



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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August 25, 2009
For Immediate Release
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Independence NHP Creates Programs to Attract Local Students

Philadelphia, PA -- What did *you* do this summer? Staff at Independence National Historical Park (INHP) spent the summer months developing two new programs that are sure to be a hit with kids: a new Junior Ranger program for the Germantown White House and an INHP component of the National Park Service's Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program. Thanks to summer staff Kathy Lee and Tawanda Morgan, INHP looks forward to an increase in youth interest in our city's national park in the coming year.

INHP welcomed two summer rangers to develop new educational opportunities, particularly those that will attract more African-American youth and connect to students of the Philadelphia School District:

- * Kathy Lee, a highly decorated and nationally recognized veteran teacher with the Philadelphia School District, joined the National Park Service's Teacher -Ranger -Teacher program at INHP. While at INHP, Kathy is leading a group of students from The School of the Future in creating a video of the park that will be screened on Independence Mall on September 11, along with a preview of the new Ken Burns miniseries, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. Funding for that project is possible through a grant from the National Park Foundation to support programs that encourage minority youth participation in park programs.
- * Tawanda Morgan, a Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern with the Junior Ranger Ambassador Program, spent her summer making a historical site fun for kids, developing the junior ranger program for the Germantown White House (Deshler Morris House). This program includes the design and development of the junior ranger booklet and patch.

Both of these summer projects will have long-term benefits for the park and the city schools. The new Junior Ranger Program at the Germantown White House is an effective tool to make history accessible to children, in a way they can understand. Tawanda explains, "For a child of 4 or 7 years old, a historical site can be boring! Young children may not understand concepts like liberty or freedom." The new Junior Ranger Program at the Germantown White House means this newly re-opened site -- that tells the story of George Washington and his household, including enslaved Africans -- will be more accessible for young children as well as adult visitors.

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By training teachers to provide interpretation of historic buildings and events for visitors, the Teacher –Ranger – Teacher program helps teachers learn and understand the importance of historical preservation and provides stronger links between the National Park Service and the School District of Philadelphia. For example, Kathy will proudly wear her National Park Service uniform to school during National Park Week in April.

Kathy looks forward to working with the National Park Service and infusing what she learns into her own school as well as the entire District. She says, “Every school year I ask my students a simple question, how many of you have seen the Liberty Bell? Only two out of thirty kids ever raise their hands. Too many of them have never been to Independence Hall or Old City. This is why I wanted to become a part of this program.” Kathy is eager to begin finding ways to encourage more Philadelphia teachers and their students to come and explore physically and electronically how history unfolded right in their own back yards. Doing so she says will make history come alive and create productive energized citizens.

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