following her baby's birth. With the support and guidance of New Heights staff and other supporters, she was able to work through this difficult time. In June 2013, Latasha became the first person in her immediate family to graduate from high school.



**Nick and Nora, —
Cardozo EC**

Nora found out she was pregnant prior to her junior year. When she and the child's father, Nick, returned to school in September, they enrolled in New Heights. During the lunch hour parenting workshops, Nick, the only guy in the room, would tune everyone out. Eventually, he started to pay attention; he learned how to be a good parent and how to raise a baby in a good, safe environment. From then on they attended the New

Heights lunch hour every single day. When Nora was out of school on maternity leave, Nick brought home her schoolwork and told her what was discussed in New Heights that day. Being a father, he says, gave him a new sense of focus. When Nora returned to school, both she and Nick continued in the program and have been described as the New Heights "stars." In June, Nick was able to keep his promise to his father as he and Nora graduated from Cardozo and will be attending UDC in the fall.



Tina — Anacostia High School

Tina, a 16 year-old high school junior, found out she was expecting in April 2013. Her guidance counselor suggested she join the New Heights program to help her continue her education and graduate on time. Soon after, Tina was encouraged by the New Heights coordinator to participate in an all-day conference for expecting and parenting teens. The conference was offered by one of the many community-based organizations that provide resources and services to New Heights teen parents. The next day, Tina sent her New Heights coordinator an email in which she shared that the conference had changed her life.

"I had an excellent time at the Hope Conference," she wrote. "It was such an honor to be there and a blessing as well...I'm now really excited about pursuing college and I look forward to coming to all that New Heights has to offer."

Anita — Wilson High School

Anita joined New Heights in the beginning of 2013. Previously, she struggled in school and her grade point average was well under a 2.0. Her relationship with the father of her child was very complicated and she was also experiencing rocky relationships at home with her mother and sisters. Anita started attending New Heights' workshops and got to know other students participating in the program. Soon, Anita's grades began to improve; she started thinking seriously about her class work, and asked for help to advocate for herself with teachers. After awhile, she was able to show her teachers that she was making an effort to change. Anita's grades have improved and she now plans to attend UDC in the fall. Anita was especially grateful to New Heights when she was able to "purchase" baby items and equipment with the Baby Bonus Bucks she earned through the program.

About the New Heights Program

- The New Heights program is a school-based initiative that engages expectant and parenting students in 13 public high schools in the District of Columbia.
- The program seeks to improve the attendance and graduation rates of these students, prepare them for college or careers, and prevent sub-sequent pregnancies.
- Students participating in New Heights work as partners with staff members to develop strengths-based solutions to the challenges confronting them and their children. Primary program components include case management and educational workshops.
- New Heights also provides assistance with securing services such as childcare vouchers, WIC, housing, TANF, employment, job training opportunities, college/university admissions and more.

Funding for New Heights

The two original locations for the New Heights program in DC schools are funded by TANF through the DC Department of Human Services.