



INSIDE VIEW

THE SIUE EAST SAINT LOUIS CHARTER SCHOOL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2003

THIS SPECIAL EDITION OF THE "INSIDE VIEW" IS DEDICATED TO THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE.



Charter School Team L to R: Mr. Neal, Reggie Cooks, Daryus Wilkes, Stanley Hines, Franklin Edwards, and Mr. Young.

Southern Illinois University Joins the Movement of Youth Leadership Development Anthony Neal, Director

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Public Policy Institute, recently stepped up to the plate and joined the movement. That is, the movement of developing leadership skills in African American males in the East St. Louis area. On November 8 & 9, 48 students between the ages of 14-19 gathered at the Touch Of Nature Retreat Center in Carbondale for a strong dose of "Leadership 101." The 2-day experience was designed to foster communication, build leadership skills, and expose the young men to examples of positive leadership.

The initiative was an outgrowth of the 1994 report by Roland Burris, former Comptroller and Attorney General for the State of Illinois. The report, "A Call to Action: Recommendations of the Illinois Commission on African-American Males," highlights the dismal plight of young African American males in the Illinois area. The report was made public almost 10 years ago; however, in 2003, nine years later, African American males still hold the title on being the largest percent of the prison population and the largest percent on probation or parole. An increasingly alarming number of African

American males drop out of high school before their senior year and a shockingly low number of African American males are represented in institutions of higher education. The retreat provided a platform for change and a framework for strategizing what needs to be done to change this most dismal and depressing situation.

A 2-day retreat is far from the answer of why we are losing our African American males to the streets and to institutions of confinement. Many even die before they see the age of 18. I personally have attended the funeral of 2 Charter School students in my 5 years with the Charter School. Some may say, "Only 2," and my response is, "One is too many."



L to R: Mr. Neal, The Late Paul Simon, former US Senator, and Mr. Young.

The retreat was a courageous step to begin the critical conversation that will ultimately have a positive impact for change. This change must offer a real hands-on approach, strategies, and methods that work to increase the number of African American males graduating from high school and who enter institutions of higher education. This change must give these young men a sense of hope, a mind-set whose script reads, "I can" and "I will" instead of "I can't" and "I won't." This change must make these young

men feel included rather than excluded and hopeful rather than hopeless.

A good friend and ally, Dr. Phil Hunsberger, often reminds me that the “Chinese didn’t decide to build a small wall overnight.” It was indeed huge and took many years to complete. These words help to keep me focused on the larger picture, big dreams, and high expectations of our African American males. Indeed the task before us is large and will take many years, but the battle is worth fighting and must not be lost. There are many ancestors who have calluses on their souls and bruises and bites on their bodies. Some even died for us to have the chance to simply be able to sit in a classroom.

Hats off to Linda Renee Baker, professor in the Public Policy Institute at SIU-C, for convening the institute and raising the issue of “Saving African American Males.” It is only appropriate to mention those individuals who were instrumental in making the institute a big success. They are: Dr. Seymour Bryson, Senator James Clayborne, Percy McKinney, the late U.S. Senator Paul Simon, Mike Lawrence, Rudy Wilson, Father Brown, Willis Young, Don Patton, Anthony Neal, Larry Taylor, Cedric Mitchell, Jason Ray, Roland Burris, and representatives from all the area fraternities, Top Ladies of Distinctions, Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center and the Boy Scouts.

Reggie Cooks, Franklin Edwards, Stanley Hines, and Daryus Wilkes are the students who represented the Charter School at the conference.

To all of you...THANKS!

(See page 12 – 14 for pictures from the retreat.)

FOCUS St. Louis: Focuses on Leaders

By Jamel Collier, Asst. to Faculty Associate

The East St. Louis and St. Louis region know how valuable leaders are to our community. Leaders provide other people with good examples to follow and can offer valuable insight on life. It is important that young people have good leaders because they set good examples for other young people to follow. Creating leaders is the purpose of FOCUS: Youth Leadership St. Louis. Students in Focus come from schools in the surrounding area; they are taken to various locations in the region and are placed in positions that allow them to assume leadership roles.

