

# SWEET SIXTEEN: OUR JOURNEY LIVING A DISCIPLINED LIFE® 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

**Perspectives** Charter Schools

Educating for College Preparing for Life

### DEAR FRIENDS OF PERSPECTIVES

Over the past 16 years, Perspectives Charter Schools has established itself as a leader in preparing students for college and for life. Ninety-nine percent of our graduates are accepted to college, and they persist in college at a rate above the national average. Based on that success, people from around the country are seeking to learn more about the A Disciplined Life education model.

However, there is still so much work to do. We need to ensure that every one of our students is prepared for college: academically, emotionally, and financially. We need to make sure that the Perspectives network has the financial and operational stability to support our students, in the face of enormous challenges. Finally, we need to continue to support and develop our greatest resource—our teachers.





We believe that every single one of our students has the potential to become an intellectually reflective, caring and ethical person engaged in a meaningful life. Our students come to Perspectives as much as three years below grade level, but thanks to the **A Disciplined Life** education model, the vast majority graduate from our schools and matriculate to college. However, that is still not every student, and we need to be rigorous about ensuring that we provide an education that meets each student on their own level and pushes them to achieve their fullest potential. We also need to explore every avenue to help prepare our students financially for college, from financial literacy courses beginning in 6th grade to the opportunity to earn professional certifications in high school that can help them obtain good-paying jobs while in college.

As we work to improve our education model, we need to be mindful of the enormous financial challenges facing charter schools in Chicago. Our schools have been historically underfunded compared to traditional public schools in Chicago. At the same time, we strive to provide a more holistic education than traditional schools, with college visits, field studies, internships, and more. We are literally doing more with less. The generous support of corporate partners like Ernst & Young and foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation helps close some of the gap, but we need to be creative about pursuing every option to financially support our schools.

In the end, our success depends on the hundreds of incredibly talented teachers who work tirelessly every single day to give our students the education they deserve. They are the ones who help our students to develop positive self-perception, healthy relationships, and the tools for productivity that they need to succeed in college and beyond. We need to continue to bring in great teachers to Perspectives, and provide them with world-class professional development to help them get even better at their jobs.

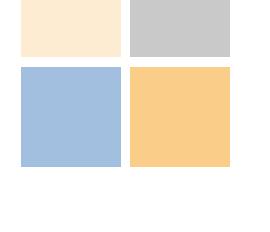
All of this work depends on the support of people like you. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of the Perspectives family over the past 16 years. We need you more than ever as we work to develop the next generation of ethical leaders for this city and this country.

With gratitude and respect,

Rhonda Hopps, CFA Chief Executive Officer

Tay Quelus

Tony Anderson Board Chairman





# sweet sixteen

### **HISTORY** OF PERSPECTIVES









1997 Founded, Perspectives becomes one of Illinois' first

#### 1999

charters

Focus on college prep & ensuring our students ask "when and where I'm going to college" not "if"

2000 First graduating class of Perspectives from the Rodney D. Joslin Campus

2001 Perspectives invests in recruiting the best and brightest

teachers



2002

2003

Perspectives

Campus

Groundbreaking-

Rodney D. Joslin

Begin sharing A Disciplined Life

with the world

2004 Healthy Lifestyles Initiative launched

### 2005

Network expansion in Auburn Gresham approved



2006 Open three schools in Auburn Gresham: Perspectives Middle Academy, Leadership

Academy, and High School of Technology

#### 2007 Perspectives and Ernst & Young forge partnership

Rhonda Hopps joins Perspectives as first CEO



2008 Open Perspectives IIT/

Math & Science

Academy

2009

26

2010 First graduating classes from Perspectives Leadership Academy & High School of Technology

#### 2011

education model

Awarded a dissemination grant by U.S. Department of Education for A Disciplined Life®



2012 First graduating class from Perspectives IIT/ Math & Science Academy

2013

**Tony Anderson** becomes new board chair at Perspectives

Perspectives graduate Anthony Halmon is now a freshman at Cornell University, with a full scholarship from the Posse Foundation. Below, Anthony tells the story of how he got to that point in his own words.



Before Perspectives, I was emotionally wrecked and determined to ruin my life. At the age of 12, I got involved in gang activity. I was doing all of the things that we think 'bad kids' do, when really, it was just me, a good kid, in a rough environment, with no direction and no clue how to get out. My school experience had been in buildings where fights broke out regularly, where kids were bullied, where teachers didn't know my name and academic expectations really didn't exist.

