

## The Executive Director



Photo by: Beverlie Lord

Greetings Stokes School Community:

Around the country Americans have just celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, a national day of service, by volunteering and giving back to their communities. At Stokes School, service to others and our community happens more than one day a year - it is a way of life. We affirm our commitment to service every morning when we recite our three school rules, "I will take care of myself, I will take care of others and I will take care of my community." Our Scholars begin learning about service to others as early as Pre-K and Kindergarten by participating in projects like making sandwiches for the homeless

and cleaning up their playgrounds. Some of our older scholars have organized projects to take care of our global and local communities by raising funds to build a well in a Nigerian village and helping to clean up the Anacostia River. Staff at Stokes School also strive to lead by example and serve our communities in several ways. Some staff members organize and support youth development efforts in their immediate neighborhoods, others serve on boards of community based organizations, while others serve internationally by supporting initiatives like educating girls in developing countries.

Service is part of the Stokes School ethos. But did you know that this ethos is based on the way that Elsie Whitlow Stokes served her community during her lifetime? Not only was she a teacher for 36 years, but she also tutored students at her home after school, grew vegetables in her backyard every summer to share with her elderly neighbors, organized and taught a group of developmentally challenged teenagers and adults at her church and was a member of the Zeta Phi Beta Inc., a historically black Greek-lettered Sorority. As a member of Zeta Phi Beta, she served as Treasurer for her sorority's local chapter and managed their finances so well that she and her sorority sisters were able to offer several college scholarships to young people in her community who may not have otherwise been able to afford college.

Elsie Whitlow Stokes instilled this sense of service in her daughter (my mother), Linda Moore, and in turn, Ms. Moore ensured that community service is one of the pillars on which Stokes School stands. Over the years we have seen many of our Stokes Scholars grow into adults who took the lessons that they learned about service to actively give back to community. When you have a moment, please watch this TEDx Talk given by a Stokes School Alumna, Diana Acosta, about [The Power of Community](#) and her chosen career of service to her community. Also, please share with your scholars the different ways that you and your family provide service to the community.

Our hope is that Stokes Scholars continue to heed these lessons and to understand that through service, we are not only helping others and making our communities better but we are also investing in our own happiness and well-being. The more we give – the more we receive.

Sincerely,



Erika Bryant  
Executive Director

*"Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?"*