The FOCUS field excursion I attended took place at St. Louis’s City Hall. I had never been inside City Hall, and this would also be my first experience with FOCUS. City Hall is an amazing building itself. The floors in City Hall are made of light gray marble, with dark gray swirls spread throughout each marble slab. The walls in City Hall are covered with art work in an Art-Deco style. The ceiling stands many feet above your head, and it, too, is covered with decorations. A turn around any corner in city hall will amaze you.

The activity for the day was unique as well. The students and staff took a bus trip around St. Louis. It took us to North St. Louis, South St. Louis, and Central St. Louis. We visited various areas and learned historical facts about the locations around St. Louis. Students were to look at each area from the point of view of a development company attempting to get people to invest money there. Students created a wide variety of ideas like investing in loft spaces downtown and home construction in North St. Louis. They created reasons why the diversity in South St. Louis could be beneficial to raising a family.

Mr. Harlan Hodge, FOCUS: YLSL Program Facilitator, gave the tour of Downtown St. Louis. Mr. Hodge led our group through the downtown redevelopment stage, and he showed us places where the major developments were underway. Mr. Hodge’s knowledge of the downtown’s rehabilitation process was extensive; he was open to questions, and made the downtown trip accommodating for all.

The day concluded with a speech by the Mayor of St. Louis, Francis G. Slay. Mayor Slay discussed both his reasons for wanting to become Mayor of St. Louis and his vision. He also took time to answer questions. The Mayor stated that he had been a successful attorney, but politics was his calling.

FOCUS: Youth Leadership St. Louis is a program that attempts to bring the best out in our young people by actively refining the qualities they already possess. The Mayor said, “Part of being a leader is knowing that you cannot please everyone that you are leading. Leaders have the responsibility to do their best and to make the best decisions for the people they are leading.” Our youth today need leaders who set high standards, who have integrity, and who know how to suggest remedies for tough situations.

Charter School Still Accepting Student Applications

The Charter School is still accepting applications for enrollment. The requirements for applying are:

- ✓ Parents or guardians must be legal residents of East St. Louis School District 189.
- ✓ Students must be age 14 – 19.
- ✓ Students must be in grade 9 – 12.
- ✓ Parents or guardians must submit a complete application including transcript and physical.

An application packet may be picked up from the Charter School office any school day between the hours of 8am – 4pm.

Two New Faculty Join Charter School Team

The Charter School welcomes two new team members to the mission.

Mr. Olukayode Amole has been hired to the position of Faculty Associate/Teacher/Science. Some students may recognize him as the Upward Bound science tutor. He will be working with both programs to instruct our students in the wondrous field of science.

Mr. Jamel Collier has been hired to the position of Assistant to Faculty Associate. He will be facilitating the new student senate and the proverbial “other duties as assigned.” Mr. Collier can be reached at 482-8375.

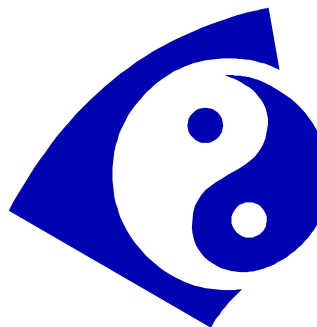
We are glad to have these two gentlemen on the Charter School team.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, notification will be made on TV Channels 2, 4 and 5. We are also on the same snow schedule as East St. Louis District 189. SIUE East St. Louis Charter School will close in accordance with East St. Louis School District #189.



A Taste of “Good Karma” By Tameka V. Rucker, Student



What goes around comes around! Treat others how you would want to be treated! These are just a couple of the basics of good Karma. It's all about being a good

person inward and outward then reaping your rewards. Whatever you do has consequences. If you make the effort to be generous, helpful, and respectful to everyone, you will get the same positive feedback. Think about today. Was there anything that you did that had a negative impact on someone else? Did you laugh at someone or ignore someone? Even the smallest things help like picking up a pencil for someone. There's a lot you can do to create good Karma. My fellow peers, step outside of the box and look at some of your behavior other than scapegoating. Maybe you have been insensitive to someone else's feelings or selfish. Whatever it is, get your Karma in check and start considering how others might feel. If making fun of someone makes you feel good, you need to figure out why your self-esteem is so low. So make an effort consciously and unconsciously to do kind things. Then watch the good moods flow!

