Byte Back is Now Fully Wheelchair Accessible!

Byte Back now has a wheelchair accessible bathroom. Thanks to a generous grant received in mid December, Byte Back hired Canal Group to install the new facilities. The contractors began work on December 22, and by January 9, the bathroom was complete, on time and on budget. Now students in our lab and our main classroom will not have to trek down to the basement to use the facilities. Furthermore, Byte Back will now be able to better serve our disabled students. Not only is our bathroom wheelchair accessible, but Canal Group also removed the door between the lobby and the first floor classroom, to further improve accessibility.

In January, the District of Columbia began resurfacing the sidewalk which surrounds Byte Back. In the process, they were about to install a set of stairs which would block our accessible Monroe Street entrance. Felicia Hawkins, our Office Manager, went to work on the phones in an attempt to stop the construction of the stairs. Not only did she succeed in stopping the project, but she was able to talk the Department of Transportation into removing the small pre-existing step, thereby improving our accessibility. We would like to thank Mr. Brett Roulier, ADA Coordinator, and Mr. Abdullah Mohammad, both from DDOT, for assisting with this matter.

Women, Poverty and the New Administration

On Thursday, January 15, Byte Back kicked off its three-part lecture series with a lecture and discussion about “Women Poverty and the New Administration,” by Dr. Diana Pearce. This event was held at the elegant Charles Sumner School, and was well attended by Byte Back students, staff and board members, along with many others who were new to Byte Back. The lecture was preceded by a reception where guests enjoyed hors d’oeuvres, conversation and good company.

Dr. Pearce, who is a faculty member at the University of Washington in Seattle, is one of the foremost experts on women’s equity issues. She coined the phrase, “the feminization of poverty,” and has lectured and testified extensively on issues faced by low income women.

Dr. Pearce spoke about a history of inequality for women, the progress that has been made, and the challenges that still lay ahead. She shared specific data regarding pay gaps between men and women in the same position with the same qualifications, and the plight of single-parent homes lead by women. Dr. Pearce
addressed ways in which the new administration can better address the needs of women by choosing to focus on or fund programs that provide childcare for working parents or careers in fields where jobs are not necessarily “shovel-ready”, a term referring to jobs that are far more likely to employ men than women. Dr. Pearce answered a variety of questions from the audience before the evening came to a close. This event was sponsored by the Washington Area Women’s Foundation, HHC Design Studio, Canal Group Builders and Community Forklift.

The second lecture in the Byte Back lecture series will be held at the Charles Sumner School on February 19th at 7:00 p.m. There will be a reception prior to the lecture at 6:00 p.m. The speaker will be the Chief Technology Officer of the District of Columbia, Vivek Kundra. The topic will be “The State of Technology in the District”.

The New Face of Byte Back

Byte Back has had a face lift, thanks to the dedicated work of three squadrons of volunteers. Over three volunteer work days in January, a total of twenty-five volunteers donated a full day of labor to help sand, prime, and paint our headquarters building. They even helped assemble our new computer desks. Volunteers included students, teachers, board members and staff, as well as individuals who were new to Byte Back. Our Board Chair, Jewel Scott, rallied four people (Iwona and David Guier, Matt Daniels and Martin Banjo) to help from Dean & Company.

where she works. In addition, Sarah Roach brought two friends (Michael Dollinger and Jessica Howe) and four co-workers from GMMB (Kelly Hanahan, Anna Smith, Jennifer Griffith, and Jenny Isaacs) to spend Martin Luther King Day volunteering their time for Byte Back. John and Rebecca Feidelson were a father/daughter team who came to the District from Brookline, Massachusetts to participate in the Inaugural festivities. They too donated their time on Martin Luther King Day.

Daniel Brice is a professional house painter and Byte Back graduate who came to lend a hand. Allison Arrington is a former teacher at Byte Back. We even had two children, Kyra Maxwell, age 12, and Ebony Scott, age 6, come to help paint. Thank you to all the above volunteers and to Sharlene Kranz, Keith Allston, Rachel Noteware, Aloom Givens, Abid Ghori, and Justin McLaughlin, who all gave their valuable time to help beautify our headquarters.
Community Forklift, a nonprofit that sells surplus, salvage and green building materials, donated paint as well as brand new cranberry-colored carpet tiles for our basement classroom. Thayer/Hidden Creek donated desk chairs for our first floor classroom.

