



INFO-BYTES

A Quarterly Newsletter about Byte Back
Summer 2008



The Winning Combination:

Tasha Tillman is Byte Back's 21st Century Executive Director

Late in 2007, when Byte Back initiated its search for a new executive director, the Board made a list of the competencies, skills, experiences and personality traits that would satisfy its "heart's desire." Byte Back needed a director who:

- ❖ Understood and could guide educational and job preparation for the District's low-skilled and underserved population
- ❖ Could develop, guide and staff technological and computer based programs and facilities
- ❖ Would negotiate, fund, and insure the continuation of resources for a non-profit community learning center

As the search neared conclusion and the applicants were evaluated, the Board realized that as if by magic, their "heart's desire," could be 100% achieved in the person of Tasha Tillman. Her preparation (degrees), certifications, professional competencies, extensive and intensive experience neatly wrapped in her charming, warm and "people" focused personality proved to be the *winning combination*. A combination that bodes extremely well for Byte Back as it moves into its second decade of existence.

Tillman joined Byte Back on May 19th stating: *"I'm very excited about all that lies ahead for the organization . . . Our plan is to continue providing the residents of DC a much needed service by assisting low-income residents in gaining computer skills to help them secure employment that would provide a living wage."*

Tasha Tillman was born, reared and received most of her formal education in Colorado. Her preparation includes a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction (2003), a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Education and a Certificate from the Leadership Institute. She has held senior leadership and administrative positions in higher education, in corporations, in youth and community service organizations, (con't p.3)



Seated, left to right: Patricia Burton, Getachew Ayele, Diedre Wood, Roxanne Carter; standing, left to right: Program Director Debonny Heart, Sadie Boone, Shay Lynch, Alexandra Marynowych, and David Edwards.

Byte Back Graduates First Office Track Class

On May 31, the very first class of Office Track graduated and received their certificates of completion. Eight students attended the graduation ceremony with their families, while another fourteen also completed the program but were not able to attend graduation. Board Chair Steve Seiden addressed the students. Two graduates, David Edwards and Alexandra Marynowych spoke to the group about their experiences at Byte Back. Each of these students and all Office Track participants who need them, will receive a free refurbished computer and help finding a new job.



Byte Back Board Chair Steve Seiden addresses the graduates.



Graduate David Edwards talks about his experience with Byte Back, and Shay Lynch enjoys her success.

Individuals comprising the Office Track graduates (OTGs) were of diverse skill levels, ethnicity, nationality and geographic origins. The group included employed, unemployed and retired persons. An exit interview queried the OTGs about their experience and their plans.

In commenting on the Office Track program, graduates David Edwards and Greta Meredith stated that in the basic Office Track areas of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook, their skill level was already advanced. In fact, Meredith stated that she actually tested out of the basic program tracks. However, she took the Quick Books and “thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from the class.”

Most of the OTGs rated the training overall as “very good with sufficient time to learn the concepts and to practice.” All OTGs agreed that the classes were quite intensive with a “lot packed in and we had to move fast to keep up.”

OTGs Alexandra Marynowych, Sadie Boone and some others agreed with the statement, “I would definitely recommend it to others.” The information provided was described as “relevant preparation at a cost savings ” and it provided exposure and background for what would come in the “real world of work.” In fact, several graduates – Marynowych, Rebecca Rodgers and Boone -- have already decided to continue into more advanced classes such as the HTML. They

Byte Back wishes to express our gratitude and appreciation for the grants received this Spring from:

- J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation
- International Monetary Fund
- Clark-Winchcole Foundation
- Spring Creek Anti-Poverty Fund of the Community Foundation of the National Capital Region.

also suggest that additional Office Track classes be offered at the next higher skill level.

Boone also stated that she had sent a “thank you” note to Debono Heart for the “great heart” she had demonstrated in teaching Excel to a group with a skill range from “know nothing” to knowledgeable.”

Some expected to use their skills for personal projects and activities, but the primary use for the Office Track skills will be job related -- (a) find a job, (b) change careers (c) advance or get a promotion or a pay increase, (d) reenter the job market, (e) keep skills current or stay updated in a current field.

In summing up the program one OTG described it as “an absolute jewel to the community and the residents of the District of Columbia overall, “ Meredith and several other OTGs said that the “Director and Staff at Byte Back should be commended for their efforts to help improve the situations of those who are still looking for employment.”