My mom was always positive and never complained, no matter how tough our times got. My Dad, he cared—but he was absent in my life after he went to prison when I was in 5th grade. Then, in the summer before my sophomore year, my father passed away and I became a father myself. The birth of my beautiful daughter was a turning point in my life. I began to feel guilt and shame about the life I was living. I had responsibilities now. I was going to be a good father.

I knew I needed a change, a new school, new friends, a new me. But it wasn't until I enrolled at Perspectives as a sophomore that I realized that I was to become so much more than society expects from kids like me. I was

**ANTHONY'S JOURNEY** BEGAN

WITH A DISCIPLINED LIFE

sixteen years old then, and for the very first time in my life, I had adults telling me that I was smart—a scholar—and destined for college.

Perspectives is different. It's like no other place I know. I walked into Perspectives with a bad attitude and the atmosphere of **A Disciplined Life** quickly changed it. I noticed that there was a very cool thing going on; students didn't feel good about breaking this **A Disciplined Life** code. I realized that these 26 principles exposed who I was, and I had to decide if I was going to be accountable to these principles.

In school, I "take initiative" and "demonstrate a strong work ethic". Since my sophomore year, my GPA has always been above a 3.6. Through an entrepreneurship class in school, I created a special pacifier that soothes babies while taking their temperature. Inspired by my daughter, I call it the "Thermofier". Thanks to this invention, I was invited to the White House Science Fair and shook hands with President Obama.

Outside of school, I "take responsibility for my actions". My alarm goes off at 5:45am each day and by 7, I catch the King Drive bus with my daughter to take her to day care. Then, I take the 79th street bus back to Perspectives. I love and nurture my 3-yearold daughter and take more seriously than anything my co-parenting responsibilities with her mother.

Perspectives has taught me that when I focus on living **A Disciplined Life**, I can be successful in college and in life. I am Anthony Halmon, and I am living **A Disciplined Life**.



*FIRST*Robotics is called "the varsity sport for the mind", and the sport is typically dominated by private

schools, selective enrollment schools and wealthy suburban schools with access to high-end equipment and professional engineers. The Iron Wolves of Perspectives/IIT Math & Science Academy defied those expectations this year, winning the prestigious Midwest Regional and heading to the world championships.

Robotics coach Joe Michaelis credited the team's commitment to the A Disciplined Life principles "demonstrate perseverance" and accept only quality work from yourself." "The typical expectation for urban teams like ours is to be impressed that our students even tried," Michaelis said. "At no point did we allow that to define our own expectations."

The team also brought in partners. Motorola Solutions became the lead sponsor of the team, and professors and graduate students from Illinois Institute of Technology provided priceless materials, mentorship, and guidance. As a result, the team was able to build a highly sophisticated robot named "Baby Red" that could throw Frisbees and climb a steel pyramid, the two challenges in this year's *FIRST* Robotics competition.



Jovan Goolsby, one of the Iron Wolves captains, is now studying mechanical engineering at the Milwaukee School of Engineering.

Motorola Solutions employee and Iron Wolves mentor Sean Taylor expects other Robotics team members to follow in his footsteps. "These kids are going places," Taylor said. "They're going to have degrees; they're going to have jobs. They think they're having fun right now, but they're going to look back and look at a teacher like Joe and say, 'This is why I'm able to do what I'm doing now.'"

**IRON WOLVES, FIRST ROBOTICS** REGIONAL CHAMPION: ENGINEERING **A DISCIPLINED LIFE** 

### PERSPECTIVES **WELCOMES TONY ANDERSON** AS NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN

Tony Anderson, who spent eight years as the Vice Chair and Midwest Managing Partner for Ernst & Young, is beginning a new journey as the board chairman of Perspectives Charter Schools.



During his time at Ernst & Young, Anderson built a partnership with Perspectives that is now a model for corporate-school partnerships across the country. In his new role, Anderson plans to take Perspectives "from good to great."

Anderson had spent years as a successful executive for Ernst & Young when he returned to Chicago in 2005. Anderson grew up only twenty miles from Chicago, and immediately he wanted to give back to the community. He was astonished at the low rates of high school graduation in the city's public schools.