IMPORTANT DATES

Dec 15	School Improvement Day Dismissal at 11:15 am Book Talk
December 22 – January 2, 2004 School Closed	
Jan 5	Classes Resume
Jan 12	Teacher Institutes/Workshops Book Talk
Jan 13	2 nd Grading Period Ends
Jan 19	Dr. M. L. King, Jr. Birthday No School
Jan 23	Parent/Teacher Conferences 1 – 4pm School Dismissed at 11:15 am
Feb 12	Abraham Lincoln's Birthday No School
Feb 16	School Improvement Day Dismissal at 11:15 am Book Talk

Two Students Enter Contest

Danelle Betts and Karlon Williams are students at the SIUE East St. Louis Charter School. They each recently submitted poems for the SIUE Martin Luther King essay contest. Following is the poem of each student. Winners of the contest will be announced at the SIUE Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner in February. Good luck to each student.

HE STILL EXISTS By Karlon Williams, Senior

*As I go out and visit stores and public facilities
Even something as simple as getting a drink of water
A thank you rings in the back of my mind
Because I don't have to worry about white only signs.
My mind
Travels back for a second
And I have to drink from a rusty water fountain
I have to buy clothes too big for me
Because I can't try them on,
And I have to pay on the side of a building to eat
leftover mess.
Now it is back to the future where I am blessed. I am
blessed
Because a man took it up on himself
To demand equality and make a difference for the
future,
My generation and all others to follow
And didn't think about a salary. I wish he were here to
see his
Dream is now a reality. His speeches were more than
words.
They were pictures in a frame
Something he could visually see but couldn't quite
hang.
So I guess the way we live now
Would be his art piece.
As long as we follow in his footsteps and walk to his
rhythm
He will be leading the crowd like the drum major he is
Being a leader for browns, whites, elders, or kids.
In my mind Martin Luther King still exists
Not as one man but he still exists in kids
When a black child and white child can play in the
same playground.*

*He is still here and will continue to be
As long as I am able to speak to any man of any race
And be respected for the intelligent and beautiful brown
person ?
Am.
I am free because of a man that is inside of many men.
I see him looking down and smiling
Because I have an equal opportunity to go to college
And succeed in whatever career I desire.
He is smiling because out there somewhere
There is a multiracial family with beautiful and
intelligent children.
He is a happy man because his goals were accomplished.
A teacher is teaching
And people are learning
But this is no ordinary teacher. This teacher lives
inside of students,
Parents,
Preachers, workers, manager,
And any other individual that interacts with people or
a person of a
Different race.
On April 4, 1968 a man laid down to rest
But he did not die.
He did not die
Because he continues to live in the people of these
United States.
Dr. King once stated, "I believe the unarmed truth
Will have the final word in reality."
This statement is coming true more and more every day,
As others and I can believe and achieve anything.
The "King" executed many accomplishments,
But his biggest one is being completed now
When everyone has equal opportunities.
This is a man to whom I will forever give my utmost
respect
To every chance that I get,
Because even the days when I'm gone
He will still exist.*

Who Is the Man Behind the Dream? By Danelle Betts

*Who's the man behind the "I have a Dream Speech"?
I'll tell you who that man is.
He's Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.
Dr. King is the man who led the boycott against the
segregated city bus lines.*

They didn't want blacks to ride in the bus so that was really something to discuss.

He was a man who believed that all men and women should be equal.

That we should be able to drink out of the same water fountain and should be able to sit in the same emergency room.

The man who brought us together was a black man. He wanted us to come together and forget about the color of our skin.

He wanted us all to be one equal nation with no kind of segregation.

Who could have a problem with the man who organized the March on Washington, the man who brought 200,000 people together?

Dr. King was the man who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Now you tell me how important that is.

