

Teachers engage teens in Columbia's vision for the future

Service project aims to get feedback from students

By Megan McIlroy
Examiner Staff Writer

They've been alive for less than half of Columbia's 40-year history, but teens are being tapped for their insight into Columbia's future.

The Columbia Association is creating a community service project that will teach teenagers about the vision and structure of Columbia.

The teens will develop a book, DVD or CD that will be used to educate other teenagers. The project will be "exciting," said Karen Hawkins, manager of community relations and communications for the Columbia Association.

Finding creative ways to teach teenagers about James Rouse's vision for Columbia and where the community is headed is important, said Amy Butler, a senior at Wilde Lake High School and head of spe-

cial elections for the Howard County Association of Student Councils. "A seminar doesn't necessarily bring attention to what teens need to pay attention to," she said.

Not many high schoolers are passionate about the past and future of Columbia, Butler said, but Herb West, a sociology teacher at Wilde Lake High, wants to change that.

He has been discussing the plans to redevelop downtown Columbia in his classes and the effect of redevelopment on the economy and infrastructure.

West's students recently met with Ann Forsyth, professor and director of the Metropolitan Design Center University of Minnesota, and presented their ideas about what the redevelopment of downtown should look like.

Getting their feedback about the redevelopment of Columbia is important, since they are the ones who will live there, he said.

"Some of [the students] who know how to do critical thinking can project about what they want to see later in life," West said.

mmcilroy@baltimoreexaminer.com
