

DEAR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS,

Have you noticed how time is moving so swiftly? It's already April 2008 and it seems like yesterday we requested your support in 2007. As time moves forward, the world continues to change and LEAP FORWARD into a new direction (positive and negative). Potential presidential leadership wants us to embrace "change" and with it the possi-

LEAP Forward, Inc. is passionate about our youth! There is an urgency inside of me that yearns to see our youth succeed. I know from my own experiences how much one good opportunity can impact a life.

Although as a small grass root organization, we can not correct years of neglect, we can begin the process of

In this issue, we will underscore, how the costs of tuition and books are escalating. You will share our enthusiasm at the efforts of one 7-year-old's fundraising effort. Additionally, we received letters from two past college tour participants, which illustrates how LEAP Forward has helped to enhance a life.

HOPE — CHANGE — ACTION — IMPACT

bilities it holds. And, yet, in the spirit of change, some things still remain the same.

Our youth are still suffering from teen violence, apathy, low academic achievement, rising education costs, and no direction. We believe that if we can provide youth hope their predicament may change and with a little action on our part, we can make an impact.

addressing some of these issues. Exposing disadvantaged youth to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) opportunities, assisting with funds for education, mentoring, and sharing knowledge and experiences are the main thrusts we continue to provide because of your support.

If you believe we can be a catalyst for change, we look forward to receiving your 2008 donations. As in Sen. Barack Obama's grassroots effort, regardless of your political persuasion, every donation you make in 2008 will go directly towards leveling the playing field, inherited by our youth.
Rhonda Thomas, Founder and President

Notable Events In 2007

January – First Edition of LEAP Forward Newsletter is released. Many thanks to Deborah Hemphill!

February – Participation at Black Engineers of the Year Award – Baltimore, Maryland

March – National Society of Black Engineers Conference – Columbus, Ohio

March 17 – Engineering Workshop at Hart Middle School, Washington, D.C. LEAP provides engineering literature and donates prizes

April – Founder's Birthday and LEAP Forward Anniversary Celebration

April 21 – Presented "What is Engineering?" at Patriot Technology Center's 10th Annual Youth Summit on Technology at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, Maryland

May – Engineering Presentation at Transportation Day event at Potomac Air Field – Fort Washington, Maryland

June – Carroll-Western U.M. Church Youth

Recognition. LEAP Forward provides star pendants donated by Cisco Systems, Inc. (www.cisco.com)

August – Four Book Scholarships Awarded.

August 4 – Fundraiser – Bus trip to The Color Purple play in New York City

October – Pizza Kit Fundraiser for LEAP Forward

December – One on one sessions held to provide students support with college applications, scholarship applications, resumes, etc.

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2007 Wallace Lorenzo Leeper Memorial Scholarship Recipients



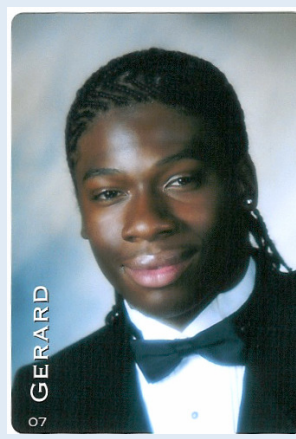
LEAP Forward, administers the Wallace Lorenzo Leeper Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship honors the memory of one of the most outstanding counselors who served at Calvert High School in Calvert County, MD. His dedication and devotion to young people framed many lives. He worked tirelessly to support students and provided an extremely personal touch to counseling. He really cared. His thoughtfulness towards the enhancement of dreams manifested itself through his actions. We honor his memory with the following scholarship recipients:



Kendra A Edwards

Patuxent High School
High Point University
Criminal Justice

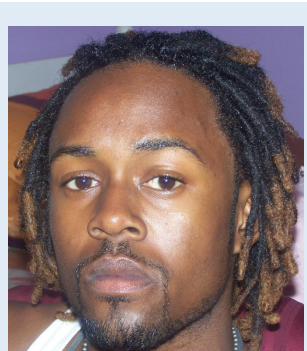
"I ultimately plan to become a criminal lawyer with a focus of representing our youth. I believe an undergraduate education will open the door to a bright and successful future as an Attorney at Law".