Interim Executive Director, Shirley Marshall, holds up the check from the D.C. government.

Byte Back Receives \$100,000 Grant from the DC Government!

On March 6, Byte Back received a \$100,000 grant from the Deputy Mayor’s Office of Planning and Economic Development. These funds are to be used for our Office Track program, which will provide classes in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, bookkeeping and QuickBooks to 96 low-income DC residents. Each student will also receive soft-skills training such as resume writing and interview skills. Upon completion, graduates will receive their own computer and help finding a job. Computers will be provided by First Time Computers.

By late July, 65 low-income, DC residents had registered for Office Track and 44 had completed their coursework. We are so very grateful to the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, and to Councilman Kwame Brown for helping us provide our students with this access to opportunity.

2nd Annual Community Computer Day

Byte Back students, volunteers, teachers and donors came together on Saturday, May 31 for a day-long event of free computer workshops, refreshments and family activities. Workshops offered included *Buying a Home Computer*, *Your Child's Safety on the Internet*, *Office Track Sampler*, *Online Job Hunting*, and *Do-It-Yourself Computer Troubleshooting*. This outreach event is designed to bring together the Byte Back community in a celebration of learning.



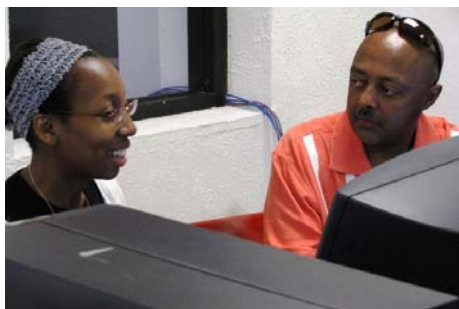
Richard Salmon enjoys a workshop taught by Jerryl Guy.



Kathryn Canary, Jewel Scott and Helen Mulkeen enjoy refreshments and fellowship.



Rochelle Sweeney relaxes after taking a workshop.



Tammy Barbee teaches a new student.



Amy Green & Breta Elliot-Meredith complete the final QuickBooks class.

Tasha Tillman (continued from page 1)

and in nonprofit organizations. In these positions she has done strategic planning, educational program and technical project development, budget management, fundraising and organizational capacity building.

She is extremely well-grounded and well-rounded in her educational capabilities. Her experience in education has included curriculum development, classroom instruction, and the coordination of in-service and online learning. Her technical expertise and skills have been demonstrated with online instruction and project management with ITT Technical Institute.

Ms. Tillman has significant educational policy experience. Working with U S Department of Education, she served on the National Assessment of Title 1 Independent Review Panel (2002 to 2008). This panel oversees educational assessments and studies that evaluate and insure the highest standards of quality. This is a most valuable combination, as it will make possible better assessments of Byte Back's programmatic impact.

Tillman is also skilled and experienced in establishing connections and providing leadership for community and grassroots coalitions comprised of parents, community, and business leaders. She developed and honed these skills while working with the *Friends of Choice in Urban Schools* and with the *Darrell Green Youth Life Foundation*

Tillman sees her "combination" as a distinctive fit for Byte Back. Byte Back's mission, she said, will contribute to a "brighter future" by providing the means whereby parents can improve their roles as providers. This will serve to increase the options for their children.

Looking specifically at Byte Back, Tillman said that she is not yet ready to "put anything in stone." But, her objectives definitely include adding appropriate certifications, and developing additional skill-focused programs that are aligned with current occupational trends. A job coordinator has already been hired to assess the needs of potential employers in order to match their

needs with student who enroll in Byte Back's programs. Tillman envisions growth and development that will include:

- A more attractive physical and spatial learning environment
- Additional instructors, courses, internships and apprenticeships
- Enlarged and technically upgraded computer labs and work centers
- An improved image and perception of what Byte Back is and its importance to the community

Steve Seiden, Board President, said of our new Executive Director: "She is very smart, dynamic and determined. We believe she is the right person to transform Byte Back into an organization that has long-term sustainability." As we all come to know Tasha Tillman, I am sure that you, too, will agree that our new executive director has the "winning combination" so very vital to leading Byte Back to "bridge the digital divide".

Information for this profile was obtained from the subject's Vitae and from an interview with Tasha Tillman, June 19 June 2008 conducted by the author, Barbara J. Flint, PhD – Byte Back Instructor and volunteer. Barbara Flint was named 2007 Byte Back Volunteer of the Year.



