



A Mind Inspired by Horizons

Algernon Kelley, Ph.D., a graduate of Horizons at New Canaan Country School, shares this message with students across the country. In July, Algernon spent a full day with the students of Horizons at New Canaan Country School, founded in 1964 to serve children from low-income families of lower Fairfield County. The success of this program has led to 20 Horizons programs across the nation.

Algernon, now a Professor at Xavier University of Louisiana, developed a love of science that inspired him to earn his Ph.D. in Chemistry in 2009. Interestingly, his love of science was born from his fear of swimming. "When I started Horizons I was so afraid of the water that I would not even go in the shallow end," Algernon recalls. "Learning how to swim and overcoming that fear helped me realize that I could do anything." Science experiments done in the pool reinforced his abilities in the water and captivated his mind.

At all Horizons programs, every child learns to swim. By the end of his first summer, Algernon received the Most Improved Swimmer award. Outside of the pool, Horizons teachers taught him how to take complicated subjects and make them simple, resulting in an increase in confidence to step outside of his comfort zone in the classroom.

Horizons at New Canaan Country School places a strong emphasis on project-based learning, giving kids real life experiences to make learning fun. Experiential learning is a key component for engaging students, and Algernon was no exception. Horizons had a similar impact on his brothers, four of whom went to Horizons.

The Kelley family all enjoy great success:

- An'Dre is an accountant for the state of Nevada and a pastor of his church.
- Adrian lives with his family in Richmond, VA and is a Staff Sergeant in the Army. He just returned from Afghanistan.
- Alden earned his BS in Political Science from the University of Nevada. Sadly, he passed away in March 2011 from a long-term illness.
- Averill, the youngest of the boys, is a high school teacher in Las Vegas.

Algernon travels the country telling children his story and hoping to show them that they can be anything they want to be. "A lot of the kids I speak to have never met a minority doctor," he said. "I hope that by exposing children to my story I can inspire them."