

FROM THE FIELD

Using Professional Skills to Make a Difference

By Kendahl Cruver

As many of you know, our *Managing Director Mary Martin* is currently serving on the Executive Board of the King County Boys and Girls Clubs. Recently, she learned that the Rainier Vista club, located in one of Seattle's most economically disadvantaged areas, was looking for assistance in updating the sustainability plan for their new facility. *Mary* made an appeal for help to the talented people working in the Seattle Jefferson Wells office. She found an eager volunteer in *Internal Controls Professional DeAnne Williams*.

DeAnne had a personal reason for wanting to help the Boys and Girls Club. When she was in search of a strong after school program for her son, she found what she was looking for in the Mercer Island club, where he thrived from age 5-12. She said, "it is truly one of the greatest organizations out there for kids", and for that reason, she wanted to give something back.

Though *DeAnne* accepted the project with the

expectation that she would spend one afternoon reviewing the plan, she found that she had more to offer. Her initial work on the plan impressed the club, and she was invited to provide further feedback at one of their meetings. She said, "I see it as an organization with a need and if we are to fulfill that need, we need to present this plan in such a way that people will be inspired to donate."

DeAnne now envisions continuing to use her professional skills to benefit the club.

It isn't simply gratitude that has inspired *DeAnne* to help the club. She deeply admires the services they provide, including various kinds of training and education (such as SAT test prep) and neighborhood outreach efforts to clear housing of drugs and gangs. She is also painfully aware of the added difficulties of growing up in the Rainier Valley area. She said of the club, "they're really filling a void some of the statistics I saw were shocking."

When asked if she would recommend volunteering services as she had to other professionals in the Seattle office, *DeAnne* responded with an enthusiastic "Yes!"



The Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club serves some of the most at-risk youth in the state of Washington:

- 75% of the children are from single parent families
 - 90% come from low income families
- 30% of the children currently live in a foster home
- 64% of the children in surrounding schools qualify for the free/reduced lunch program
- 22% of the children come from homes where English is not the primary spoken language
 - Many kids face family or personal substance abuse issues

Statistics courtesy of the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club