

## Words from Pam Jones

When men and women support the growth and empowerment of teen girls and young women, they raise the quality of life for everyone in our nation. Why? Because when empowered women lead they don't just lead in their homes, they lead businesses, they lead in their communities, and they give voice to issues that are important to our collective future — like economic security, education, and overall well-being.



For the past ten years I have had the privilege of witnessing the continuum of empowerment that is distinct to the mission and legacy of the Crittenton family. I have seen the strength and growth in each teen girl that we serve.

Let me give you just one example. Tia Dolet, a young woman with an infectious laugh, joined Crittenton's SNEAKERS program in the 9th grade. Make no mistake, as with all girls the strength of Tia's character was latent in her inner core from the start. A Crittenton caring and trusted adult helped Tia bring out that character, enhanced it and let it flourish in a safe place – a place to ask questions, to learn about healthy relationships, career possibilities, family values and other issues of concern to Tia and her peers in weekly group meetings.

In her 5 years with Crittenton, Tia evolved from a girl to a confident young woman. She graduated from high school and completed her Bachelor's degree at American University while volunteering her time at Crittenton, mentoring other girls. She was a founding member of Crittenton's Youth Advisory Board, "Our Voices Affect Our Choices," and gave us valuable insight on ways to improve programming and services.

With an abiding interest in youth development, Tia came "home" to Crittenton to become a full time program leader, working with 80+ girls each week in our communities. She instilled values in her girls that led them to make informed decisions. She taught girls how to advocate for their individual rights within the public school system and how to avoid discriminatory suspensions. And, while she was serving 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade girls at Crittenton, she was earning her Master's degree in education, with a specialization in minority and urban education.

I have known Tia for ten years now, and she never ceases to amaze me. Recently she accepted a new position at the Universities of Shady Grove, where she is a Student Success Coordinator and Coach, helping first generation college students transition from earning their associate's degree to beginning the work on their bachelor's degree.

Tia is but one of the Crittenton girls who have finished high school, gone on to college and into careers they never dreamed of before they came to Crittenton. Tia is a strong thread in the Crittenton fabric – a virtual tapestry woven from the contributions of the girls, our inspiring alumnae, our visionary board members, our staff, and you, our supporters who invest your time and resources.

I hope that this re-envisioned Crittenton Chronicle newsletter will more closely connect our readers with amazing young women like Tia Dolet and with the more than 400 teen girls across the District and Montgomery County that we are serving this year.

As always, thank you for standing with us in our work and our mission.

**Warm regards,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tia Dolet', written in a cursive style.