

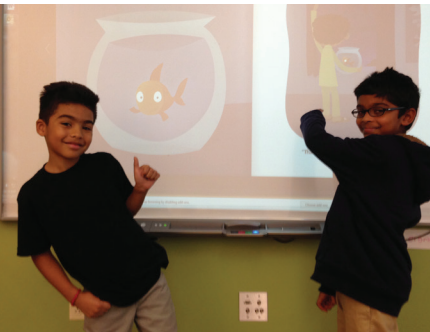
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A MONTHLY UPDATE BY THE CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL

November 2015

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Executive Director's Message

Bruce E. Douglas, Ph.D.

We Love Children
Adapted from a poem by Ina J. Hughes

*We love children
who put chocolate fingers everywhere,
who like to be tickled,
who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,
who sneak popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who can never find their shoes.*

*And we love those
who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire fences,
who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers,
who never had a popsicle or a math workbook,
who are born in places where we wouldn't dare go,
who never go to the circus,
who live in an X-rated world.*

*We love children
who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
who sleep with the cat and bury their goldfish,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,
who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,
who slurp their soup.*

*And we love those who never get dessert,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind them,
those we never give up on,
and those who never get a second chance,
those we smother with hugs,
and those who will grab the hand of anybody
kind enough to offer it.*

We love all of Connecticut's children.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Bruce Douglas!

CREC Executive Director Bruce E. Douglas will retire on December 31 after devoting 46 years to improving Connecticut's educational system.

Bruce has led CREC since 2001. He began his career as a social sciences and history teacher for Bloomfield Public Schools and served as Suffield's superintendent before arriving at CREC in 1998 as assistant executive director.

Bruce is known for encouraging innovative ideas and for his strong stance on the need for desegregation and equity in education. He is widely credited with molding CREC into the non-profit agency that you know today.

“Memories of our lives, of our works and our deeds will continue in others.”

— Rosa Parks

Upon retirement, Bruce has accepted a position with an international education organization. His successor will be Cheshire Superintendent Greg J. Florio.

As Rosa Parks once said, “Memories of our lives, of our works and our deeds will continue in others.” Bruce has certainly made an impact on CREC's many employees, and they will continue to work together to improve the quality of public education for all learners, building on what Bruce accomplished in his years as executive director.

Because of his long tenure at CREC, almost everyone has a memory of Bruce, including CREC Deputy Executive Director Sandy Cruz-Serrano.

“Like most of us, Bruce loves Friday mornings!” she said. “Not because it's the end of the week, but because he gets to sit with us in Cabinet and make us tell him ‘good stories’ that have happened during the course of the week or will happen during the upcoming weekend. The Cabinet works hard to come up with stories, often sharing stories about our families, hobbies, articles we've read, or movies we've seen. He doesn't care what kind of story we tell—as long as it's a good one! He is adamant that Cabinet will not begin until good stories are shared. It makes for better Cabinet meetings for sure because, usually, much laughter is involved. Of course, he laughs the hardest and that makes it all worthwhile.”

CREC Director of Human Resources Regina Terrell's favorite memories also involves storytelling.

“Some of my favorite memories of Bruce are when we would talk about historical facts,” she said. “A mention of one topic would end in him sharing background on a moment in history and how it impacts the world today, or just thought-provoking discussions on how times have changed. Before long, he would bring me a book to read, or give me my laugh for the week! It is these times that allowed me to appreciate his passion for history, for education, and they helped to transcend our friendship from Dr. Douglas, executive director, and Regina Terrell, director of human resources, to just Bruce and Regina.”

For Eric Crawford, CREC's managing director of student and family relations, the memories are intensely personal.

“I was experiencing some personal issues that made me think about changing jobs and not working with families who are in need. We talked for about an hour about how he was raised and how he overcame some very difficult times in his



life. He explained why his leadership and advocacy skills are what they are. His style is that of urgency, and he explained that we don't have another second to waste when it comes to the best interest of kids. He talked about all the time that people who are responsible for children's well-being waste on politics and self-promotion. Bruce also mentioned guys who try to do the most for their family and children are not the most popular people in the world, and he stated that we need more people who really care about what is actually going on in our communities. If I gave up, who was up next?”

