



Thea Bowman Center

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

Fall 2013

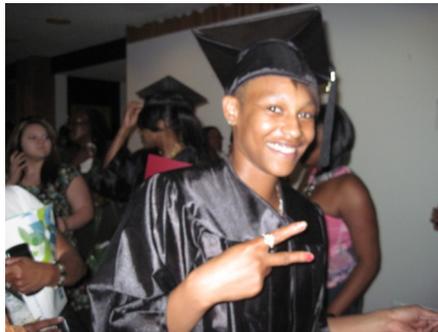
## Changing Lives: It's What We Do

"I need to get my diploma, because I want my son to grow up smart and complete his education," explained Antionette Jefferson when she passed the GED test in May 2013. All parents understand this goal, but until the young mother of a two-year old son found the Thea Bowman Center GED program, it did not seem attainable for Antionette.

Her story is not unusual for students in the GED program who juggle work and family commitments even as they struggle to make it to class. "While time and energy may be in short supply some days, there is never a scarcity of inspiration," says Adult Education Program Coordinator, Rosary Kennedy.

Antionette found her way to the Thea Bowman Center through the Cuyahoga County Work Experience Program (WEP), which helps people gain employment experience intended to lead to a job. While working in the youth afterschool program, she learned about the GED program. She entered it in January 2013, and saw her name

added to the list of graduates posted on the Center's wall in May. In June, a



happy Antionette walked across the stage at Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) to receive her General Education Degree. She is currently applying to CCC for college, even as she is working to raise her son. She's an inspiration to her older brother and sister, both of whom dropped out of high school in the 10th grade and are now enrolled in the Center's GED program.

### Sweeping Changes Ahead

The Thea Bowman Center offers daytime and evening individualized programs. Approximately two hundred

men and women from teens to late middle age enrolled during the last academic year. "Each student is seen as an individual," explains Executive Director, Ella Thomas. "Our goal is to meet students where they are when they arrive and individually devise a plan for their success if they are willing to make the investment." That investment will increase in January 2014 when sweeping changes impact the curriculum format and require computer-based online testing. Thus, students who may be uncomfortable with technology will simultaneously have to become computer literate while they are mastering subject matter. A Bruening Foundation grant has helped the Center develop the necessary computer lab infrastructure, but we are in need of enthusiastic, patient, college-educated volunteers to serve as tutors. Rosary Kennedy will provide orientation and guidance for all volunteers, who will have a first-row seat watching lives change. For more information, call 216-491-0699.

## November 16, 2013: Celebrate the Center!

"Celebrate Good Times, Come On!" are lyrics from the popular 1980 song, *Celebration*, by Kool & the Gang. They could easily describe the night we have planned to celebrate the Thea Bowman Center's rich history of service to the Mt. Pleasant community of Cleveland. Thanks to the tremendous commitment of so many, the Center continues to be a place of hope and opportunity, engagement and community, relationships and partnerships. Our future is

bright. Let's celebrate with joy!

The event will be held on Saturday evening, November 16, 2014, at St. Noel's Banquet Center. Eleanor Hayes, former television and freelance reporter, and currently the Director of Communications at the Cleveland Clinic, will be the Mistress of Ceremonies. We will offer a variety of delectable food at stations, music and dancing, exciting silent auction items, and lots of fun. To recognize their leadership in

advancing our mission, St. Dominic's Parish Community will receive the *Shining Light Award of the Thea Bowman Center*.

If you are interested in becoming a dinner underwriter or donating a silent auction item, or if you wish to volunteer, please call the Thea Bowman Center at 216-491-0699 or visit our website: [www.theabowmancenter.org](http://www.theabowmancenter.org). Invitations will be mailed in late September. Thanks for your support!

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## Message from the Executive Director

The **summer program** proceeded full speed ahead with over 60 youth ages 5-13 registered and participating in a variety of activities four days a week. The children enjoyed singing practice, violin lessons, dance, Kung Fu and other activities. They took part in the summer program finale in August to showcase what they've learned!

During July, field trip destinations included the Zoo and Rain Forest, the Botanical Gardens, the Aquarium and the Federal Reserve Bank and its Money Museum. The final field trip was to the Cuyahoga County Fair.

The summer program would not be possible without the generous support of Neighborhood Connections, Huntington Bank, Sisters of St. Joseph, Assumption Church, youth volunteers from Youth Unlimited and community volunteers.

**Adult education classes** were in session until the end of August with 20-30 people attending classes Monday through Thursday. Some honed their math, reading and writing skills while others were ready to take the GED test. Congratulations to the 18 students who have passed the test this school year!

With great volunteer support, the **Food Pantry** promotes healthy eating with food from the Food Bank and donations from neighbors and church partners. About 150 people continue to receive food each week. The Saturday buffet lunch is also greatly appreciated by community participants.

The Thea Bowman Center is a place where all are welcome. We are open and encourage the sharing of talents and lifelong learning experiences that will help make the Center more than just a building. Our goal is to be a true community of neighbors, friends, volunteers, staff and participants promoting dignity and respect, reaching out to inspire hope, encouraging self-improvement and building sustainable relationships.

Come and visit us at any time!

## Center Happenings

**All That Jazz!** The 2nd Annual Jazz Brunch and Concert was a great success with over 200 friends enjoying delicious food and the awesome sounds of Horns and Things. Rolondo Pizana Latin Jazz Band was the opening act. This wonderful fundraiser was held at the Thea Bowman Center on June 9th.

**Technology Upgrades.** Thanks to the Bruening Foundation, the Thea Bowman Center was able to make major technology upgrades, including computers for the computer lab.

**Adult Education News.** Starting in September, the Thea Bowman Center will offer computer classes to all adult education students in preparation for the new online GED test requirements that will take effect in January 2014. The center will also provide a basic eight week computer class for other adults in the Mt. Pleasant community. Contact the center at 216-491-0699 for enrollment information.

**Clothing Donations.** A special thanks to the Christ Child Society for donating 35 vouchers for uniforms and for providing winter jackets to 12 families.

## WISH LIST

The Thea Bowman Center is in need of a heavy duty vacuum cleaner. Any help you can provide would be very much appreciated!

**NEW WEBSITE :** Please be sure to visit our new website with online donation capability and new features at [www.TheaBowmanCenter.org](http://www.TheaBowmanCenter.org). Your donations, online or in the enclosed envelope, help to change lives!