Gerard Steven Muschette

Calvert High School
Geneva College
Business

"I have developed a sense of high standards for myself over the past four years. I assumed the position of Captain of the football team, which made me realize what leading and being a leader was all about."



Jermaine Mason

Calvert High School
Coppin State University
Computer Science

"I will use it to help me pay my way through college so that I can succeed in life and get a valuable education."



Courtney A. Sutton

Calvert High School
Bowie State University
Criminal Justice/Education

"My parents have instilled in me that education is the most important thing that any person could ever need. Four years from now I will be able to say that the Wallace Lorenzo Leeper foundation was a part of why I was able to reach my goals."

WHY Should YOU SUPPORT LEAP Scholarship Efforts?

United Press International (UPI) Report High Book Prices Hitting Students,

"The price of college textbooks is soaring, creating an additional burden for students already struggling with the economics of surging tuition. Some studies show the average student pays as much as **\$900** per year for books." Read more at the following website:

http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Top_News/2008/01/14/high_book_prices_hitting_students/7275/



Everyone Can Make An Impact . . .

No One Can Do Everything But We Each Can Do Something . . .

After watching a TV program which depicted kids and adults in Africa who were poor, Dorien Minor, a 7 year old from Prince Frederick, MD wanted to do something here to help out. At the suggestion of his mom, Dorien decided to embark on a Joe Corbi food fundraiser to help a local organization.

During October and November, Dorien collected pizza orders with proceeds to benefit LEAP Forward.

His efforts yielded \$200.00 for scholarships. Thank you Dorien and ALL who supported this effort!

"It is true no one can do everything, but we all can at least do some thing. And a child shall lead the way..."



POINTS OF INTEREST & MESSAGE BOARD



UPDATE On 2006 Scholarship Recipient!

Dominique Reid, a 2006 Scholarship Recipient, who currently attends the University of Maryland College Park (Major– Architecture), is working hard and excelling. Through an email to LEAP Forward's Founder she writes: "Well LB called me once and I have not heard from him again, but there is GOOD news. You passed my resume to someone at DOT and they have hired me for a summer internship that started today. I will be working a 40hr work week. I am a GS-4. Thanks for helping me get an internship for the summer. It was greatly needed and it's greatly appreciated."

LEAP Forward's Core Philosophy, "Enhance Your Life With An Early Start & A Perfect Finish"

Out & About - LEAP Forward, Founder & President Rhonda Thomas speaks with youth at the Potomac Field Event.



Students - TSU College Tour 1998. Joanita is the young lady in the second row - 3rd person from the left. Reggie is the tall young man in the second row—5th person from the left.

Back down memory lane. Students participated in a college tour of Tennessee State University, Meharry University, Fisk University and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. Read thank you letters from Joanita and Reggie on page 4 --- and share the joy of their successes!

"All great achievements require time." Maya Angelou

"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly." Langston Hughes

Joanita's Thank You . . .

Dear Ms. Thomas,

LEAP Forward, Inc. has truly been my inspiration. As I look back over my life and career, I would not be where I am today if it were not for this wonderful organization and its members, Faith, and my belief in God. My success I owe to you.

I have been blessed to have been supported by this organization financially, emotionally, and academically for the past 9 years and has continued up until now. Yes, 9 years. It all started my senior year in high school. The opportunity to participate in several college tours opened my eyes to "a whole new world" for life after high school. The positive exposure was so influential and beneficial that my decision to attend Tennessee State University in 1999 was made very easy.

The support that I received made the transition from high school to college a breeze. The mentorship is beyond and above any standard criteria for any mentorship program. There were times that I wanted to give up. I thought school would defeat me, but Rhonda coached me through every step of the way. Her encouragement, enthusiasm, not to mention the love and passion for what she does was exactly "what the doctor ordered"! I am truly blessed for her being a significant part of my life.