Dr. King's words were carried on until this day.

He helped us to stand up for others and ourselves.

Dr. King even organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

That gave him a base to do further civil rights activities. Even though he had a lot of arrests in the 1950's and 60's it was for good reasons.

I think that Dr. King is the man and his words will live on forever.

So when you all ask who's the man? The words Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will come from your mouth.

So the next time you think about your education, you think about Dr. King.

Like when you walk into a restaurant and see black and white co-workers having a conversation, think of Dr. King.

Think of how bad this world would be if Dr. King hadn't helped to make it better.

If he hadn't preached and spoken about being together as one nation

All you have to do is believe and put it in your head that we live better, and part of it is because of Dr. King.

So I tell you now hold your head high and walk with a smile.

A smile to show that you're free

A smile to let everyone know that you revere the Drum Major's words.

Honors Program Postponed

We are sorry to announce that because we are under construction, the first semester honors program has been postponed. The date, time, and place will be announced at a later date.



The 3rd Annual "Teach for a Day" Jamel Collier, Faculty Associate Assistant

The importance of education has to be echoed in the minds of our students. Faculty and school administrators work together to ensure that our students receive not only an education, but receive an education that is one of quality. To create an education of quality, our staff reads books written by other educators, participates in activities away from school, and has discussions to share ideas. Our staff is active in its pursuit to complete the mission under which our school's charter is granted. The most active and effective strategy that we implement within our school is inviting members from the community to our school. One example of our school's community participation strategy is found in the "Adopt-A-School" program. Ms. Ledora Williams, our school counselor, invites representatives from the "Adopt-A-School" program. The program addresses conflict resolution and problem solving. Also, one day a year, we have our annual "Teach for a Day" program.

"Teach for a Day" is a program involving individuals from various careers and social backgrounds. They come to our school and talk to our students about the importance of education, their careers, goal setting. "The Teach for a Day" program's mission is to

strengthen the relationship between our students and the community at large by allowing the mentors to have control over the classes.

Our third "Teach for a Day" program included mentors from Monsanto, the 'Dean for America' campaign, a Citadel Partners Junior Associate, a 100.3 The Beat radio personality, the director of the Human Resource Corporation, and a Research Specialist from the Missouri Institute of Mental Health. The mentors conveyed their message through various means. For an example, Ms. Maricelly Daltro, Research Specialist from the Missouri Institute of Mental Health, used a power point presentation during her classes.

At the event's conclusion, "Teach for a Day" received favorable reviews. Staff members appreciated the diverse careers of the mentors, and applauded their professionalism. Our students welcomed the mentors to their classrooms, listened attentively, posed intelligent questions to mentors, and were appreciative of the mentors coming to our school.

All mentors in attendance were asked to complete an evaluation form. The comments and feedback received reinforced the sentiments of our staff and students. The mentors also found delight in participating in the program. Comments on the evaluation forms prove our students not only impressed them, but they also made the mentors want to come back to our school. The mentors used words like responsive, interested, attentive, and excellent to describe the conduct of our students.

It is indeed an honor to have successful members from the community come into our school and convey the importance of education to our students. The time they spent with our students also shows the staff here at the SIUE East St. Louis Charter School that the community at large is willing and able to help our youth's potential blossom.

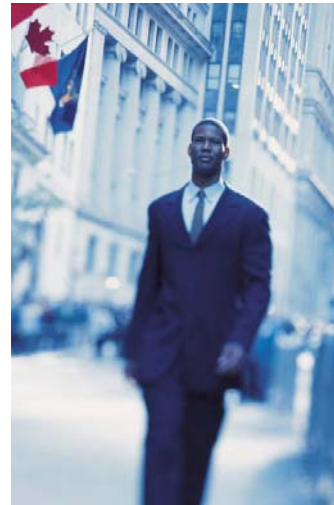
Thanks to everyone at the Charter School, the program was a success. Our students should be proud of themselves because the mentors welcome the chance to come back to their school and help in any way possible. Our staff should be proud because the effort of preparing our students for the world around them reflects their diligence, patience, and firm guiding hands. The progress made was noticeable by the mentors, and you are encouraged to keep up the good work. If a quality education has a road to it, then the SIUE East St. Louis Charter School is one of its main highway markers.