Under Bruce's leadership, CREC has grown to include more than 2,000 employees and more than 8,000 magnet school students, and it offers more than 120 programs and services.

In addition, the agency manages 40 facilities, is responsible for a \$498 million budget, and is consistently named one of Connecticut's top places to work.

District and School News

Students, Teachers Team Up for Marine Program

The 25th Annual Red Ribbon Rally was held on the town green last week, giving dozens of Southington students an opportunity to pledge their commitment to clean and sober living.

More than 300 residents crowded downtown to show their support for the pledge, which was made by 19 student groups on Wednesday evening.

Hosted by Trish Kennifeck, the 25th annual event featured speeches by Southington High School (SHS) principal Brian Stranieri, Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Brian Goralski, and Superintendent of Southington Public Schools Timothy Connellan.

"The commitment to a healthy lifestyle is one that goes beyond the day to day," said Connellan, "It's something you are committed to and you grow with."

The superintendent encouraged students to acknowledge the large gathering of



Photo credit: The Plainville Citizen

community members, and to lean on their support whenever necessary.

Joining to light candles in support of each students' pledge were members of the Town Council and BOE, along with State Representative David Zoni (D-Conn.)

"This whole community is standing with all these kids from different schools," said Town Councilor Victoria Triano of the middle

school and high school students who joined in the ceremony.

To honor national Red Ribbon month, the 19 groups were called forward to make their commitments to a drug free community.

"We're doing something very important here tonight," said Triano, "we're taking a personal stand."

Several athletic groups, including the SHS football team, baseball team, and cheerleading team joined middle school athletes from the DePaolo Middle School volleyball and soccer teams and the Kennedy Middle School cheerleaders.

Representing other student organizations were the Southington Key Club, the Valentin Karate Club, the SHS LGBT organization, and several other groups.

Source—The Plainville Citizen article published by Taylor Hartz and John Goralski on November 3, 2015

Plantsville School Pageant Winner Collects Toys for Children's Hospital

The shoppers at Stop and Shop in Southington and Walmart in Bristol surprised—in a good way—Kylie Watson.

Kylie, 6, is the reigning 2015 National American Miss Southern New England Princess. And the first grader at Plantsville Elementary School recently held a toy drive to benefit the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Kylie stood outside both Walmart and Stop and Shop, giving shoppers the opportunity to donate a toy for the children at CCMC or donate money so she could buy a toy for the children at CCMC.

When Kylie was done, she said she was surprised at how generous people were toward the children in the hospital. She said at Walmart—where people went and bought toys for her—her shopping cart was overflowing. At Stop and Shop,

people donated more cash toward the cause.

In the end, Kylie said she collected hundreds of toys and more than \$600 to buy yet more toys.

Cathy Watson, Kylie's mother, said she and her daughter asked for a wish list of toys that the children wanted. And the cash they collected in Bristol and Southington went toward helping CCMC fulfill those wishes.

Kylie said the hospital was important to her because it had taken care of her brother and she liked what the hospital did for him. She said she felt the hospital does a good job.

This was the first time Kylie had tried a toy collection, said Cathy Watson. And both mother and daughter were taken aback by how much they collected.



Photo credit: The Southington Observer / Kylie Watson displays the gifts collected during a recent toy drive to benefit the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

"People are generous when you say it's for the children's hospital," said Cathy Watson, who thanked the family, friends, and strangers who helped make the drive a success.

Source—The Southington Observer article published by Mike Chaiken on October 30, 2015

Recognition and Honors

CREC Graduate Finishes First College Soccer Season

A former CREC student-athlete now competes in soccer and track for New England College in New Hampshire.

Samuel Dweh, of Hartford, is the first CREC student-athlete to graduate and play college athletics, and he is finishing his freshman soccer season. He is a 2015 graduate of CREC's Metropolitan Learning Center for Global and International Studies in Bloomfield, where he was a member of the soccer and track and field teams.