Board Chair Steve Seiden addresses the crowd after receiving a gift for his eight years of service to Byte Back.

Byte Back Celebrates Steve Seiden

On Friday, June 6, Byte Back headquarters came alive as the organization celebrated Board Chair Steve Seiden, who is stepping down from the Board after serving for 8 years. Mr. Seiden, CEO of Acquired Data Solutions, assumed leadership of the Board of Directors in July 2006, during a time when Byte Back was experiencing severe financial difficulties due to staff turnover. Since then, he has skillfully stewarded the organization out of financial crisis, brought on new board members, strengthened governance policies, overseen the initiation of a new, government funded Office Track program, and hired our new Executive Director. We are so very grateful for his loyal and devoted service to Byte Back, its students and its goals. Steve's leadership will be greatly missed, although Steve himself plans to remain active at Byte Back as a volunteer.



In addition to celebrating Steve Seiden, this event featured a silent auction fundraiser, which successfully raised over \$9,000 for the organization. Items auctioned off had been donated by area businesses and individuals, and included a Mexico Getaway vacation, a DVD player, dinner for two at La Fourchette, a month of Martial Arts Training, a week in Martha's Vineyard, and much much more. We are very grateful to the following businesses and individuals for their generosity:

American Plant * The 3610 Shoppe * Acquired Data Solutions * Anita Bonds * Artfully Chocolate * Bread and Chocolate * Brenda Barry * Brookland Shoe Repair * Gary and Laurie Lewis * Cactus Cantina * Capitol Hill Exxon * Casey Langer Tesfaye * Charlie Snow * Cleo's Brothers * Councilmember Thomas * Councilmember Brown * Dr. Cheryle Baptist, DDS *Fort Dupont Ice Arena * Friendship Heights Chiropractic * Full of Beans * Home Rule * Jean and Louis Seiden * Jerryl Guy * Katherine Ellsworth * Kathryn Canary * Kelley Ellsworth * Kellogg Collection * Kristi and Peter Balazy * La Fourchette * Lilvenquist & Beckstead Jewelers * Lisa Raymond * McCormick & Schmick's * Northeast Taekwondo Martial Arts Center * P Street Pictures * Petals, Ribbons & Beyond* Pizza Boli's of Brookland * Pulp * Senandoah Brewing Company * Solar Planet * Somafit * Steven Weinberger of Electric Design Studios * Strathmore * T.G. Cigar * Troika Theater





Summer Class Schedule:

Byte Back Headquarters Site:

PC Beginners AM

Mon & Wed 10:30 – noon
June 2- 18 or Sept 8-24

PC Beginners PM

Mon & Wed 6:00 to 7:30 PM
June 2-18 or Sept 8-24

MS Office Track AM

Tues & Thurs 10:00 AM – noon
May 27 – July 17 or Aug 19-Oct 23

MS Office Track PM

Tues & Thurs 6:00 TO 8:00 PM
May 27 – July 17 or Aug 19-Oct 23

PC Beginners Saturdays

Saturdays 12:30 -2:00 PM
June 7-19 (skip July 5) ,
Or July 26-Aug 30

HTML 1

Wednesdays 6:00 to 8:00 PM
June 4, 11, 18, 25, July 2, 9

HTML 2

Mondays 6:30 to 8:00 PM June 2-July 21

QuickBooks

Fridays, 10 amt6

Catholic Community Services Site:

PC for Beginners

Mondays and Weds
June 2-25 or July 7-23 or Sept 3-24

Mail Merge

Tuesdays, June 3-24

Excel

Tuesdays, July 1-29

Internet

Tuesdays, Sept 2-30

**Additional Office Track Classes for Youth
will be starting soon at Covenant House
on Mississippi Ave SE**

Save the Dates!!

Byte Back is holding these very special events
this fall.

Byte Back Job Fair
Thursday, September 25th at DCTV

Volunteer Appreciation Banquet
Sunday evening, October 5 at Strathmore

Byte Back Board of Directors

Peter Balazy
Larry Brown
Kathryn Canary
Kelley Ellsworth
Jerryl Guy
Jewel T. Scott
Julius Ware II
Charlie Snow, Ex-Officio
Tasha Tillman, Exec. Dir, Ex-Officio



815 Monroe Street NE
Washington DC 20017
Phone: (202) 529-3395
Fax: (202) 529-4684
Email: info@Byte Back.org
www.Byte Back.org