Poetry of Sterling A. Brown

BYE AND BYE, I'M GONNA LAY DOWN MY
HEAVY LOAD
I'VE BEEN IN THE STORM SO LONG, LORD
WALK TOGETHER CHILDREN, DON'T CHA
GET WEARY
WE SHALL OVERCOME SOMEDAY

The strong men
keep a comin' on
The strong men
gittin' stronger.

Abolitionist,
Frederick Douglas
said it many years
ago. "We are here,
and here we are
likely to be. To
imagine that we shall
ever be eradicated is
absurd and
ridiculous. We can
be remodified, changed, and assimilated, but
never extinguished. We repeat, therefore, that
we are here, and that this is our country...and we
have and will make our presence felt. We shall
neither die out, nor be driven out, because...



The strong men keep a comin' on
The strong men gittin' stronger.

Phyllis Wheatley, internationally known poet, "Black daughter of the sun" penned a volume of poems—the second boo, published by an American woman.

Benjamin Banneker, astronomer, almanac maker, surveyor, botanist, zoologist and philosopher. Experimented with the velocity of sound waves, wrote a dissertation on bees and helped to lay out the city of Washington, DC.

Granville T. Woods inventor of the telephone transmitter that American Bell bought.

Jan E. Matzeliger revolutionized the shoes industry with a machine for attaching soles to shoes.

The strong men keep a comin' on
The strong men gittin' stronger.

The millions of Americans whose lives have been saved by blood plasma should give thanks to: Dr. Charles Drew who perfected the Blood Plasma Technique that saved the lives of so many white Americans in World War II.

George Washington Carver who revolutionized southern agriculture with his research on pecans, peanuts and sweet potatoes;

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams who made what was probably the first successful operation on the human heart;

Dr. Edward L. Harris, a leading authority on rocket and jet fuels.

The strong men keep a comin' on
The strong men gittin' stronger.

Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes,
Gwendolyn Brooks,

Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and James
Baldwin and Lorraine Hansberry in literature;

W. C. Handy, Charles Parker, Louis Armstrong,
Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Marion Anderson
and Leontyne Price in music.

Paul Robeson, Bert Williams, Bill Robinson,
Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, James Earl Jones
and Cicely Tyson in theatre.

The strong men keep a comin' on
The strong men gittin' stronger.

W. E. B. Dubois and Carter G. Woodson in the
realm of ideas;

Joe Louis, Jessie Owens, Wilt Chamberlin, Willie
Mays, Reggie Jackson and Lou Brock in sports;

Robert Weaver, Ralph J. Bunche, Andrew
Young, Donald McHenry in public affairs;

Martin Luther King whose non violent approach
to equality triggered the vibration of unity
throughout the world.

The strong men keep a comin' on
The strong men gittin' stronger

*They bought off some of your leaders
You stumbled, as blind men will . . .*

*They coaxed you, unwontedly soft-voiced. . . .
You followed a way.
Then laughed as usual.
They heard the laugh and wondered;
Uncomfortable;
Unadmitting a deeper terror. . . .
The strong men keep a-comin' on
Gittin' stronger. . . .*

*What, from the slums
Where they have hemmed you,
What, from the tiny huts
They could not keep from you—
What reaches them
Making them ill at ease, fearful?
Today they shout prohibition at you
"Thou shalt not this"
"Thou shalt not that"
"Reserved for whites only"
You Laugh.*

*One thing they cannot prohibit—
The strong men . . . coming on
The strong men gittin' stronger.
Strong men. . . .
Stronger. . . .*

Taken from *The Collected Poems of Sterling A. Brown*, by Michael S. Harper

Library Cards Available

Faculty, staff and students of the East St. Louis Higher Education Center may now apply for a library card at the East St. Louis Community College Center Learning Resource Center located in Building B. To apply, please bring your school ID (SIUE, SWIC, Charter School, KCC, SCC, etc.) and a driver's license. The LRC is open Monday through Thursday from 8am – 9pm, and Friday from 8am – 4pm. Their website may be accessed at www.eslccc.com/lrc.html.