During the two year gap between the completion of my degree (B.S. Electrical Engineering) and now, I experienced not being able find a job in my field, marriage, and a baby. LEAP was still there. In comparison to other organizations after the completion of a degree they still supported me. At this point, emotional support and encouragement was highly fa-

vored. It took two years to get my career started. I felt like changing my whole career path numerous times during this time frame. Rhonda and Wilhemina spent countless efforts critiquing my resume and helping with the job search. Not to mention all of the advice, "Don't give up! God has something in store for you!". I am currently working for Northrop Grumman. In my five months of working there, I have already excelled, making "Contractor of the Quarter for January – March 2007. LEAP Forward, you have truly been an inspiration. I will continue to **Learn Excel Achieve Perform Explore Rise!** Thank you for believing in me.

Sincerely, Joanita Ayers

Reggie's Thank You . . .

March 27, 2007

Dear Family & Friends,

When thinking about what to write in this letter, *my* first thought was to tell my story—how *I* came to TSU in 1999 with big dreams; how *I* struggled through those in-between years when *I* had quit; how *I* had worked hard to come back and was looking forward to graduation day; and how *I* was earning my degree. Then upon further contemplation, *I* realized that it is really not *my* story. It's just as much *your* accomplishment as it is mine. So, it gives *me* great pleasure to announce *our* graduation from Tennessee State University.

If there is one thing that I've learned during my time here in Nashville, it is that I cannot make it through life

alone. I've always been a very independent person. I rarely ask for help. I like to figure things out on my own and not be a burden to others. But each of you, in your own unique way, has helped me in reaching this point. Whether it was an encouraging word, a smile, a hug, money, a home cooked meal, or just a plain kick in the butt, you helped. There were so many times when I was on the verge of giving up and then one of you would come along to give a helping hand. I am filled with gratitude and so thankful for each of you. Countless sacrifices have been made as well by many of you and I carry the burden of them all. I hope that my life, in some way, will be worthy of what you have laid down in order for me to go forward...

Reginald Robinson

B.S. in Arts and Sciences

May 2007

Reggie's Words to others....

"I hope that it can be an encouragement to you as it was to me. Many of you have hopes and dreams that you wish to accomplish. Each of you will reach those times of difficulty—mountains that seem insurmountable; valleys that appear dark and unable to navigate. My hope is that you will "press" through to the other side. There is a great reward waiting for you on the other end. The joy of triumph, the satisfaction of a goal accomplished, and the pure delight of a desire achieved far exceed the pain and struggle that accompany the process of attainment."

TOYOTA MOTOR NORTH AMERICA, Inc. Donates \$5,000 To LEAP Forward



Toyota Donation! - As I pound the halls at numerous technical conferences, my desire is to find persons who share my passion to help our youth.

Though I interact with a lot of technical professionals who represent diverse industries, more often than not my efforts result only in empty



promises... and then there was Toyota! Several years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting T. And what she promised—she delivered.

LEAP Forward extends heartfelt gratitude to Toyota for embracing our efforts to help students to Learn, to

Excel, to Achieve, to Perform, to Excel and to Rise.

T. we wish you continued success at your new position with Time Warner!

Thank you,

R. Thomas

Quote of the Year — “It must be borne in mind that the tragedy in life doesn’t lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.” Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays

Jessica’s Thank You . . .

I would like to thank LEAP Forward for my college tour experience and for providing assistance for my college education. I will be graduating from

Morgan State University in May 2008 with a degree in Business Administration. With the help of LEAP Forward, I am finally able to realize

goals I look forward to pursuing within the near future.

Jessica Brooks

2007 Sponsors & Donors

We would like to thank our sponsors and donors for their continued support of LEAP Forward in 2007.