Anderson came into contact with Perspectives co-founders Kim Day and Diana Shulla-Cose just as Perspectives was opening three new schools in the old Calumet High School in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood. At the time it closed, Calumet High School was graduating less than 40 percent of its students. Anderson poured all of the resources of Ernst & Young into helping Perspectives transform that legacy. It wasn't just a financial partnership, though Anderson and Ernst & Young raised and donated more than \$2 million for Perspectives students. On top of that, Ernst & Young employees served as mentors, helped paint classrooms, and brought books, music and other resources into the school. Anderson made support for Perspectives a part of the fabric of the Ernst & Young office in Chicago.

With its first Auburn Gresham graduating classes in 2011, Perspectives more than doubled the graduation rate of the old Calumet High School, while serving students from the same neighborhood in the exact same building. Ninety-seven percent of graduates were accepted to college.

Now, Anderson is bringing that same commitment to excellence to the entire Perspectives network.

"I've always had this firm belief that education is the secret sauce to accomplishing anything that you want to do," said Anderson. "Whatever your aspirations are, education is the way there. And, if you want to change the trajectory of your life, then education—especially a college education is the key to that transformation. When you choose Perspectives, you are choosing to graduate from high school ready to earn a college degree and able to succeed in life."

"Tony embodies the 26 principles of **A Disciplined Life**. He leads by example, he cares deeply about education, and he has been influential in getting much needed resources to our schools that have directly improved the academic achievement of our students." —Rhonda Hopps, CEO

# Perspectives and Larry Ashkin have been on a long and extraordinary journey together.

16 years ago, Ashkin walked into the dilapidated warehouse on Chicago's South Side that was the first home to Perspectives Charter Schools to meet Perspectives cofounders Kim Day and Diana Shulla-Cose. Since that day, Larry has worked tirelessly and passionately for and on behalf of the students, teachers and parents of Perspectives. After ten years as board chair, Larry is moving into the position of board chairman emeritus.



"His wisdom, ability to get things done, and to think different than most is only matched by his generosity, goodness and love for the Perspectives' vision," said Day.

Under Ashkin's leadership, Perspectives grew from a small school of 6 classrooms into a network of five schools serving 2,200 students from throughout Chicago. Because of his commitment to Chicago students, Larry received the A Disciplined Life Award in 2007 and the Illinois State Charter Schools Champion Award in 2011. Along with his wife Doris, was the namesake of the Larry & Doris Ashkin Library at Perspectives Rodney D. Joslin Campus.

"Larry is proof that one man can change the world. He has done it for hundreds of Chicago students and hundreds more will benefit from his legacy of hope and inspiration," said Shulla-Cose.

# LARRY ASHKIN TRIBUTE: DEDICATED TO LIVING A DISCIPLINED LIFE

# LIVING A DISCIPLINED LIFE TO RESTORE PEACE: ALISON THOMPSON AND PERSPECTIVES

One of the principles of **A Disciplined Life** is "solve conflicts peacefully". In the face of the persistent violence in Chicago, Perspectives students are striving to spread this principle throughout their neighborhoods and the city at large.

Humanitarian and volunteer Alison Thompson joined Perspectives students in commemorating the 9/11 Day of Remembrance and Service by building and planting a peace garden as a symbol of their commitment to eradicating violence in our communities. The Yellow Tractor Project donated gardening supplies and seeds for students to plant. Students gathered in "peace circles" to reflect on how to incorporate the principles of **A Disciplined Life** into actionable ways to restore peace in their neighborhoods.

"The peace garden is a great way to show our neighbors that Perspectives is committed to peace," said Heather Haines, principal of Perspectives High School of Technology.

Later in the year, Perspectives Rodney D. Joslin Campus organized "Perspectives on Peace", a peace march through downtown Chicago led by Perspectives students. Razia Hutchins, a Joslin student, wanted to do more to advocate for peace, and worked with school leaders to organize the march.

"I was tired of hearing negative stories about youth in Chicago," said Hutchins. "I decided that students would have to take the lead in advocating for peace."



Twenty years ago, two public school teachers working on the South Side of Chicago sat down in a coffee shop on Michigan Avenue. Kim Day and Diana Shulla-Cose were successful in the classroom; their students got good grades and made academic gains. But they had bigger goals in mind. They wanted to help shape the next generation of ethical leaders. So that day they started brainstorming: what skills and habits does an ethical leader need?

Over dozens of sessions in coffee shops and classrooms, they narrowed in on 26 principles, which they soon came to call the principles of **A Disciplined Life**<sup>®</sup>. They knew that the first step to leadership is positive self-perception, especially for students seeking to rise from poverty, so they included principles such as "love who you are" and "be open-minded". They knew that leaders needed to develop healthy relationships, leading to principles like "communicate effectively" and "show gratitude". And finally, they knew that leaders needed to master the tools of productivity like learning to "be reliable" and "be punctual and prepared".