Brief Reminders

Food and Drinks

The Charter School has a “**No food** in the classroom” policy. Signs regarding this policy are posted on every classroom door. Food should be contained to the cafeteria area only.

Cell Phones and Pagers

Students are not allowed to carry pagers or cell phones on belts or in pockets. These devices should be put in the off position and left in student lockers.

Lanyards and Photo ID's

All students have been issued school ID badges. Badges are to be worn where they may be seen at ALL times. Students arriving without their ID badges will be asked to call home and have someone bring it to the school or will be sent home. The cost for a replacement badge is \$5.00.

Starting Time

Charter School hours for students are 8:15 am – 3:15 pm. Students who wish to eat breakfast should be finished eating and up on the 2nd floor in the Charter School area by 8:10 am. Students, thanks for your cooperation!

Important Social Skills By Chasity Love, Junior

Social skills need to be taught to children as they are growing up. There are three important ideas that should be learned before the age of twelve. First, children should be taught their roles in life.

A child should already know his/her role in society before becoming an adolescent. A male should know that he is responsible for protecting his family. For example, a boy might be living alone with his mother, when someone breaks in. It is his job to comfort his mother and make sure nothing happens to her. For instance a dog might be attacking a little girl; it is her brother's job to make sure she does not get bit. A female should know that it is her job to keep the family together and take care of the children. For example, it is the woman's job to make sure her children do not go a day without eating. Mothers should provide a home cooked meal for them. For instance, the sisters are the ones that should keep all of the other children in line, making sure they respect each other. It is the woman's job to nurture the children in their time of need. For instance, when a youngster falls off a bike,

he/she always runs to the mother knowing she is going to make things feel better. Subsequently, when children are growing up, they should be taught common courtesy.

Before children turn twelve, they should have established common courtesy. Children should know when someone does something for them, they should say thank you. For example, if you are a female and a male opens the door for you, you should say thank you. Saying thank you will be a nice way of showing appreciation. A child should also learn how to be respectful. For example, if a mother asks a youngster to do something, he/she should just do it instead of giving her mouth. If a little boy sees an old lady drop her money, he should be kind enough to give it back instead of stealing it. Finally, a child should learn the rules of etiquette.

The rules of etiquette should be learned as a child grows up. A child should know not to eat with his/her elbows on the table. For example, when a young person goes to a friend's house, the individual should know how to eat at the table correctly. It is the parent's job to teach right from wrong. A young man should know he is supposed to open the door for a lady or elderly person. For example, if a young man is walking in front of an elderly person, he is supposed to keep the door open until he/she enters or leaves. A young man should know if he takes his girlfriend out on a date, he should always walk on the outside towards the street to protect her from danger. Therefore, if a young lady and man are walking on the sidewalk, the boy should walk on the outside so the young lady will not get hit or get any water splashed on her.

In conclusion, human beings, in order to get along and be successful, you must learn many social skills. The roles they have in life, common courtesy, and the rules or etiquette are only three such ideas.

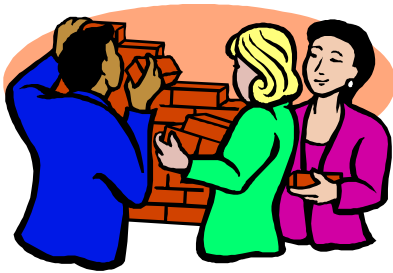
Anthony Neal 12/20

Andrea Smythe 12/22

Jamel Collier 1/24



We Need You Charter School Parents



If you want to see things happen, if you want to be a part of an extraordinary team, if you just need a stress reliever.

Then...
Come one
Come all
To the next

SIUE East St. Louis Charter School
Parent Meeting.

When: Wednesday, January 14, 2003

Where: Bldg. A – SIUE East St. Louis Higher
Education Center

Time: 6:00 p.m.

We can't do it alone! WE NEED YOU!!!

