



INFO-BYTES

A Quarterly Newsletter about Byte Back
Winter 2008



Left to right: Steve Seiden, Harry Thomas, Yvette Alexander, and Joseph Askew

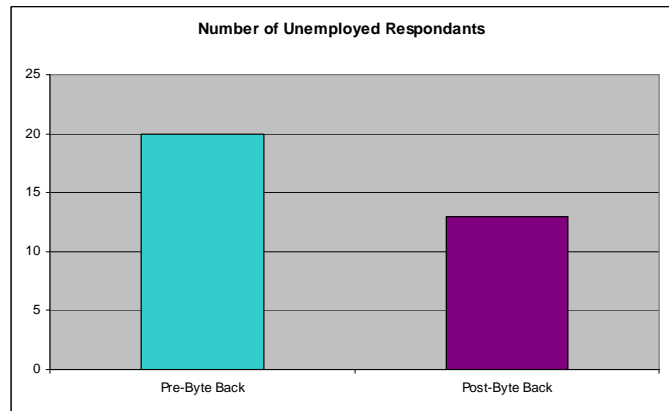
Verizon Presents Byte Back With a Check for \$15,000

On Sunday, December 9, at a fundraising House Party, Byte Back was awarded a check for \$15,000 by Verizon. Joseph Askew, Vice President of Verizon Washington, DC, presented the check to Byte Back Board Chair, Steve Seiden. Councilmembers Harry "Tommy" Thomas (Ward 5) and Yvette Alexander (Ward 7) also attended the event and spoke to the crowd about the good work that Byte Back is doing. Also in attendance were Maria Olivas, from Verizon; Sharlene Kranz, representing Kwame Brown; and Byte Back Boardmembers Larry Brown, Julius Ware, Jerryl Guy, Jewel Scott, and Rick Drom. The party was held at the home of Boardmember Kelley Ellsworth.

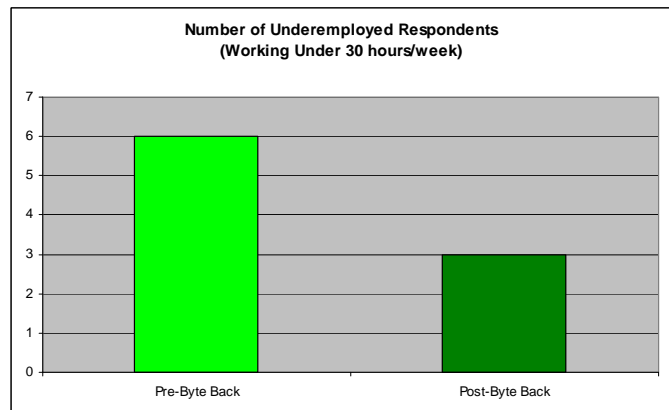


Telephone Survey Shows Financial Situation Improves for Students

In November and December 2007, the Board of Directors of Byte Back attempted to reach all 293 students from FY07 to ask them about their experiences at Byte Back. Of the 79 students we were able to reach by telephone, all but one agreed to complete our Student Outcome survey. The results of the survey were encouraging and enlightening. The 78 respondents took a total of 97 classes with a completion rate of 66%. Of those classes taken, 46% were the PC for Beginners class, 30% were other beginning courses such as Word, PowerPoint or Fast Track; and 24% were advanced courses such as HTML, DreamWeaver, Access, JavaScript and A+ prep.



The responses concerning employment and income levels showed that Byte Back is making a positive difference in these areas, and that we could do much more. The unemployment rate fell from 28% before Byte Back to 18% after Byte Back.



The rate of underemployment (working under 30 hours per week) went from 19% before Byte Back to 9% after. Similarly, those earning under \$10,000 per year dropped from 19% to 8%. Those earning \$30,000-39,999 per year rose from 19% to 31%.

Of the 78 students surveyed, 68% felt their self-confidence had increased due to their experiences at Byte Back. Nine percent said they had obtained a job paying more money as a result of Byte Back, 6% said they had obtained a more enjoyable job, and 3% said they had gotten a job due to Byte Back classes. Four percent said they received a raise and 3% said they received a promotion as a result of the classes taken.

As to the personal benefits received from taking classes at Byte Back, 37% said that as a direct result of taking classes at Byte Back, they were now able to use email, 35% said they were able to conduct research on the internet, 15% said they were able to do budgeting and/or banking, and 9% of respondents said they were able to help their child with homework.

The results of this survey showed that Byte Back is making a positive difference in helping our students bridging the Digital Divide. It is also clear that Byte Back would be doing much more to help our students improve their economic situation. Towards that end, Byte Back is initiating a new job-focussed program entitled, Office Track. (See related article.) The full results of the Student Outcome Survey are available for viewing at the Byte Back office.



Program Director, Debony Heart and former Executive Director, Patricia Jayne

The Search for a New Executive Director

November 16 was the last day for former Executive Director Patricia Jayne, who parted ways with Byte Back after 14 months on the job. Currently Byte Back is in the capable hands of Interim Executive Director Shirley Marshall and Program Director Debony Heart as the search begins for a permanent Executive Director. Ms. Marshall served as the Executive Director of Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services in Alexandria for many years, growing that organization from deficit funding to a budget of \$1.6 million. Ms. Marshall will be primarily focusing on fundraising, outcome measures, and transitional matters. Debony Heart graduated from Byte Back's Intern Program in January 2002 and was hired as Byte Back's Community Academy

Coordinator in 2003. Last year she was promoted to Program Director. Ms. Heart will be maintaining our traditional courses, and overseeing the initiation of our new Office Track curriculum (see related article). The Board of Directors has a goal of having a new Executive Director in place by May 1, 2008.