Sponsors

Toyota Motor North America, Inc.
\$5,000.00 donation

Cisco Systems, Inc. donated Star Pendants for a Youth Achievement and Awards Program

Wal-Mart (LaPlata, MD)
Gift Cards (Five \$25 Cards)

Target (LaPlata, MD)
Gift Cards (Five \$10 Cards)

Wal-Mart (Prince Frederick, MD)
Gift Cards (\$25)

Safeway (Prince Frederick, MD)
Gift Cards (\$25)

Best Buy (Waldorf, MD)
Gift Card (\$25)

Conrad White—Gift card

Donors

Al Douglas and Associates

Amando and Dorothy Gomes

Bill Finch and Blanche Newton

Gloria Dennis

Wilhemina Greene

Kim Johnson

Nathaniel Johnson

Maurice Irvine

Nathan Lovett

Scott McCluskey

Rita McNair

Natalie Ogletree

Rhonda Thomas

Wistar Withers

Supporters

Color Purple Trip Supporters

Joe Corbi Pizza Purchasers



LEAP Forward Board Members Give Back — South Africa Trip



Board members Wilhemina Greene and Rhonda Thomas traveled to South Africa during the Thanksgiving Break.

Travels included visits to Johannesburg, Soweto, Cape Town, Robben Island, Cape of Good Hope, Zimbabwe, Victoria Falls, Zambia and Botswana.

Numerous items were shared with our brothers and sisters

on the beautiful continent.

Despite adverse conditions in some areas visited, we were yet amazed at the joy, hope and the spirit of the people. See more trip pictures on page seven of LEAPERS Newsletter!

Share their experiences at www.leapforwardinc.org/SAtrip.htm

Fun! Fundraiser! Fantastic Like Fantasia!

Our fundraiser was a great success! Ciely, Mister, Shug, food, prizes, shopping and fifty-four LEAP Forward supporters from the Southern Maryland and Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. Who could have asked for a better combination!

This sold out event was enjoyed by all and \$1700 was raised toward the scholarship fund. We were also blessed to be accompanied by recent and past scholarship recipients.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all of the supporters and sponsors who made this event such a success. Thanks to all of the local merchants and corporations who made special donations to support this event. For their in-kind donations, we would like to thank Wal-Mart, Safeway, Target, and Best Buy. Thank you Pamela for acquiring the gift cards. Thank you to all of the past scholarship recipients who supported this event. **Much love and thanks also to Grace,**



Tammie, Pamela, and Kimberly for your support with ticket sales! Thank you Maurice, Conrad, and Wilhemina (\$\$, gift card, food).

LEAP Forward, Inc. Consulting Assistance

Ms. Thomas requested, for a second year, consulting help from the Black MBA Community Consulting Clinic.

As a result, successful Entrepreneur Mr. Kevin Sims, Founder and President of Auctus, Inc., was assigned to Ms. Thomas and her organization, LEAP Forward, Inc. As with many entrepreneurs, Ms. Thomas has a full-time occupation and is also responsible for the daily operations of LEAP Forward.

As a consequence, there are an abundance of issues that need to be addressed. Mr. Sims provided valuable knowledge about budgeting, networking and fundraising. A final report was submitted with an assessment of the organization as it operates today and recommendations for improvements.

LEAP Forward truly appreciates the time allocated by Mr. Sims and his dedication to this task. **THANK YOU SO MUCH** and much success.

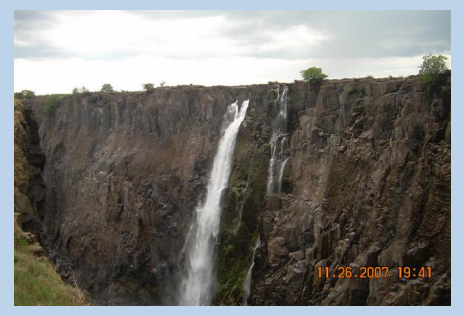
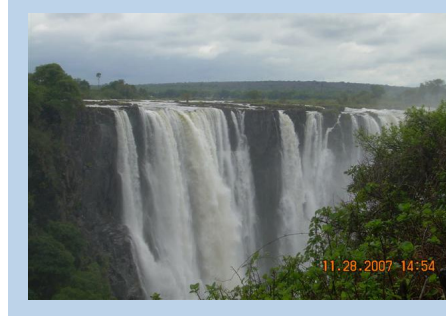
Mr. Sims specializes in leadership management training, marketing, finance, taxes, strategic planning, process improvement and consulting. For more information about his services, please contact;

Mr. Kevin I. Sims
President
Auctus, Inc.

www.auctusinc.com
(301) 567-5527



South Africa Trip Pictures!