For more info, please call Ms. Wilkes, 482-8377.

Workshop Notes By Sharon Joiner, Faculty Associate/Language Arts

On November 10, 2003 I attended a workshop at the Sheraton in St. Louis. The thrust of the presentation was to introduce the Collins method of writing. The information covered five types of writing ranging from simply creating sentences as responses to full formal papers resulting after several drafts had been composed.

Effective communication is recognized as a primary job skill. Therefore, no matter what the subject field is, complete sentences should be required—at least periodically—for reinforcement of clarity of thought. Even a math problem can be explained in a step-by-step manner utilizing full statements. It is not necessary for all teachers to correct all grammar errors. Just the requirement of complete sentences will encourage students to produce “clean” copy. The workshop was especially helpful for administrators and teachers in fields other than language arts.

One positive thing I can report is many teachers at the SIUE East St. Louis Charter School are already using practically all of the

elements of the Collins method, so our students are well on their way to concise, clear, and correct communication.

A Word to the Seniors By Tameka V. Rucker, Student

Here are some quick steps to get you on your way to your dreams and futures.

1

State what your plans are after high school (college, trade, etc.). Write down your plans.

2

How are you going to execute these plans? Such as, if college is on your mind, start doing things now to get yourself into college. Do your best at school. Put in that 110% effort. Save. Volunteer. Look up scholarships, etc.

3

Have realistic goals. For example. If you want to be a basketball player, ask yourself, “What are my chances?” There are only about two handfuls of teams. Ask yourself, “Am I on a team so people will see my skills?” I wanted to go into aviation. I crossed that off my list because I know my strengths and weaknesses, and math is not my subject. You need math for aviation. So I moved on.

4

Get help. There are numerous people waiting to help you if you are serious. Talk to a counselor or principal. Talk to parents or relatives. Let them know your plans.

5

Apply yourself. You have your goals? Now do whatever it takes to reach them. There are going to be some rocky roads but you keep up the work, and you will soon be on a clear pathway.

Nigerian Scholars Visit Charter School Students

Teenagers in Nigeria are similar to those in the United States, said Dr. Remy Oriaku, college professor at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. Oriaku was one of five Nigerian scholars/artists who recently spoke to SIUE East St. Louis Charter School students. The educators were

visiting faculty at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville for six weeks.

Many Nigerian youth have adapted aspects of American culture, including listening to rap music and wearing hip hop clothing, said Professor Francis Egbokhare. "Even the hand gestures and mannerisms are the same," he said.

But there are differences among the youth from the two countries. One distinction, which got the most vocal response from students, was that the majority of Nigerian teens do not date until they are 18 years old. Nigerian youth are preoccupied with getting into college before they start dating because education is greatly valued in Nigeria, said Dr. Remi Raji, poet, professor and author.

Another difference is that Nigerian teens greatly respect their elders. "When children greet their parents, they lay prostrate on the ground and stay there until they are told to get up. Even when you are an adult, you have to do this," said Demola Lewis, graduate student at the University of Ibadan. SIUE faculty and staff who served as Metro East area tour guides for the Nigerians were Dr. Ron Schaefer, director of International Programs; Rudy Wilson, assistant provost for cultural and social diversity and Eugene Redmond, professor of English and East St. Louis poet laureate.

KUDOS To Graduating Teachers

Congratulations to Mrs. Elena Badjie and Ms. Alsandyra Essien for recently graduating from the American Memories Program. This was a one year commitment that recently culminated with a graduation and each receiving a personal laptop computer.



**Seven Charter School Students
Form a "PACT"
Anthony Neal, Director**

Open almost any newspaper, turn on the 5 or 10 o'clock news, or tune into the radio on most any station on your way to school or work and you are likely to see, hear, or read about many negative and demoralizing stories of African American male youth.