The Jovid Foundation

Byte Back Receives a 2nd Challenge Grant from the Jovid Foundation

In December 2007, for the second year in a row, Byte Back received a \$7,500 all-or-nothing Challenge grant from the Jovid Foundation. Any new or increased donations will be matched, dollar for dollar, by Jovid. The Jovid Foundation is a relatively small foundation which is particularly interested in funding neighborhood-based efforts that provide programs and services to low-income DC adults that help them obtain and retain employment. They have been a long-time friend to, and supporter of Byte Back.

This generous grant will help Byte Back enormously as we work to diversify our sources of funding and expand our individual donors. Last year, thanks to a previous Challenge Grant from Jovid and thanks to our generous donors, we were able to more than triple our individual donations. We hope you will consider helping us meet the challenge by making a donation to Byte Back today.

New Job-Focused Office Track Initiative Begins January 2008

In January 2008, Byte Back will begin a new program entitled, Office Track. Students will take classes in Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint, will learn bookkeeping and QuickBooks, will receive job search assistance and will receive a free computer for their home. In all, Byte Back will be enrolling 96 highly motivated, low-income D.C. residents in the program in the next few months. Students can choose to take daytime or evening classes. Those students who have completed some of the coursework previously can test out and move on to the next course. This program will be primarily funded by a \$100,000 D.C. Economic Development Grant to be presented by the end of January. Byte Back is grateful to Councilman Kwame Brown for his assistance in helping us secure this grant. Please contact Program Director Debony Heart for more information.



Barbara Flint, right, Byte Back Volunteer of the Year, with Kelley Ellsworth, Board Vice-Chair

Barbara Flint Named Volunteer of the Year at Gala Event at Strathmore

On Monday, November 12, Byte Back held an elegant event in honor of our 53 dedicated volunteers, who teach, write curriculum, work in the office and mentor our students. Each volunteer that was present at the event was given a certificate of appreciation. Barbara Flint was named Volunteer of the Year and was presented with a beautiful ceramic bowl. Boardmembers Jewel Scott and Kelley Ellsworth, as well as Program Director Debony Heart addressed the crowd, thanking our students, teachers and donors. Strathmore greatly reduced their fee and allowed Byte Back to use the entire mansion, which was beautifully decorated in Christmas lights. The event featured music by Tom Puwalski, flowers by Nicole Turner and wine from Addy Bassin's MacArthur Beverage, all donated. Thanks to videographer Phil Shapiro, students and volunteers were able share the experiences they have had at Byte Back. These testimonials create a visual and oral history of Byte Back's inspirations and successes. These interviews are available for viewing in our office, and will be uploaded to our website soon.



Byte Back Board of Directors

Steve Seiden, Board Chair
 Kelley Ellsworth, Board Vice-Chair
 Larry Brown, Treasurer
 Gary Lewis, Secretary
 Peter Balazy
 Kathryn Canary
 Rick Drom
 Jerryl Guy
 Rey Harris
 Serita R. Kelsey
 John Nicholson
 Martha Ochieng
 Jewel T. Scott
 Julius Ware II
 Charlie Snow, Ex-Officio
 Shirley Marshall, Ex-Officio



Winter Class Schedule:

E-mail and Internet PM

Mon & Wed 6:00 - 7:30 PM
Feb 4, 6, 11, 13

Word 2

Mon & Wed 10:30 AM - noon
Feb 4, 6, 11, 13

PC Beginners AM

Mon & Wed 10:30 - noon
Feb 11, 13, 18 20, 25, 27

Excel 1

Mon & Wed 10:30 - noon
Feb 25, 27, Mar 3, 5, 10, 12

PC Beginners AM

Mon & Wed 10:30 - noon
Mar 17, 19, 24, 26, 31, and April 2

PC Beginners PM

Mon & Wed 6:00 to 7:30 PM
Mar 17, 19, 24, 26, 31, and April 2

QuickBooks AM

Mon & Wed 10:00 - noon
Mar 17 to Apr 9

QuickBooks PM

Mon & Wed 6:00 - 8:00 PM
Mar 17 to Apr 9

MS Office Track AM

Tues & Thurs 10 AM - noon
Mar 18 to May 15

MS Office Track PM

Tuesdays & Thursdays 6- 8:00 PM
Mar 18 to May 15

PC Beginners Saturdays

Saturdays 12:30 -2:00 PM
Mar 29 to May 3

PC Hardware

Saturdays 12:30 - 2:30 PM
March 29, April 5, and April 12

We Think Byte Back Students Are The Greatest!



Left to Right: Boardmembers Rick Drom, Larry Brown and Steve Seiden; Councilmembers Harry Thomas and Yvette Alexander; Joseph Askew from Verizon; Boardmembers Jewel Scott and Jerryl Guy; Maria Olivas from Verizon; Boardmembers Julius Ware and Kelley Ellsworth; Sharlene Kranz from Councilman Kwame Brown's office.



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