

## Washington, DC Ward 5 School Administrators Lead with Compassion and Community Engagement By D’Nyah Jefferson Philmore

In the heart of Washington, D.C., the administrators of Ward 5's Dunbar School, Creative Minds Middle School, and Wheatly Education aren't just molding young minds within their walls; they're also leaving indelible marks on their communities.

Meet Semaja Soloman, Esmeralta Sullivan, and Christian Andrews, three individuals whose leadership expands beyond the boundaries of their administrative positions.

Semaja Soloman, the dedicated secretary at Dunbar School, represents the values of hard work, honesty, and great service. "Seeing the kids every day brings me joy," she admits, her dedication evident in everything she does. Soloman's compassion extends beyond the bounds of her work, as she engages in acts of kindness such as aiding the elderly with groceries and supporting those in need. As she puts it, "It's about opening doors, both literally and metaphorically."

Esmeralta Sullivan, the energetic Director of Operations at Creative Minds Middle School, offers a wide range of knowledge and skills to her position, having moved from being an immigrant to managing school operations. "Being present and visible to students, especially girls, sends a powerful message," says Sullivan, who bases her approach on empathy and resourcefulness. Sullivan advocates for accessibility and community service through projects such as the Capital Food Bank, inspiring students to trust in their own abilities. "Even in the darkest times, there's always hope for a brighter tomorrow," she concluded.

At Wheatly Education, Christian Andrews serves as the registrar, advocating tirelessly for community development and inclusivity. Faced with a diverse student body, Andrews recognizes the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and confidence among students of varying backgrounds. "Inclusion is not just a goal; it's a necessity," she emphasizes, underscoring the ongoing need for more support in educational settings. Through her leadership, Andrews strives to bolster student enrollment and engagement, paving the way for a brighter future for all.

Despite the myriad challenges they encounter, these administrators remain steadfast in their dedication to both their schools and communities. Their stories serve as a testament to the transformative power of leadership, compassion, and community involvement. As Sullivan aptly summarizes, "In the midst of adversity, there is always the promise of progress. This too shall pass, and brighter days lie ahead."