



**BUILD**  
Excel. Lead. Succeed.

February 2008

# NEWS

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## Upcoming Events:

### BUILD Youth Business Plan Competitions:

**Peninsula: May 10, 2008** at Stanford Graduate School of Business

**Oakland: May 31, 2008** at UC Berkeley Haas School of Business

## BUILD-ing the Dream in Washington, DC

BUILD is pleased to announce the opening of its Washington, DC site. The office, which officially opened on Monday, October 29, 2007, is located at 701 Pennsylvania Ave. NW in the law offices of Mintz, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo, PC.

BUILD's expansion to the DC area is born of our three-tiered vision to address the devastating education disparity in the US, to change the face of higher education and, ultimately, to radically transform impoverished communities nationwide from the inside out.

Every child should have access to quality learning opportunities — as this will result in greatly improving their chances in school and life. BUILD's in-school and after-school programs target students whose current opportunities for educational advancement are extremely limited. To participate in the BUILD programs, students must meet three of the following five criteria: live in under-resourced community with under-performing schools, be of an

ethnicity that is under-represented in higher education, be the first generation to attend college in their family, have a median family income

population. A closer look at DC's public high schools reveals that almost all schools are seriously under-performing, with between



BUILD goes to Washington!

in the lower-middle or low category, and have not participated in more than two academic preparation/enrichment classes.

Similar to the under-resourced BUILD service areas of San Mateo and Alameda Counties in California, DC public schools are characterized by a separation of plentiful resources in close proximity to, but currently unavailable to the large under-resourced

twenty-five to fifty percent performing below-average on state assessments in math and reading and a drop-out rate of fifty-eight percent or higher.

Despite the current condition of DC public schools, "our goal is to serve 100 students from under-performing schools in the District in the 2008-2009 academic school year," said Ajuah Helton, BUILD's East Coast Regional Program Director. (continued on page 2)

## Continued: BUILD-ing the Dream in Washington, DC

Ms. Helton began her career with BUILD in 2001 as an entrepreneurship instructor. Though she relocated to Philadelphia in 2002 to pursue graduate studies in education, Ajuah stayed connected with BUILD as an advisor, mentor educator and facilitator, and served as interim Director of Education in 2004. Ajuah has since rejoined the organization to spearhead BUILD's expansion to Washington DC. Prior to re-joining BUILD, Ajuah managed youth entrepreneur-

ship programs at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business and at The Enterprise Center in Philadelphia, where she was later promoted to Chief of Staff.

Ajuah is a Certified Entrepreneurship Instructor through the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE). She is also an alumna of Teach For America and taught two years in the Greater New Orleans area. Ajuah holds a BA in psychol-

ogy from Clark Atlanta University.

BUILD's Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Suzanne McKechnie Klahr, adds, "I am thrilled to expand our services to the students in Washington, DC. With Ajuah's background in education and entrepreneurship, I know BUILD DC will be a huge success!"

## Holiday Sales Bazaar: Becoming a Tradition

Over the last five years, BUILD has held Holiday Sales Bazaars to showcase our students' entrepreneurial spirit and to prepare them for business in a real-life market setting. In addition, Holiday Sales Bazaars expose our students, their incubated businesses, and BUILD to the commu-

This past December, both BUILD sites held a Holiday Sales Bazaar. On December 12<sup>th</sup>, seventeen student-run businesses gathered in Oakland at the Lake Merritt United Methodist Church for BUILD Oakland's Inaugural Holiday Sales Bazaar. For the Peninsula site, it was our fifth annual

Holiday Sales Bazaar in East Palo Alto. We sought to build a positive partnership with the brand new East Palo Alto YMCA so that we could house our annual event at their beautiful location. Even though space options are extremely limited in East Palo Alto for an event of this scale, we



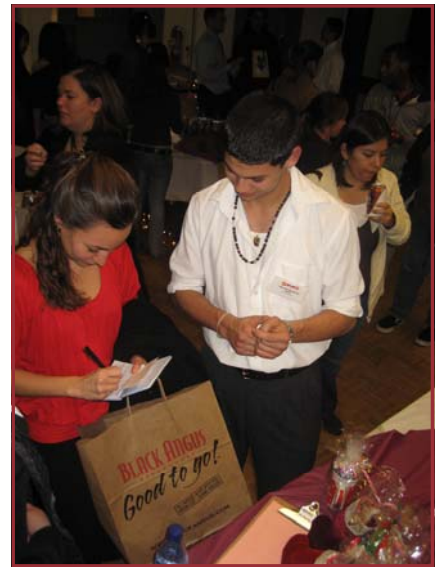
Student business team "Herstory Now"

nities that we serve. Business teams began their preparation in August and for the E2 teams (sophomore year) it was the first time they were selling their products to the public.

wanted to stay true to our community by continuing to keep this event in our city.

