



## (MS)<sup>2</sup> Students “Best in State” in App Competition

An all-girls team from the Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science (MS)<sup>2</sup> won the “Best in State” title during Verizon’s Innovative App Challenge.

Of the 1,300 entries in the competition, 81 finalists made it to the “Best in State” round. The middle school students were selected as the only “Best in State” winner from the Washington, D.C., area. Their app, Build Central, assists builders and architects in the construction process. The students were assisted by Clearly Innovative Inc., a Washington-based mobile solutions provider.

“We are on cloud nine because their hard work paid off,” said Patrick Gusman, the group’s advisor, who teaches computer science and technology. “It’s essential that students learn the latest technology and for local businesses to invest in educational programs.”

“We are extremely proud of our students for their achievement,” said Yohance Maqubela, the middle school’s executive director. “The high achievement by this group of young ladies further demonstrates that our investment in STEM is delivering results.”

JUSTIN D. KNIGHT

## Haiti’s President Speaks on Rebuilding the Education System

Haitian President Michel Martelly spoke passionately about his focus on revamping Haiti’s education system during a visit to the main campus in February. He also urged the Howard community to continue its support of the nation.

“When I ran for president, education was a key part of my campaign platform,” Martelly said. “I found it unacceptable and shameful that many Haitian children were not going to school because their parents could not afford school fees.”

The devastating earthquake of 2010 killed nearly 200,000 people and caused widespread damage to infrastructure, including nearly 4,000 schools. Martelly said approximately 125 schools had been restored and equipped with computer labs and Internet access.

“As proud as we are of the progress we made, we still have a long way to go. Meanwhile we are doing all we can to ensure that our children get the quality education they need and deserve,” he said.

And while education is highly valued in Haitian culture—according to Martelly, families typically spent 40 percent of their income to send their children to school—many students and their families cannot afford the school fees. Martelly has been combating these statistics by providing free universal education for primary school students.

“I am proud to report that nearly 1.3 million primary school-aged children have



been enrolled in school as part of my government’s education program,” he says.

In addition to renovating the educational system for primary school students, Martelly wants to provide more higher-education opportunities to older youth and adults. He acknowledged the Howard community’s contributions to the growing success of the country. (Howard students and faculty members have held fundraisers and traveled to Haiti to provide tutoring, medical and reconstruction assistance.) Martelly said Haiti would also welcome graduate students to do research fellowships and internships at Haitian educational institutions.

“Education frees us from ignorance and servitude,” Martelly said. “Education allows a human being to reach their fullest potential and to understand and transform the world around them.”

## Colloquium Turns 25

The Department of Art hosted the 25th Annual James A. Porter Colloquium on African-American Art and Art of the African Diaspora in April. Named after a pioneering Howard University art historian and professor, the colloquium is the leading forum for scholars, artists and curators, as well as enthusiasts, in the field of African-American art and visual culture. The colloquium’s theme—“Bridging the Past to the Present: African American Contributions in Public Art”—examined the contributions of Black artists in the public space.