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# INFO-BITS

The online newsletter of Byte Back | December 2011



[Home](#) [About Us](#) [Our Mission](#) [Donor Headquarters](#) [Contact Us](#)

## December 2011

[Student Spotlight: Marvin Jones, Success Story](#)

[A Night To Remember](#)

[Trying New Things](#)

[What To Expect Next From Byte Back](#)

[Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[About Byte Back](#)

## Student Spotlight: Marvin Jones, Success Story



The story of Marvin Jones is impressive. In the fall of 2010, he was unemployed and eager to learn new skills to reenter the workforce. In October 2010, Mr. Jones enrolled in Byte Back's A+ certification class. He completed ninety hours of course work and enjoyed every minute of it. He missed only one day of class. He enrolled in an internship at First Time Computers, a local nonprofit organization which refurbishes donated computers for low-income families. Jones put in 112 hours of his time, far more than the 80 hours required, refurbishing, repairing and troubleshooting more than 20 computers.

After completing his internship, the Executive Director of First Time Computers, Lowell Dodge, offered Mr. Jones a full time job as a Computer Refurbisher. Mr. Dodge was so impressed by Jones' skill and work ethic that he gave him more responsibility, promoting him twice. Jones is now the Program Director. He started in March 2011 and has made enormous strides toward success since that first day. He no longer receives public assistance in the form of food stamps and unemployment benefits, and recently moved into his own apartment.

Mr. Jones is just getting started. He credits Byte Back with equipping him with valuable skills. "Byte Back is a "worthwhile experience," he says, "they helped me sharpen my skills and gain employment." In turn, Byte Back is thrilled to know that one of our students has developed valuable knowledge and expertise, allowing him to take on a leadership role in providing a vital service to our city.

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## A Night To Remember: "It's Never Too Late" Byte Back Gala



Byte Back Staff, Board Member and Volunteer Instructor - *Photo Courtesy of Kristian Whipple*

Byte Back experienced several milestones in November, but one of the most remarkable ones was Byte Back's black tie fundraiser gala. Named "It's Never Too Late," and hosted at the beautiful Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Byte Back honored its hardworking students and volunteers and generous donors in the most classic way, a party. The event included food, dancing and fun.

On November 19, 2011, with the kind support of the Panté Technology Corporation, Byte Back hosted its first-ever gala. Who is Panté? The Panté Technology Corporation is a San Antonio, Texas based computer technology firm specializing in Information Technology products, services and enterprise-wide integrated IT solutions to higher education, Federal, state and local government customers worldwide. The Byte Back and Panté partnership developed a few months ago when Panté wanted to sponsor a fundraiser for a local workforce development agency. They asked around and were told that since they are an IT firm, they should support Byte Back!



Oraios Ward, Pante Employee - *Photo Courtesy of Kristian Whipple*

The night included the presentation of the Golden Mouse Award to six recipients:

- \* Ronald Wade and Germaine Holt as Student/Volunteer of the Year
- \* Chris Tonjes as Government Partner of the Year
- \* The Federal Communications Bar Association as Corporate Partner of the Year

- \* Lowell Dodge of First Time Computers at Nonprofit Partner of the Year
- \* Bob Wittig of the Jovid Foundation as Funding Partner of the Year



Auction Item, Autographed  
Guitar by Paul McCartney -  
Photo Courtesy of Kristain  
Whipple

In addition, the event included a silent auction, featuring rare wine, a Martha's Vineyard getaway and one of a kind collectibles. Guests danced the night away to The Yvonne Johnson Trio (jazz and R&B) and dined on Chinese and Italian fare.

The night became a very special occasion when At-Large Council Member Michael Brown made a special appearance and provided some very encouraging words to 151 attendees.

So far, the event grossed over \$18,000. The proceeds will go to Byte Back's operations. This event has been more than beneficial to Byte Back for now we can continue to provide the well needed services to our community.



Kelley Elsworth and At-Large Council Member Michael Brown - Photo Courtesy of  
Kristian Whipple

In all, the event was a huge win for everyone. Byte Back had the opportunity to honor our partners and celebrate our successes and to begin a new relationship with Panté Technology. Will there be another gala next year? Well, that depends on kind supporters like Panté and folks like you.

If you would like to see more photos or view the video from the "It's Never Too Late," Gala, 'Like' us on Facebook and visit our website [www.byteback.org](http://www.byteback.org).

## Trying New Things: Byte Back's Fall Graduation



Byte Back Graduating Students

Congratulations to all of the Byte Back Graduates! Each season Byte Back holds a graduation for students who have successfully completed our intermediate to advanced courses. All graduations are special, but this one was especially exciting for it was a first for a lot of new experiences for Byte Back.

Our graduations always include some traditional elements: we have guest speakers, hand out certificates and wish the best for our graduates. This time we added the traditional "Pomp and Circumstance" to add a bit of flair. When the music played, the atmosphere hummed with pride and the feeling of accomplishment. The feeling of nostalgia and excitement felt so very real.

For the first time, we also had a sign language interpreter for the ceremony, because some of the graduates had completed our very first Office Track in American Sign Language. Our Deaf and Hard of Hearing graduates were fully integrated into the ceremony.