We featured 20 student-run busi-

nesses, and also an alumni-run business. At their heart, the Holiday Sales Bazaar in East Palo Alto. We sought to build a positive partnership with the brand new East Palo Alto YMCA so that we could house our annual event at their beautiful location. Even though space options are extremely limited in East Palo Alto for an event of this scale, we



Venancio S. working with a customer

Bazaars are a celebration of our community's students and the community itself. By the end of both evenings, student businesses collected over \$6,500 in revenue. And both events went off without a hitch, with many community members in attendance. Students were thrilled to pitch their businesses and make sales.

## Staff Spotlight: Ajuah Helton

*Life is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood.*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

It took working with four different entrepreneurship-education organizations and six years before I realized exactly what makes BUILD different – and when I came to that realization, I came back home to BUILD.

After college, I taught in New Orleans with Teach For America in 1998, then returned home to the Bay Area in search of any type of work in non-profit, education or youth development, as long as the target group was high school students. I soon found myself managing a Saturday entrepreneurship-education program through a local university. I enjoyed the work and my colleagues, though I wasn't fully convinced that entrepreneurship as a programmatic theme was any more powerful than art, dance, music or science.

The program was successful in meeting its goals, but I soon recognized that about 50% of each year's enrollees attended private school. Although such a group may still be under-resourced and need additional support to be successful, my gut told me then (and tells me now) that there were more needy students I could be serving. Additionally, the program served 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> graders, but did not shepherd students through their all-important senior years.

I joined BUILD as a part-time entrepreneurship instructor a year later to save money to transition to graduate school. Immediately, it felt *different*. With BUILD, entrepreneurship came

alive, not just as an academic construct or thematic unit, but as a way for students to marshal skills and re-



Ajuah Helton, BUILD East Coast  
Regional Program Director

sources to earn real money. BUILD was also clear and transparent about entrepreneurship serving as a vehicle to propel students toward higher education, not a destination, even though program participants were uniformly more under-resourced than at my "day job." Most importantly, BUILD was led by a visionary leader looking to change the face of higher education, which was a mission I could truly embrace.

Even as I left BUILD to pursue graduate studies in Philadelphia and went on to work with two other entrepreneurship-education organizations, I never really left. I facilitated workshops, volunteered at the Business Plan Competitions and attended retreats, all the time becoming more and more convinced that entrepreneurship is different from other programmatic themes like art or music. With BUILD, I saw first-hand young entrepreneurs' ability to apply their

hard-earned life experiences to enterprises that bettered their skills, future outlooks and self-efficacy, not to mention their economic positions. I also saw the outcome of four years of contiguous service to cohorts of high-potential young people – 100% college acceptance.

None of the other entrepreneurship organizations with which I worked achieved the same results, especially with the high-need students BUILD cherishes. So after graduate school, I came back and am thrilled to help launch BUILD on the East Coast, beginning in Washington, DC in 2008. Life truly is a succession of lessons which must be lived to be understood!

## BPC 2008!

Wondering who the next enthusiastic visionary, positive thinker, decision maker in Silicon Valley will be? Then mark your calendars and plan to attend BUILD's annual Business Plan Competition in May, 2008 hosted by the Stanford Graduate School of Busi-



2007's winning team, Young Hype

ness and UC Berkeley Haas School of Business. BUILD freshmen students will present their innovative ideas to a panel of distinguished judges for an opportunity to be guaranteed entrance into the nation's largest youth business incubator.

## Student Spotlight: Freddy Z.

My name is Freddy. I am 17 years old and a senior at Woodside High School. When I was younger, I felt inferior because of my Latino heritage, and the fact that I look different from many of the kids I go to school with. As I walked to school, I got called names that took a toll on my self-esteem.

I also took a lot of responsibility when I was younger, because I felt like I had to be the man of the house. Alcohol transformed my father into a stranger. I understood that being the man of the house is not an easy task, and that the alcohol helped him deal with the stress just like his father. But I knew I did not want this lifestyle for my family, especially my younger siblings.

I initially viewed my education as my



Freddy Z., preparing to speak at a BUILD event

ticket out of home; I could no longer bear living with a dysfunctional family. Instead, I found out that I could

show my family the change I wanted to see in them by exceeding academically.

Unlike many Latinos my age—who ended up in gangs or dropping out of high school—I stayed determined and devoted. I didn't want to succumb to the violence and drug abuse enveloping East Palo Alto. I reached out and applied to programs that would help academically, and would also help me attain my goal of going to college.

I heard about BUILD my freshman year, and the idea of learning to run a business fascinated me. I became CEO of Flame Styles, a candle-lamp making business that manufactures custom and decorative candle-lamps. My business team members and I presented our business plan to more than 100 people at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, and won second place!

Being CEO of my own company, I was faced with lots of decisions such as how many candle-lamps we were going to produce, what designs we were going to use, and how to incorporate philanthropy. My BUILD experience taught me the true value of communication and teamwork.