Photos: Donations to children at a School in Zimbabwe; Lions—Safari experience in Botswana; Elephant—Zambezi River Cruise experience; Visiting the home of a friend in Johannesburg; Cape of Good Hope (end of the earth), Cape Town; Nelson Mandela Statue Cape Town; Victoria Falls (one of the seven wonders of the world); School Children in Zimbabwe; Lesedi Cultural Village in Johannesburg.

2007 Youth Summit



Youth Summits

Rhonda Thomas, presented at the 10th Annual Youth Summit on Technology sponsored by the Patriot Technology Center held on April 21st at the Eleanor Roosevelt High School (Greenbelt, MD).

Additionally, LEAP Forward provided an engineering exhibit on November 7th in Baltimore City for the New Light Leadership Conference. Students in attendance learned about math, science and engineering career fields and opportunities. Our youth need to hear our stories!

"Success is taking the talent that God has given you and using that to elevate other people"

Benjamin S. Carson M.D., Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institute



Who Wants To Be An Engineer?

Edited Article By Eugene Plater

There were a couple of experiences that convinced me I wanted to be a mechanical engineer, but there was one time, in particular, that stood out to me the most. That was the time when I took part in the MESA (Mathematics Engineering and Science Association) group at School.

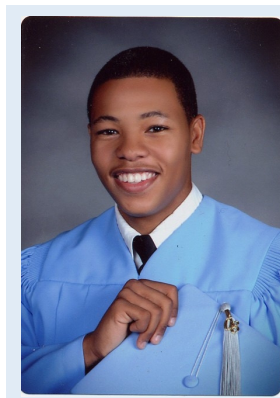
I had never really taken part in an organization like that. I got really interested in engineering from that group because of all of the things that it taught me. Also because of how interesting the work was that I did on our M.P.V. (Multi-Purpose Vehicle) Project.

I was amazed about how much amusement I got out of creating something from scratch; collecting data from testing the vehicle and using that data to draw conclusions about what could happen if we changed something on the vehicle. Also using that data to change the robot to suit the situation was amazing.

The group opened my eyes to how much more I could do if I kept learning about engineering. After that experience, I started getting very involved

in all of the engineering activities I could find.

Eugene Plater
Senior, Huntingtown High School
Huntingtown, Maryland



Eugene will pursue his collegiate education in Mechanical Engineering this Fall, 2008

NOTE: Scholarship and Internship Opportunities Appreciated!

Scholarship Application 2008

(www.leapforwardinc.org)

Greetings Applicants!

Launching Educational Assistance Programs Forward, Inc. (LEAP Forward, Inc.) is a non-profit organization that administers the Wallace Leeper Memorial Scholarship.

LEAP Forward will award a one-time book scholarship (minimum \$500.00) to deserving disadvantaged minority students from the local Southern Maryland and Metropolitan DC areas. Scholarships will be available for the Fall 2008 semester. To be eligible for consideration, the student must:

- Be a high school graduate who has been accepted by an University/College; and
- Displays scholastic, athletic and/

or leadership achievement; and

- Be in need of financial assistance (verification may be requested).

Upon notification of the scholarship award, the student must:

- Provide proof of college enrollment, and
- A high school photo (with permission for use in solicitation of future scholarship funding.)

Completed applications should be forwarded to:

LEAP Forward, Inc.

2290 Adelina Road

Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Questions????

We can be reached at 301.509.3872

or by email at

leapforwardinc@yahoo.com

Also Please Visit

www.leapforwardinc.org/Forms.htm for a scholarship application.

**MAY YOU HAVE SUCCESS IN
ALL OF YOUR COLLEGE AND
CAREER ENDEAVORS!**



LEAP Forward Founder's Birthday Celebration!

