

Seeds 4 Success Changing Eastport Youth | Eye On Annapolis

[EOA Staff](#) | November 4, 2012



Members of Seeds 4 Success Board and Staff (from left to right) Christy D'Camera, Jean McCoy, Karen Feldman, Jane Lawrence, Helena Hunter, Jessica Snell-Johns, Valerie Drozd, Jenelle Davis, Megan Howell. Photo by [Tony J Photography](#)

With a beautiful sun setting, more than 100 Annapolitans gathered at "Cocktails for a Cause" to celebrate the remarkable achievements of Seeds 4 Success (S4S), a four year-old grassroots organization headquartered in the Eastport Community Center. This local nonprofit aims to provide children and families living in Annapolis public and subsidized housing communities with knowledge, services, experiences and relationships that help them grow into successful, healthy and contributing adults. Best known for its original program, The Eastport Girls Club, S4S recently launched two additional programs; I am A Reader and Parent Challenge. Cocktails for a Cause was generously sponsored by many individuals and local businesses including Severn Savings Bank, D'Camera Group, BB&T, and Annapolis Accommodations, raising more than \$15,000 for S4S.

The Eastport Girls Club (EGC) is an after-school tutoring and goal-based mentoring program for girls in grades 5-9. I Am A Reader is an after-school individualized literacy program for boys in grades 1-3 that focuses on addressing gaps in reading skills before they become barriers to overall academic success. The Parent Challenge is an educational, incentive-based program focused on increasing family cohesion and parent involvement in their child's education.

Executive Director Jessica Snell-Johns highlighted their most recent success. Most EGC girls begin the program up to three grade levels behind in reading. However, after two years in the program, most girls are reading at grade level. In Spring 2012, all girls scored "proficient" in reading on the Maryland State Assessment (a standardized test with three scoring levels: basic, proficient, and advanced). Dr. Snell-Johns explained: "Without intervention, research predicts that they would remain up to three levels behind and develop further frustration with school. Having all our girls score so well was a huge step forward. It not only validates our collective hard work but allows our girls to have a "can do" attitude that reaches beyond their reading capabilities. Helping children set high expectations and providing them with support to achieve these goals, empowers them to become self-sufficient, contributing adults."

Recently EGC was named 2012 Best Community-Based Mentoring Program in Anne Arundel County and in October received the prestigious Fannie Lou Hamer award for community service, the first nonprofit to ever receive it.

C'mon, how 'bout a share? You know you want to!