

## Glenwood school names new president, CEO

**BY PAUL CZAPKOWICZ**

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GLENWOOD | Samuel Banks made a decision his sophomore year of college that shaped the course of his future and that of countless others.

A business major at the time, Banks volunteered to be a big brother in a Big Brother/Big Sister Program.

"That experience changed my life," he said.

Banks would go on to get his master's in social work, a path that would eventually lead to the position he began in March as president and chief executive officer of the Glenwood School for Boys & Girls.

Raised on Chicago's West Side and a 1972 graduate of St. Ignatius College Prep, Banks took over for John Irwin, who served at the Glenwood School for 17 years.

"I thought it was an opportunity for me to have a new challenge, to be in an environment where kids really had a opportunity to excel," Banks said.

Banks oversees a staff of about 120 and the approximately 200 children combined on both the Glenwood campus and the campus in St. Charles.

The Glenwood School has a regular enrollment of 140 children, grades two through high school, during the course of the school year. About 60 children are now taking part in a summer program.

Most children enrolled in the residential education program in Glenwood come from about a 30-mile radius and a variety of backgrounds, including low-income and single-family homes.

Banks, a father of three, said that neither the Glenwood nor St. Charles campuses are filled to capacity due to necessary budget cuts.

"We hope to get back to having all of our cottages full some day," he said.

Banks identified funding as the biggest challenge facing the Glenwood School.

The school provides services without accepting state or federal funding, and the current state of the economy has affected fundraising efforts.

The school attempts to find individuals or businesses to take part in a Child Sponsorship Program. A donation of \$15,000 will support a child at Glenwood for one year, while \$7,400 will allow a student to attend Marian Catholic High School, which is where the majority of the high school-aged students at the Glenwood campus matriculate.

"One of the things that I'd like to see us do is to make Glenwood and what we do more known in the community," Banks said. "I think we're one of the best kept secrets around."

Banks and his wife, Maureen, had called Urbana home for the past 20 years while he served as president and chief executive officer of the Cunningham Children's Home.

"The main thing I hope to do is to continue to carry on the great tradition that Glenwood has established," Banks said. "It has reached out to the community in special ways for 120 years, and I want to make sure that it's around for the next 120 years."