In 1997, Ms. Day and Ms. Shulla-Cose founded Perspectives Charter Schools as one of the very first charter schools in Illinois. Sixteen years later, A **Disciplined Life** has shaped the lives of thousands of students, teachers and families at Perspectives.

Now, Perspectives is preparing to share **A Disciplined Life** with schools and organizations throughout the country, thanks to a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

One way Perspectives shares the story of **A Disciplined Life** is at the annual **A Disciplined Life** Expo at Perspectives Rodney D. Joslin Campus. At the Expo, guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres from **mk The Restaurant** while hearing first-hand from Perspectives students on how they are living **A Disciplined Life**. Chloe Glispie, a Joslin graduate and student at the University of Chicago, shared how A Disciplined Life has prepared her for success.

"Because Perspectives demanded greatness from me, I learned how to demand greatness from myself," said Glispie. "I don't have to worry about whether I live up to the standards of my university because I am already striving to live up to the standards of **A Disciplined Life**."

### SHARING A DISCIPLINED LIFE® AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



rigorous and relevant education. based on A Disciplined Life<sup>®</sup>, that prepares them for life in a and helps them further become caring and ethical people engaged in a meaningful life.

**OUR MISSION** 

will provide

All Perspectives

Charter Schools

students with a



# PAUL TOUGH **ADVOCATES** CHARACTER EDUCATION, **A DISCIPLINED LIFE**

Our sixteenth year as a charter network was the year that social emotional learning finally became a part of the national conversation. New York Times Magazine education writer and best-selling author Paul Tough led the way with his book "How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character."

Tough's book makes the case that character is at least as important as intellect when it comes to helping students succeed in college and beyond. He shows that students who succeed share a common quality that researchers call "grit"—the ability to demonstrate perseverance and overcome obstacles. At a luncheon at mk The Restaurant, Tough shared how the **A Disciplined Life** education model has been ahead of the curve in terms of recognizing the importance of character development.

"Many people think that character is something that is set in stone," said Diana Shulla-Cose, Perspectives co-founder and president. "Paul Tough's book shows that character is something you can learn, and something that you can teach. At Perspectives, we have been teaching character from the very beginning."

After the luncheon, Tough traveled to Perspectives Rodney D. Joslin Campus, where he heard first-hand from Perspectives students about what it means to live **A Disciplined Life**.

"Perspectives students learn that they can overcome the challenges they face, and they learn a language to help them understand how they do it. Then, when they face unexpected obstacles in college, they have both the mindset and the skills to get past them."



-Dr. Angela Brooks-Rallins, Joslin principal

Students enter Perspectives Charter Schools as much as three years below grade level, many of them facing all of the challenges associated with growing up in poverty. But they graduate from high school at a rate above the state average for all students. They enroll in college at a rate more than 15 points higher than the city average. Most impressively, they persist in college past the first year at a rate above the national average for all students.

## GRAD TALKS ABOUT AN EDUCATION SECRET—A DISCIPLINED LIFE®

#### By Miguel Jimenez, Joslin '03

As a young student, I was resistant to A Disciplined Life<sup>®</sup> (ADL). Like many teenagers, I was critical of anything that looked like a rule. I quickly realized that ADL wasn't a set of rules—it was a way of being. Perspectives provided time and space to reflect on the 26 principles of ADL, practice them, and recognize their positive impact on our lives.



We lived ADL every day. On the bus or train, we showed compassion and generosity by giving up our seat for someone in need. We would listen actively by taking notes during a lecture or museum visit. We asked questions because we were intellectually curious. We listened closely to others because we knew that to communicate effectively we needed to listen respectfully.

I graduated from Perspectives Rodney D. Joslin Campus with a self-awareness and self-reflection that people recognized and praised in college. At DePauw University, I earned a bachelor's of arts in Creative Writing. I then earned a master's in fine arts at California State University – Fresno.