Serving Our Veterans

In December 2008, Byte Back’s Job Coordinator, Terrell Waller, initiated a partnership between Byte Back and the Southeast Veterans Service Center. Mr. Waller teaches Office Track to veterans at the center on Monday and Tuesday evenings. On Saturdays, the veterans come to Byte Back for their class. Initially, the class consisted only of men, but in January a group of women veterans joined the group. The Office Track program provides instruction in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, as well as employment training, such as career development, resume writing, interview skills, business attire, and conflict resolution. Office Track students attend classes and workshops as well as individualized mentoring. Upon completion of the program, students receive a free refurbished computer for their home. We are happy and proud to be able to provide this opportunity to the men and women who have served our nation.

Success Story

Kemi Owens Returns to Byte Back

Almost a decade ago, when Kemi Owens was in the eighth grade, she took an HTML class at Byte Back. She remarked that at that time, people were just starting to get online and learn basic computer skills. When she graduated High School, she went to North Carolina A&T in Greensboro, North Carolina. There she studied Electronic Technology. She also helped teach basic computer classes there.

Currently she is back in the DC area and she paid us a visit at our most recent Taste of Byte Back. She brought her little brother with her, and it seems he has been bitten by the technology bug as well! When I asked Kemi what she saw herself doing five years from now, she said she may be interested in becoming a teacher. Lucky for us, she wants to practice her teaching skills at Byte Back. Kemi got a brief volunteer orientation at Byte Back and wants to begin teaching classes with us in the very near future. Our favorite Byte Back success stories are those in which our students come back to share what they’ve learned with us. Kemi, we welcome you back!
The Computers Are Here!

Our Byte Back photographer was there to capture the delivery of a seven computers from First Time Computers, our partner. Each of these refurbished computers was then given out to our Office Track graduates. These computers all come with a monitor, keyboard, mouse, cables, and a network card for high speed internet. All computers have a minimum of a 10 gigabyte hard drive, 256 MB memory, and a 700 MHz processor; and come with a software package that includes the operating system, MS Office, anti-virus software, and Internet Explorer. If a student wishes to special order some additional bells and whistles, such as a CD burner, a DVD player or a printer, all they have to do is let us know a week ahead of time and pay a small fee for the extras.

One of the first graduates to receive her own computer was Damita Wilson. She picked out a sleek black Dell with a matching monitor. First Time Computers is located just a few blocks from Byte Back, at 3101 12th Street NE. First Time Computers accepts donations of used computers and computer equipment and puts them together into high quality systems for low income families who can't afford to buy them and for non-profits with programs for low income individuals. Their refurbishing is done entirely by at-risk youth they have trained. To find out more about First Time Computers, you can go their website: www.firstimecomputers.org.

Brookland Festival of Lights

On Sunday evening, December 14, Byte Back opened our doors in participation with the Brookland Festival of Lights. Hundreds of residents of the Brookland neighborhood and beyond flocked to our block of Ninth Street to sample holiday treats and to partake of a trolley tour of the impressive holiday lights throughout the neighborhood. “It was such fun to participate in such a warm and positive event in the neighborhood,” said Executive Director, Kelley Ellsworth. Byte Back wishes to thank the Brookland CDC for putting on such a special yearly event.
A Taste of Byte Back

On Wednesday, December 17, Byte Back held the first of our monthly open houses. Each month, a Taste of Byte Back will welcome newcomers to our organization with refreshments and a presentation on what we are all about. Staff, volunteers and students speak about what initially brought them to Byte Back and what they enjoy about the organization.

Potential volunteers hear about the many ways they can get involved with Byte Back, including teaching, assisting with teaching, curriculum design, fundraising, governance, mentoring, and marketing. The end of the presentation includes a teacher orientation for those who are interested in teaching or serving as an assistant teacher. A Taste of Byte Back is held on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 6pm to 7:30pm. The next sessions are January 28, February 25, March 25 and April 22. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Betty Benningfield at bbenningfield@byteback.org or (202) 529-3395 to sign up to attend.

Vision and Mission Statements

**Vision:** To be recognized as the premier source of affordable computer training and employment education for residents of the Washington Metropolitan area.

**Mission:** To improve economic opportunity by providing computer training and employment readiness skills to low-income residents of the Washington Metropolitan area.