"Samuel serves as an example of the opportunity that exists for our student-athletes to participate in athletics beyond high school," said CREC Athletic Director Jonathan Winer. "Many of our student-athletes believe that they have to be talented enough to play at the level of UConn in order to pursue collegiate playing opportunities. This is not true.

"As a former Division 3 athlete, I can attest that the smaller colleges and universities give student-athletes an opportunity to continue playing competitive sports and to be a part of a cohesive team. Through that team, they

will develop friendships that will last throughout the rest of their lives."

Across five high schools, more than 600 students participate in CREC's interscholastic sports program, which began in the fall of 2011. The program has grown each year since its inception, and Dweh's status as a college athlete is something to be celebrated.

Dweh, who is majoring in biology at New England College, said his first sports season as a collegiate athlete has been great and that he has enjoyed getting to know his teammates. Playing college sports is very different than being a CREC student-athlete, he said, explaining that the competition level is much higher and the workouts more frequent and regimented. Playing time in college is earned, and time management is very important because it is difficult to balance academics and athletics, Dweh said.

For CREC students who hope to follow in his footsteps, Dweh said he would tell them not to listen to anyone who tries to talk them out of following their dreams. He also said the road to playing college

athletics will be easier if student-athletes respect and listen to their coaches, upperclassmen, and captains.



Photo credit: New England College

Grinfeld Participates in Princeton University Symposium



Zoe Grinfeld, a senior at the CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts High School, recently participated in the 16th annual Creative Arts & Humanities Symposium at Princeton University.

Grinfeld, who lives in Colchester, was one of 90 high school seniors from throughout the country to attend the prestigious symposium. The symposium, which was held October 16 through October 18, gives students a taste of studying creative arts and humanities at the university level, and participants were nominated by their schools.

"It was a meaningful and thought provoking experience," Grinfeld said, explaining that the CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts has prepared her for college.

Grinfeld is an excellent student who is studying theater design and production at the CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. Last December, she won Lifetime's "Project Runway: Threads," a competition that showcases the work of young fashion designers.

Events and Updates

CREC Foundation Holds Successful Anniversary Golf Tournament

In keeping true to its mission, the CREC Foundation raised \$81,000 to support CREC's educational programs and services during its October 5 golf tournament and reception.

Established in 2005, the CREC Foundation raises private funds to support CREC's educational programs and services. Money raised by the foundation supports art; music; science; math; and afterschool and summer enrichment classes. The CREC Foundation also helps to fund middle and high school college-preparatory classes; professional development for teachers; classroom grants; instructional and counseling support; and middle and high school sports.

The October 5 event was the CREC Foundation's first-ever golf outing, and it was held at the Hartford Golf Club in West Hartford. It marked the foundation's 10th anniversary, and it will be an annual event.

The tournament featured 100 golfers who represented CREC's corporate and community partners. A reception and raffle emceed by NBC Connecticut's Brad Drazen followed the tournament.

Key event sponsors included Mayo Crowe, Freeman Companies, JCJ Architecture, and Midstate Site Development, LLC.



CREC photo

"The generosity of our sponsors will have a meaningful impact on the youth of the Greater Hartford community and will provide opportunities for families to have access to quality public education," said CREC Foundation and Program Officer Darlene Wolliston. "One hundred percent of funds raised will support these efforts. We are extremely grateful to all sponsors who participated in this year's golf outing and donated to our organization."

Teachers From China Visit Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School



CREC photo

Thirty-three teachers from China recently visited Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School.

During their visit, the teachers enjoyed student performances, saw a planetarium show, and went on a school tour. They also taught 30-minute lessons about Chinese culture to Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School classes. As a

result, students learned Chinese songs and poems and about other topics, such as Kung Fu and calligraphy. Most of the lessons were taught in Chinese.

The Chinese delegation's visit is an example of a reciprocal partnership. It allowed the teachers from China to teach in an American elementary school. Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School students and staff were able to learn more about the Chinese language and culture.

Throughout the year, students at Glastonbury-East Hartford Magnet School study Mandarin-Chinese. The magnet school, which is operated by CREC, serves students in preschool through grade five, and they explore science, global studies, and technology through hands-on immersion experiences.

