



By day, Melvin Carter is a committee management specialist at NIAAA; by night he is a well-respected whistleblower in D.C.

NIH'er Scores Big with D.C. Basketball

To his colleagues, Melvin Carter is the friendly, down-to-earth committee management specialist at NIAAA. To insiders in D.C.'s middle-school athletic community, he is a respected up-and-coming coach, part of an extended network that makes up the city's legendary hoops scene. And to his players on St. Gabriel's seventh and eighth grade boys' basketball team, he's their play-calling, whistle-blowing, eyes-in-the-back-of-his-head, sees-everything Coach Carter.

That's a good thing, because Carter represents their first taste of the competitive Metro area basketball scene. Each week, he prepares the team to go up against the region's best competition. A recent highlight was the first annual Gonzaga College High School Holiday Invitational Basketball Tournament. Attracting teams from D.C., Maryland and Virginia, the event is one of the largest for this age group held in the mid-Atlantic.

Participating in such tourneys, Carter knows that he is watching the superstars of the future. "The competition is intense," he says. "Most of the players on these teams go on to play high school basketball—and many will become college stars."

A District native himself, Carter has helped many aspiring players. Following high school, he went on to play for the U.S. Air Force team based in Sardinia, which competes in the professional league in Italy. He understands the dedication required to reach the upper echelons of the sport. Upon returning to Washington, he brought his skills and experience to coaching, with stints at St. Anthony's middle school and the Metropolitan Police Boys Club.

"It's a privilege for me to work with these talented young athletes," he says, "and to remind them of the right way to conduct themselves, both on and off the court."

Carter shares his dedication and passion for the game beyond his own team. Each spring, he runs a basketball clinic for middle-school youth from all over the region. The program combines basketball fundamentals, guest speakers and league play. The clinic is held on four consecutive Saturday afternoons at a downtown gym.

Participants receive T-shirts, gold medals and best of all, instruction and advice from such basketball luminaries as DeMatha's Mike Jones, O'Connell's Joe Wootten and Gonzaga's Steve Turner. For more information about the Mel Carter Basketball Clinic, call (202) 635-8082. 📞

Seeds for Earth Day 2008 Sown

There are only 9 months of shopping left until Christmas 2008. The NIH Environmental Management System (NEMS) hopes the gifts you buy for the next holiday season will be energy-efficient; free of lead, phthalates and polybrominated diphenyl ethers; contain 100 percent post-consumer recycled materials and be made locally—in other words, sustainable.

That brings to mind another date on the calendar—NIH's annual Earth Day Celebration, which will be held this year on Thursday, Apr. 24 in conjunction with Take Your Child to Work Day. NEMS would like to make that event even bigger and better (greener) than last year's celebration, which broke previous attendance records. Help ensure success by volunteering your green ideas, time and talents to the Earth Day planning committee. Sign up at the NIH Greener web site: www.nems.nih.gov.

One of the most popular Earth Day traditions is the "Name IT Contest" to identify a mystery plant that has something to do with NIH's mission and the environment. Each year, the winners have received great prizes—like tickets to Strathmore or a catered lunch for the whole office. Seeds for this year's mystery plant were sown in early January and are now sprouting. Photos of IT's seeds and one-week-old seedling are below. Keep your eyes on the *NIH Record* for more clues, photos and contest entry instructions.



Above:
The seeds of the mystery plant in this year's Name IT Contest.



Right:
A seedling of this year's mystery plant erupts from its potting place. Plants chosen for the contest contribute in some way to the NIH mission.