Passed September 9, 2008

The Examiner

Byte Back
Executive Director Featured in *The Examiner*

On February 5, *The Examiner* printed their “3-Minute Interview” with Kelley Ellsworth, our Executive Director. They asked her a number of questions, including,

What is most rewarding about the job?

The ability to change people’s lives. You can imagine going through life this day and age having never touched a computer. There are thousands of people like that in this city. These classes open up that world and take that person to the point that they can shop online, download pictures and e-mail friends. That is amazing, to open up that world to them, especially since computers are becoming more and more important.
Ready, set, mark your calendars!

A BITE OF BYTE BACK
Fourth Wednesdays from 6:00 PM - 7:30 pm
January 28, February 25 and March 25

Individuals and groups who would like to learn more about Byte Back and how they can get involved are invited to attend one of our special receptions. Attendees will hear from Byte Back students, staff and volunteers. Immediately afterwards, anyone interested in volunteering as a teacher is invited to the Teacher Orientation. You must register ahead of time. Please send an email to: dheart@byteback.org.

Location: Byte Back  815 Monroe Street, N.E.

SOCIALIZE FOR A CAUSE:
Thursday, February 12, 2009
from 5:00-8:00 p.m.

Please join us for happy hour for food, drinks and fun.
Location: Madam’s Organ,  2461 18th Street NW

Bring your friends to Madam’s Organ to relax after a hard day of work and help another low-income DC area resident take advantage of the services at Byte Back!  We look forward to seeing you there!

BYTE BACK LECTURE SERIES
Location: Charles Sumner School, 17 & M Streets
Reception: 6 pm       Lecture: 7 pm

February 19: Vivek Kundra, Chief Technology Officer for the government of the District of Columbia will speak about “The State of Technology in the District.”

March 19: Jeffry Ian Ross, Criminologist and professor, will speak about Cyber Crimes.

These two lectures will be free to the public. We are currently seeking corporate sponsors for these events. Please email kellsworth@byteback.org for more information.

COMMUNITY COMPUTER DAY
Saturday, May 30, 2009
Free computer workshops from 10 am to 4 pm
Free reception and silent auction 4 -6 pm
Location: Byte Back, 815 Monroe Street NE

WINTER/SPRING CLASS SCHEDULE

PC Beginners AM
Mon, Wed, & Fridays 10:30 am to noon
February 2-13 or March 16-27

PC Beginners PM
Mon & Wednesdays 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm
February 2-18 or March 16-April 1

PC Beginners
Saturdays 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm
February 7-March 14 or April 4 to May 16

Email and Internet Search Class
Wed & Friday 10 am to noon
February 18 & 20
Mon - Wed 6-7:30
February 25 and March 2
Saturdays 12:30-2:00 pm
March 21 and 28

Word 2
Saturdays 12:30-2:00 pm
March 7-28

Excel 1
Saturdays 12:30-2:00 pm
April 4-25

MS Office Track AM
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00 am to noon
January 13-March 24 or April 7-June 11

MS Office Track PM
Tuesdays & Thursdays 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
January 13-March 24 or April 7-June 11

HTML 1
Wednesdays 6:00-8:00 pm
February 18-April 8

HTML 2
Mondays 6:00-8:00 pm
May 6-24
Would You Like to Learn More About COMPUTERS?

Then please come to the Third Annual

**Community Computer Day**

On

**Saturday, May 30**

Classes from 10 am - 4 pm

Reception and Silent Auction from 4-6pm

At

**Byte Back**

815 Monroe St NE

(Across the street from the Brookland/Catholic University Metro - Red Line)

**Free Computer Workshops, Refreshments, Give Aways and Family Activities (even a clown!)**

Come get a taste of what Byte Back has to offer by taking one of the following free workshops:

- Home Computer Maintenance,
- Your Child’s Safety on the Internet,
- Microsoft Office Track Sampler,
- Learning How to Use Email,
- Online Job Hunting,
- Basic Computer Hardware
- and MORE!

All activities are open to ALL and FREE of charge.

For More Information Call (202) 529-3395
Or email info@byteback.org
Or visit www.byteback.org
Byte Back Staff: (L to R, top row: Kelley Ellsworth, Isel Perez Castellanos, Terrell Waller, Deboni Heart; bottom row: Nia Turner, Cheryl Owens, Betty Benningfield, Felicia Hawkins)

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