Rhonda Thomas

Rhonda Thomas celebrated 50 years of life (April 1957) and 6 years with LEAP Forward, as a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization (July 2001). Guests gathered at the Holiday Inn located in Solomons Island, MD to celebrate this special occasion.

One highlight of the evening was a well deserved acknowledgement of her contributions to the community noted with a proclamation from the Calvert County Commissioners, presented by Chairman, Mr. Wilson Parran.

Guests contributed \$1500.00 to the Scholarship Fund.



Above - Rhonda with her TSU Alumni Guests

Who Is LEAP Forward Inc.?

Organized officially in 2001, LEAP Forward, Inc. seeks to:

- Expose youth to math and science careers with an emphasis on engineering;
- Provide educational financial assistance to economically disadvantaged youth through scholarships;
- Expose youth to technical careers options through seminars, exhibits and industry tours;
- Introduce college life through college visits and tours;
- Advocate admission, financial aid, considerations;
- Assist in preparing necessary documentation to pursue post secondary education or vocational training.
- Introduce youth to technical professionals who can encourage, inspire and foster dreams.

OUR MISSION

“We believe in serving minority youth from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds through personal mentoring and providing them with social and cultural enrichment activities to include (but not limited to) informational seminars, field trips, and educational support services that foster positive self esteem, academic excellence and a comprehensive awareness of technical career options.”

OUR CORE VALUES

Our Core Values: Excellence, Dedication, and Commitment. We believe:

Excellence should be displayed in all we do and that all youth can achieve excellence when given an opportunity to learn and grow.

Dedication to our youth is necessary to meet their needs.

Commitment embraces commitment and as we make deposits in the lives of youth they will commit to society.

OUR VISION

“We believe in developing a generation of minority youth that will accept the challenge to become academically prepared, to enter math and science-based careers and to become the problem solvers and productive leaders that will address the needs of all humanity.”

Check us out at

www.leapforwardinc.org

New and improved website for LEAP Forward! Special thanks to S&R Design for his unselfish support and dedication to this task. Thank you for the South Africa photo gallery! We truly thank God for leading you to us! (Thanks Scott!)



LEAP FORWARD, INC.

WWW.LEAPFORWARDINC.ORG

Phone: (301) 509-3872

Or (410) 535-1803

Email: leapforwardinc@yahoo.com

Or

Rthomas@leapforwardinc.org

Excellence. Dedication. Commitment.

“PROVIDING HOPE & OPPORTUNITY”

Launching Educational Assistance Programs Forward Inc. (LEAP Forward, Inc.) is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization established to provide hope and opportunity with excellence, dedication and commitment to youth.

What Can You Do To Help?

You can make a difference in the lives of our youth. Help One, Reach One!

With Your Donation - -

- You can offer options.
- You can offer help.
- You can offer hope.

Help us to increase the availability of positive activities for youth by providing funding to help to solve critical needs. **Donations are 100% tax deductible.**

Help us to increase the availability of positive activities for youth by providing educational and promotional materials that can be shared with youth. **Donations are 100% tax deductible.**

To make a donation, please navigate to our webpage at www.leapforwardinc.org and select the link entitled “Donations”. Here you can download a donation form or see page 11 of the LEAPERS Newsletter for additional information.

Launching Educational Assistance Programs Forward, Inc.

**Won't you invest
in our children's
education?**

LEAP Forward is a non-profit corporation that qualifies as a 501 (c) (3) corporation under the Internal Revenue Code. As such, contributions are tax deductible in accordance with federal law.

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

Thank You



Launching Educational Assistance Programs Forward, Inc.

2008 Contributions

**Yes, I want to invest in our children!
Please accept my tax-deductible
donation of \$_____.**

Mail to: LEAP FORWARD

2290 Adelina Road

Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Student Interest Form

Student Interest Form



Name

Address

Address

Phone Number

School

Classification (Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior)

Interested in

_____Engineering

_____Scholarships

_____Math and Science Career Options

_____College Assistance

_____Literature

_____Academic Support