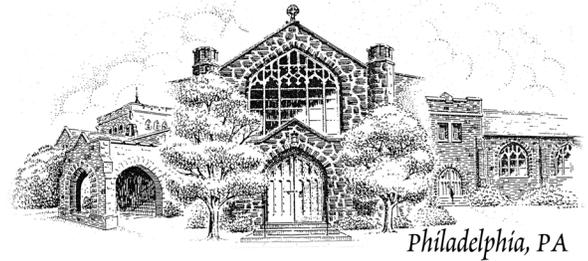


FOUNDED 1792

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas



Philadelphia, PA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

St. Thomas Academy (After School Initiative) Responds to District Financial Crisis

Philadelphia, PA September 16, 2013 - Today, the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas (AECST), the first Black Episcopal Church in the United States, announced that it will launch the St. Thomas Academy, an after school program for school age children enrolled in schools in West Philadelphia. Students, selected by their school staff, will work together with caring adult volunteers and fellow students in grades 3 to 5, 6 to 8, and 9 to 12 to receive homework help, learn critical technology skills needed to succeed in school and the world of work, and to prepare for college and other post-secondary opportunities.

The St. Thomas Academy is a part of AECST's growing outreach ministry for young people including the Tree of Life Prison Ministry, the Jesse F. Anderson, Sr. Scholarship Fund, the Boy Scouts Troop #133 and the planned Absalom Jones Day School (AJDS), an early education childhood center. To learn more about AECST Outreach Ministries, please visit: <http://www.aecst.org/outreach.htm>

Anthony Carter, President of Overbrook Technologies shares, "The St. Thomas Academy is a faith based partnership of volunteers: educators, businesspeople, parents, fraternities & sororities all working together to create a safe and innovative learning community for children. During these challenging times for the School District of Philadelphia and all schools - district, charter and parochial - the St. Thomas Academy will provide much needed academic enrichment support for the teachers, students, and families that reside in the Overbrook and Wynnfield communities of West Philadelphia. The St. Thomas Academy seeks to establish partnership agreements with Overbrook Elementary, Samuel Gompers Elementary, Dimmer Beeber/SLA Middle School, Overbrook High School and Ad Prima Charter School.

"As an historic community of faith, whose parishioners include many active and retired educators from the School District of Philadelphia, we believe that we are called to do something to help the children and families of Philadelphia during what is the most challenging time for K- 12 education in Philadelphia. We encourage all communities of faith to do the same" Father Shaw AECST Rector said.

On Sunday September 22, 2013 @ 10 a.m. Dr. William Hite, Jr. Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia will be the guest speaker during the parish's Annual Education and Back to School Observance, when prayers will be offered for all parents, students, families and school districts. The public is invited. To read Dr. Hite's biography please visit <http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/leadership/>

Founded in 1792, the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas (AECST) is the first Black Episcopal Church in the United States. We are a Christ-centered community that welcomes all people. This community embraces and executes the core values of our founder, the Reverend Absalom Jones, the first Black Episcopal Priest in the United States: leadership, morality, spirituality, equal rights, education, liberty, charity, justice, humanitarianism, self-determination, self-respect, and freedom. To learn more about us, please visit www.aecst.org

The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas (AECST) is located at 6361 Lancaster Avenue, between Overbrook Avenue and Sherwood Road, one block west of City Line Avenue. If you would like more information about AECST and the St. Thomas Academy, please contact Father Martini Shaw, Rector at (215) 473-3065 or via email at fmartinshaw@aol.com

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