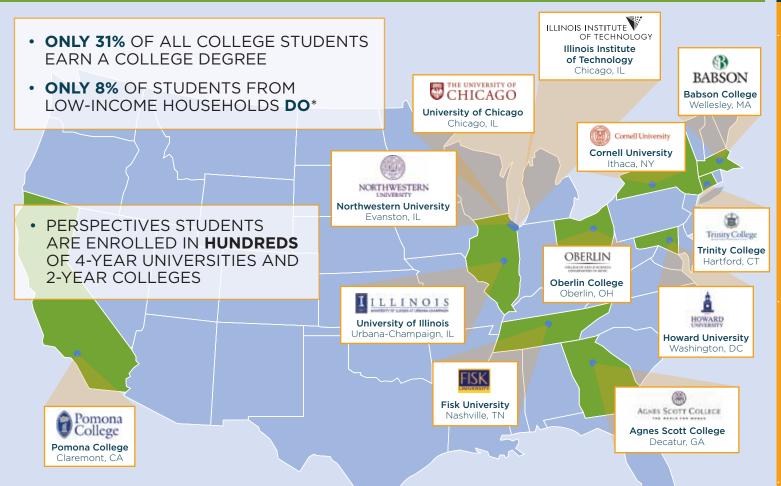
I am now a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and I still value the ADL education given to me at Perspectives. This past semester, I was stunned to learn that one of my students was a Perspectives graduate. We talked about Perspectives and ADL at length. Here she was, my student, 10 years in age difference, and we were chatting about ADL like it was the secret to life—perhaps because it was the secret to both of our lives.

I recently ended a class with an unrehearsed pep talk, and found myself referencing ADL principles. "You have to think critically and be inquisitive," I told my students. I caught myself directly quoting A Disciplined Life, and I thought of Perspectives, and of my student—the Perspectives graduate—sitting in front of me. And on a whim, I asked her to finish off my pep talk with an ADL principle. "Accept only quality work from yourself," she said, smiling at our inside knowledge, smiling at our secret.

"This is grit in action," said Dr. Brooks-Rallins.

# THE DATA SAYS OUR STUDENTS ARE PREPARED FOR COLLEGE AND LIFE





# 99% of Perspectives graduates are accepted to college

Among students from low-income households:

- PERSPECTIVES' COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATE IS DOUBLE
- PERSPECTIVES' HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ARE FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO EARN COLLEGE DEGREES



- Accept only quality work from yourself
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Seek wisdom
- Be open-minded
- Think critically and be inquisitive
- Love who you are
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity
- Be generous
- Be a life-long learner
- Live a healthy lifestyle

#### RELATIONSHIPS

- Communicate effectively
- Challenge each other intellectually
- Show gratitude
- Solve conflicts peacefully
- Respect differences
- Be positive and supportive
- Show compassion

#### PRODUCTIVITY

- Demonstrate a strong work ethic
- Use your time wisely
- Listen actively
- Be punctual and prepared
- Be organized
- Be reflective
- Be reliable
- Take initiative
- Demonstrate perseverance

### DONORS

Perspectives Charter Schools extends our deepest thanks to every individual, business, and organization that made donations in fiscal year 2013. In spite of difficult economic times, your collective support allows our students, teachers, and staff to achieve academic, personal and professional greatness. Continue to support our mission by making a donation today.

#### \$100,000 and Above

Baldwin Richardson Foods/ Eric Johnson Anne and Stephen Bent Crown Family Philanthropies Ernst & Young LLP The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program

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### FINANCIALS

#### **Statement of Financial Position**

#### **Statement of Activities**

Assets	/ear Ended June 30, 2013	Revenues	Year Ended June 30, 2013
Cash	\$ 1,685,691	All government sources	\$28,539,587
Pledges/other accounts receivab	ole,	Contributions:	
prepaid expenses and deposit	cs 2,091,579	Individuals	366,282
Property and equipment, net	8,208,821	Corporations/Foundations	781,393
Total Assets	\$ 11,986,090	Other	1,533,093
		Total Revenues	\$ 30,374,954
Liabilities			
Accounts payable, accrued sala	ries	Expenses	
and related liabilities	\$ 2,533,964	Program services	\$26,605,084
Construction debt	2,310,319	Management and general	1,720,988
Capital lease obligations/deferr	ed	Fundraising	580,571
rent and revenue liability	1,267,287	Depreciation and amortization	n \$ 1,193,434
Bond payable	4,700,000	Interest	256,432
Total liabilities	\$10,811,570	Total Expenses	\$30,356,509
Total net assets	\$ 1,174,520		
Total Liabilities and Net As	sets \$ 11,986,090	Change in Net Assets	139,914
		Net Assets, beginning of year	\$1,034,606
al Statements		Net Assets, end of year	\$1,174,520

Source: Fiscal Year 2013 Audited Financial Statements

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