What else was new this year? This graduation featured a special guest appearance from Angela Benton, CEO of Black Web Media LLC. Ms. Benton is featured in the series on CNN "Black in America: The New Promised Land - Silicon Valley." Her encouraging words sparked motivation and intrigue. She spoke of her personal journey and the void that exists in the IT field when it comes to Black and Latino entrepreneurs. She encouraged our students to keep moving forward and to join the ever-growing field of technology. To deliver her message from California she was "Skyped" in and then phoned in due to technical difficulties. Although technology made things difficult, her message was still very clear, "personal struggle builds character, but doesn't define who you are." She encouraged the students to "choose newness in your journey." To close, she quoted Albert Einstein, "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new," and with those words, our students seemed pleased with the decision they made to learn more skills in technology.



Byte Back Graduating Students and Instructors

In addition, the ceremony included appearance by Hanna Rogers, a Byte Back student and graduate of Office Track. Ms. Rogers showed off her newly learned skills by showcasing her Power Point Presentation on developing literacy skills with children. Following her informational presentation were inspiring messages by Johnathan Eidsvaag and Taylor Maltz (both are Byte Back volunteers), Diane Harris from Southeast Ministry and Lowell Dodge from First Time Computers (both are Byte Back partners) and Angela Stephens, a very special Byte Back Student.



Byte Back's First ASL Office Track Graduates and their Instructor, Joseph Lewis

Before the certificates were handed out, Ms. Stephens spoke of her challenges to commit 100% to her studies and the benefits of staying focused. She closed with letting us know her aspiration to become a success story in one of our newsletters.

With all the greatness that occurred the late afternoon of a chilly December Friday, there was plenty of warmth in the auditorium of the Luke C. Moore Academy High School. The program ended with a group photograph taken by professional photography Kristian Whipple and a catered reception.

If you would like to view more photos from this event 'like' us on Facebook. If you are interested in finding out more about Byte Back, [click here](#).

## What To Expect Next From Byte Back: Upcoming Classes

Every year our New Year's Resolution is to be better than the last year by providing even better quality job training and certification classes, more class time slots and location options and to teach the most cutting edge material.

This year, with the help of the newly appointed Director of Programs, Tasiyiwa Mapondera, Byte Back has scheduled even more classes to fit the needs of the Washington DC and surrounding area communities. Byte Back is not only offering classes at its central location, 815 Monroe street NE, Washington DC, but also at the following partner sites:

- Hubbard Place Apartments, 3500 14th Street NW

- 1330 Tenant Association, 1330 7th ST NW
- Anacostia DC PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1800 Good Hope RD SE
- Benning DC PUBLIC LIBRARY, 3935 Benning RD NE
- Capitol View DC PUBLIC LIBRARY, 5001 Central AVE SE
- The Family Place, 3309 16th St. NW
- First Time Computers, 3101 12th ST NE
- Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital, 921 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
- Southeast Ministry, 3111 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE (This site recruits internally, inquiries should call 202.562.2636)
- Academy of Hope, 601 Edgewood St NE # 25
- Watha T. Daniel-Shaw DC PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1630 7th St. N.W.
- Language ETC, 2200 California ST NW DC
- Faircliff West
- Mayfair Mansions
- Jubilee Housing
- YWCA

(Please note that some of our sites recruit internally, please call us for specific site information (202) 529-3395)

Depending on the site, we now offer classes starting as early as 9:00 am and as late as 6:00 pm to accommodate the growing needs of students. We offer classes at Byte Back on Saturdays too.

In addition to our well-known classes of Personal Computing for Beginners and Office Track, we are now offering:

- Personal Computing for Beginners (in Spanish)
- Office Track (in Spanish)
- Personal Computing for Beginners (in American Sign Language)
- Office Track (in American Sign Language)
- HTML
- IC3 (Internet and Computing Core Certification)

Moreover, we are offering advanced certification courses in:

- A+ Certification
- Net+ Certification
- Security+ Certification
- Linux + Certification
- Microsoft Certification Desktop Specialist Technician Certification (MCDST)
- Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)

If you are interested in finding out more about Byte Back, our classes and course schedule, [Click Here](#)

Call us today for registration information (202) 529 - 3395

## Volunteer Opportunities

*"Volunteering is the most effective means to give back to your community, and to continue to develop the human spirit." --Ted Frazier, volunteer instructor*

Byte Back is always eager to take on volunteers. Whether you're a student, a participant in a service learning program, professional, organization or alumnus

who wants to stay connected with us, volunteering is an excellent way to stay in touch with our community and help us bridge the digital divide.

If you'd like to volunteer or learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Byte Back Director of Volunteer Services Eleanor Grewal at [egrewal@byteback.org](mailto:egrewal@byteback.org) or (202) 529-3395.

## About Byte Back

Founded in 1997, Byte Back seeks to improve economic opportunity in the Washington, D.C. area by providing computer literacy and job training for disadvantaged communities. Byte Back offers courses ranging from basic computer literacy to Microsoft Office to internationally recognized computer certification preparation. Byte Back is licensed by the DC Educational Licensure Commission as a Postsecondary Educational Institution.



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