



ry Neal Awards, the District Lines Poetry on Metro Competition, and the Junior League Teen Poetry Contest.”

The highlight for students in both the in-school and after-school program are the editions of hArtworks that is published three times a year. Distributing over three hundred copies to classmates, teachers, parents, and other members of the community, hArtworks is the nation’s only inner-city public middle school literary magazine of its kind. It is a professionally designed magazine that boasts a sleek cover and candid shots of the young writers throughout the pages. The magazine celebrates the expression of youth in grades 6-8 and is edited by the youth as well. To promote the magazine, students give readings throughout the community and offer signed copies of their work for sale to audience members.

“I was published in a book when I went to Patterson Elementary; I’ve been writing for a while,” says Angelo. He shares that he likes to write about his sister, God and, of course, apples.

“My mom told me, ‘See what you can do when you’re not being bad,’ when I showed her the magazine with my poem in it.”

DCCWW encourages youth to use writing as a creative tool in all aspects of

HARTWORKS LITERARY MAGAZINE

Creatively expressing the voice of youth

BY KHADIJAH ALI-COLEMAN

AT Hart Middle School, Ms. Carolyn Jackson’s 6th grade developmental reading class perks up as Ms. Ruby from the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop asks what does love look like.

“It’s like an apple,” says 12 year-old Angelo Martin as he sparks the class discussion of how love and an apple can compare.

Angelo loves apples and has written about his love of apples in his poem “In Praise of the Apple Tree”, published in the Winter 2005 edition of hArtworks, a literary magazine published by the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop (DCCWW). Angelo, like the majority of his developmental reading class, have become published poets while meeting weekly with Ms. Ruby —Ruby McCaen—and other DCCWW facilitators, learning different creative techniques.

“They get excited and motivated when they see themselves in print,” says Jackson. “It’s an esteem builder for them.”

Jackson, who has shared her reading students with DCCWW for the past five years, believes that the partnership between Hart Middle School and DCCWW is

great and a highlight in many of the children’s lives. “[DCCWW] brings a new and fresh perspective of reading and writing to the children and is very motivating. Overall, it’s very positive.”

The D.C. Creative Writing Workshop’s writers-in-residence, like McCaen, work with teachers in grades 4-12 to provide interactive writing instruction to students. They encourage the students to keep a personal creative writing portfolio to record his or her progress throughout the year.

In addition to the in-school programs, DCCWW has an after-school program are based at Hart that is open to all students, ages 5-18, in the surrounding neighborhood. Participants have the option of attending up to three days a week of activities. Eighth-grader Sherelle Barnes attends after school. “I’m in the Creative Writing Workshop with Ms. Nancy—it’s fun.” The after-school program, led by DCCWW’s artistic director Nancy Schwalb, is a venue for creative genius.

According to DCCWW’s website, “Since the Writing Club’s inception, Hart Middle School has developed a city-wide reputation for artistic excellence, consistently fielding winners in the Parkmont Poetry Contest, the Lar-

their lives.

Ceshelle Evans, 11, admits that she doesn’t write that often when she is not in her DCCWW class, but she enjoys the poems that she has written while writing with her peers. She is especially proud of her appearance in hArtworks.

“When the magazine came out, I told everyone!” she gushed.

Ceshelle’s poem “Air” shares a page with a photo of the DCCWW Executive Director, Jamila Wade and the poems of two classmates.

“This class is fun. I write now when I have nothing else to do,” says Angelo.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

May 2005 marked the debut of two new publications from DCCWW, *Simon Says*, a literary magazine featuring the works of students at Simon Elementary, and *Voice of the Knight*, a literary magazine devoted to the writings from Ballou Senior High. For more information about DC Creative Writing Workshop, contact Jamila Wade at 202.297.1957 or visit their website at www.dccww.org.