While doing gardening work with my father, I learned the true value of hard work through the blisters on my hands. And although it might be hard to change the world, I hope to plant the seed of hope in my family and my community.

## BUILD Board of Directors

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## Greetings from our CEO

Dear Friends:

I hope that you had a wonderful holiday. At BUILD, we are looking forward to the year ahead and reflecting on all that happened in 2007. Last year was a very exciting and busy one for BUILD.

In 2007, we served 400 students at 11 high schools – an all-time high. For the first time in BUILD's history, we held two separate Business Plan Competitions – at Stanford's Graduate School of Business, as well as at Berkeley's Haas School of Business - to accommodate the needs of the growing BUILD Oakland site. We also held two Holiday Sales Bazaars - at the East Palo Alto YMCA, and at Oakland's Lake Merritt United Methodist Church – attended by hundreds of people who came to shop and support our youth.

Our most exciting change in 2007 was the opening of our BUILD office in Washington, DC, in November! BUILD DC currently occupies office



Suzanne McKechnie Klahr

space provided by the law firm of Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky & Popeo. Ajuah Helton, East Coast Regional Program Director, is spearheading BUILD's expansion to the East Coast and will spend the next

few months partnering with schools and other organizations. Our goal is to serve 100 students from under-performing schools in the District in the 2008-2009 academic year.

As exciting as our expansion and changes have been, the fundamentals of BUILD do not change. Our core values of entrepreneurship, teamwork and a relentless pursuit to serve overlooked young people who have so much potential are as strong as ever! We thank you for your belief in our students and look forward to having you as part of the BUILD family in 2008.

Happy New Year!

Warmly,

## A Sweet Way to Help

Michelle Bordin started her candy-making business out of a desire to share her delicious traditional family recipe with the world. She aptly named her business *Droga*—Italian for “drug”. Her addictively yummy rocky road candy is being sold at a handful of Oakland area food stores and can be special-ordered on her website.

Lucky for BUILD, Michelle is not only thinking about her own profit, but also about giving back to the community: 1% of all her proceeds are being donated to BUILD!

Check out Michelle's sweet temptations at [www.goodaddiction.com](http://www.goodaddiction.com).

## Ways to Support BUILD

Students in low-income under-served communities have the same potential as young people in other communities. The difference comes in the level of support they receive, both emotionally and financially.

Your generosity can provide opportunities for those most in need.

**There are many ways to donate:**

- [Make an online donation with your credit card](#)
- Include BUILD in your estate plan
- Honor someone special

- Become a corporate sponsor
- Give through employer-matched giving
- Give a stock gift
- Volunteer your time

If you would like to donate by phone or want learn more about supporting BUILD, please contact Barbara Bellissimo, Director of Development, at [bellissimo@build.org](mailto:bellissimo@build.org) or phone 650-688-5754.

*Financial contributions to BUILD are 100% tax-deductible, as allowed by law.*

## Leave a Legacy

Have you considered including BUILD in your estate planning? A bequest is a wonderful way to perpetuate your support for BUILD and to extend your influence into the future. A bequest can be a provision in your will, or it can be made by adding a codicil to an existing will.

You may also designate your bequest to be used for specific programs or purposes (e.g., Oakland E1 Program, Peninsula Academic Incubator, or Headquarters General Operating).

A bequest to BUILD can significantly reduce the taxable portion of your estate. Please contact your attorney and/or financial professional for specifics about including a bequest to BUILD in your estate planning. For more information about making a bequest, gift of appreciated stock or other planned gift to BUILD, please contact Barbara Bellissimo, Director of Development at 650-688-5754 or [bbellissimo@build.org](mailto:bbellissimo@build.org).

## BUILD Wish List

### Technology

- Projector
- Copiers – with certain specifications
- Scanner

### Office Supplies

- Fire-proof safes
- Copy paper
- Resume paper
- Static-free chair mats

- Ergonomic chairs
- Four drawer file cabinets

### Staff Development

- Staff Development Training
- Diversity Training

### Students

- White Button Down Shirts (Male and Female)
- Black Slacks (new)
- Snacks



Your support will help us make a difference

## Thank You for Supporting BUILD!

### BUILD INVESTORS

*With your help, BUILD is changing the face of higher education by providing real-world entrepreneurial experience that empowers youth from under-resourced communities to excel in education, lead in their communities and succeed professionally. The following is a list of all donors who invested between July 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007.*

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(\$50,000 or more)

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#### Series B Investors

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BUILD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to provide real-world entrepreneurial experience that empowers youth from under-resourced communities to excel in education, lead in their communities and succeed professionally. We are headquartered in Menlo Park, CA, and have sites in Palo Alto, CA, Oakland, CA and Washington, DC.

**BUILD**

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[www.build.org](http://www.build.org)

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