Reggio Students Try Out Google Expeditions



CREC photo: The Google Expeditions team recently visited CREC's Reggio Magnet School of the Arts. The school is one of the first in the country to take "field trips" using Google Expeditions, virtual technology.

Events and Updates (continued)

CREC Holds Ribbon Cuttings at Two New School Buildings

In October, both CREC's Academy of Aerospace and Engineering and CREC's Discovery Academy held ribbon cutting ceremonies at their new school buildings.

The new CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering facility, located at 1101 Kennedy Road in Windsor, is 150,000 square feet and serves students in grades six through 12. Previously, middle school students attended school on Blue Hills Avenue in Bloomfield, and high school students attended school at the Learning Corridor in Hartford.

The new building includes features that reflect the school's aerospace and engineering theme. A zinc-clad curved "wing" contains middle school science laboratories, and a quarter-barrel roof with an exposed truffle structure at the gymnasium references the design of an airplane hangar. There's also a pixelated image from the Hubbell Telescope at the Lagoon Nebula that wraps the exterior of the school's auditorium in phenolic panels, and operable photovoltaic louvers are used to maximize exposure to the sun for energy collection. Overall energy usage and generation, along with water

consumption, is monitored by a building management system, and the data will be displayed on televisions that will be installed throughout the school. In addition, the entrance to the school's media center mimics NASA's "Mission Control."

The new CREC Discovery Academy building is 72,000 square feet and was built to enhance the school's theme of interactive exploration and science, technology, engineering, and math. Its exterior design provides interactive ways for students to explore nature. Rolling topography and extensive vegetation create nature trails; discovery areas; planting beds; fields; playscapes; and play yards. There are also segregated automobile and bus drop offs.

There are dramatic features and exhibits in the main lobby, 24 core classrooms, and additional classrooms for science, literacy, art, and music. There's also a computer lab inside a new library and media center.

Both school buildings opened to students on September 2, the first day of school.



CREC photos



CREC photo

CREC John J. Allison, Jr. Polaris Center to Raise Money for Out to Pasture

CREC's John J. Allison, Jr. Polaris Center, in collaboration with KISS 95.7 FM, held a community tag sale on October 22. The proceeds benefited Out to Pasture Farm & Rescue, Inc., a nonprofit organization that rescues medically fragile, abused, and neglected animals that would otherwise be euthanized.

The tag sale featured animal clothing and costumes and gently used household items. Students from the CREC John J. Allison, Jr. Polaris Center's Academy for Life, Employment, and Purpose program coordinated the event, and they visited Out of Pasture Farm & Rescue prior to the event to take pictures of the many animals that benefited from the tag sale donations.

To learn more about Out of Pasture Farm & Rescue, visit www.outtopasture.org/.

CREC and Source4Teachers Partner to Provide Substitute Teachers and Staff to Connecticut School Districts

CREC and Source4Teachers are partnering to provide highly-qualified substitute teachers, paraeducators, and other support staff to local school districts.

“CREC is always looking to find better, more efficient, and more cost-effective ways to help Connecticut’s school districts,” said Margaret MacDonald, director of CREC Technical Assistance and Brokering Services. “We are excited to announce our partnership with Source4Teachers. While districts will benefit by employing highly-qualified substitutes, there are also many other, less obvious benefits. For example, there is an ongoing training program for substitutes hired through Source4Teachers and the company provides and manages health benefits for substitutes, ensuring compliance with the Affordable Care Act. Source4Teachers offers one-stop shopping for all educational substitute needs. Overall, this new partnership can only help districts employ the best substitute teachers, paraeducators, and educational staff.”

In line with CREC’s ongoing mission to support and provide resources to school districts in Connecticut, this new partnership aims to bring awareness to the services Source4Teachers can provide, specifically saving districts time, money, and valuable personnel resources.

“Source4Teachers is pleased to be working with CREC and eager to serve the students, parents, and communities in Connecticut,” said Source4Teachers President Kendley Davenport. “This relationship will yield continuity of care for students, create jobs for the community, and cut down on the administrative burden and unwelcome costs for districts. Ultimately, the partnership enables the district to focus on what it does best—delivering a quality education.”

For more information about CREC’s partnership with Source4Teachers, contact Janet Scialdone, CREC’s staffing solutions manager, at jscialdone@crec.org, or 860-509-3681.

CREC’s International Magnet School Reads for the Record



CREC photo

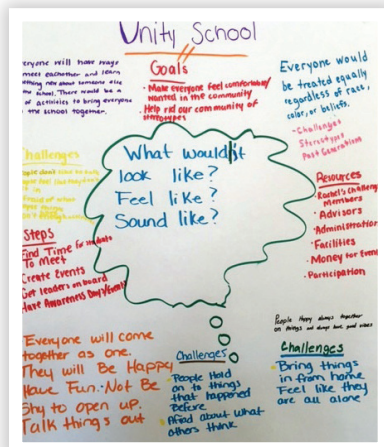
On October 22, CREC’s International Magnet School for Global Citizenship participated in Jumpstart’s Read for the Record, a campaign that generates support for early learning and builds a child’s vocabulary and love for reading.

CREC Student-Athletes Raise Money for Coach’s Nephew



CREC photo: Student-athletes at CREC’s Metropolitan Learning Center for Global and International Studies recently held the Orange Marathon, an event that raised money for Christian Reynoso, a 4-year-old from Hamden who is fighting against leukemia. Christian is the nephew of the school’s middle school basketball and high school baseball coach.

Forging Unity Through High School Program



CREC photo

Events and Updates *(continued)*

CREC Two Rivers Middle Participates in FitKids In School

Six hundred and twenty CREC Two Rivers Magnet Middle School students participated in the Hartford Marathon Foundation's FitKids In School event on October 6 at Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field.

The event included a mile run, which was the culmination of a five-week, goal-oriented running program. This fall, some students ran together before, during, or after school to accumulate 12 miles, or 25 miles. The mile on October 6 was the mile they needed to complete the distance equivalent to a marathon or half marathon. Others students only ran the final mile in support of CREC Two Rivers Magnet Middle School's health and wellness initiative.

The goal of the FitKids program is to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle in middle school students. About 2,700 students from 27 different schools, including CREC Two Rivers Magnet Middle School, participated.

In addition to running, CREC Two Rivers Magnet Middle School students shared information about recycling and composting at the event and manned compost bins.

CREC Two Rivers Middle School shares a special relationship with the Hartford Marathon Foundation. In addition to participating in the annual FitKids event, the school was recently the beneficiary



CREC photo

of the organization's old marathon signs. When the Hartford Marathon sponsor changed its name from Northeast Utilities to Eversource, the old signs were donated to CREC Two Rivers Magnet Middle School and are used by students for stage sets and posters. Old marathon T-shirts are used to create reusable tote bags for Earth Day.

Students Help Marathon Runners, Including Assistant Principal

Students and staff at CREC's Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy know that running 26.2 miles isn't easy. That's why they volunteered at this year's Eversource Hartford Marathon.

The marathon was held October 10, and representatives from the school manned the water station at mile 17 in South Windsor. For six hours, they poured water and Gatorade for the runners, including Robert Canelli, the school's interim assistant principal. They also picked up the many cups discarded by the runners as they continued toward the finish line.

Canelli is an avid runner and ran the Eversource Hartford Marathon as part of his training for the New York City Marathon, which was held November 1.

"When I found out that our students were going to be working at a water station, I was really psyched and excited," Canelli said. "Training for a marathon is a five-month



CREC photo

ordeal that has a lot of ups and downs both physically and emotionally. It is perhaps the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. Having the students there for support meant so much to me, especially when I got up to the 15- to 20-mile part of the race. This is where your body breaks down and has depleted a lot of its nutrients, and

there is the potential for the runner to hit the 'wall,' so to speak. This is where some runners become ill and drop out of the race. Knowing that our students were going to be there gave me a lift and the energy to complete the rest of the race."