Recently, seven students, part of Mr. Neal's Leadership 101 class, decided they, too, were tired of the negativity that is often placed on African American males and pledged to fight back. After reading the book "The Pact," (a book about 3 young men who experienced the pitfalls of the street life in Newark, New Jersey; and were inner city youth surrounded by peer pressure and obstacles, but went on to become Dr. Sampson Davis, Dr. George Jenkins, and Dr. Rameck) students were amazed at the agreement the three doctors had made to one another while in their early teens. The agreement was to stick together, to study together, and to hold one another accountable. The story of the doctors was filled with drama, courage, peril, and ultimately triumph. Many times, each came close to failure and was ready to give up, but each time, the other two convinced the one in danger that the constant sacrifices, daunting work load, and dizzying challenges would be worth the eventual reward, especially if they stuck it out together. Today, Davis and Hunt are doctors, and Jenkins is a dentist.

Charter School students, Reggie Cooks, Karlon Williams, Lloyd Millender, Marcus Thomas, Franklin Edwards, Orlandis DuPree, and Roderick Hammonds, have accepted the same challenge as the 3 doctors. They have agreed to stick together and to do whatever it takes to inspire and motivate one another to finish school and to go on to college. The skills that have been taught about unity, self-

determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith, all of which are African American principles of the NGUZA SABA, will provide each with the foundation needed to reach their highest potential. As a way of sending the students off to live up to their agreement, Mr. Neal took the 7 young men out to lunch and had a brief graduation for the students. Each student received an autographed copy of the book, a certificate of participation in the 7 week class, a wallet card listing the 7 principals, and a class picture.

Here are a few of the comments of several students from the class evaluation.

Reggie Cooks: The most important thing I've learned from my time in the class is leadership. I've learned how to carry myself as a leader and to always have high expectations for my goals in life. I also learned that a good leader teaches others how to be leaders.

Lloyd Millender: I learned that no matter what you go through, you can always strive to do your best. You can make it through the tough storms of life.

Franklin Edwards: I learned that ambition is everything. Life isn't always easy, and you should appreciate everything that you are blessed with. I also learned that you should not be afraid to ask for help or to help someone else.



Joyeux Noel

Hauskau Joulua

Feliz Navidad

I'd miilad said oua sana saida

Boas Festas

Noeli Nziza

Shen Tan Kuai Loh

Eftihismena Christougenna

Mboni Chrismen

Melkam Yelidet Beaal

Afishapa

Jwaye Nwel

Mo'adim Lesimkha

Shub Christu Jayanti

Milad Majeed

Krist Yesu Ko Shava Janma Utsav
Ko Upalaxhma Hardikk Shuva

Wilujent Natal

Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah! Habari gani?

And A Very Good New Year!

From the
SIUE East St. Louis
Charter School Family



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Southern Illinois University Carbondale
African American Youth Leadership Retreat
November 8 & 9, 2003



Students discuss plan for successfully completing ropes course obstacle.



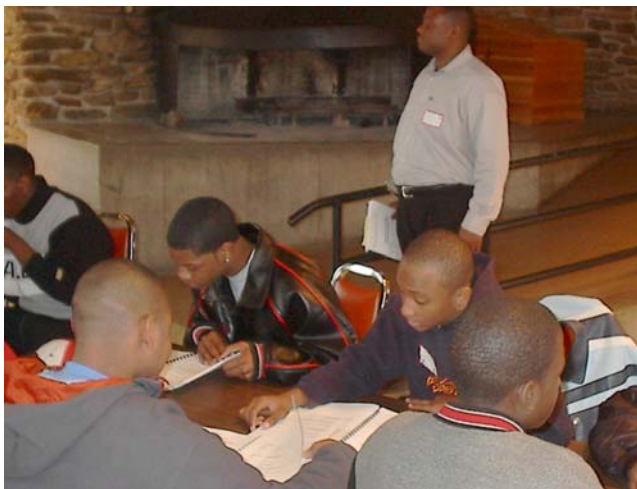
Charter School Team L to R: Mr. Neal, Reggie Cooks, Daryus Wilkes, Stanley Hines, Franklin Edwards, and Mr. Young.



Students receive instructions before experiencing the ropes course.



Student Franklin Edwards experiences the ropes course.



Charter School students tackle a strategic planning task.



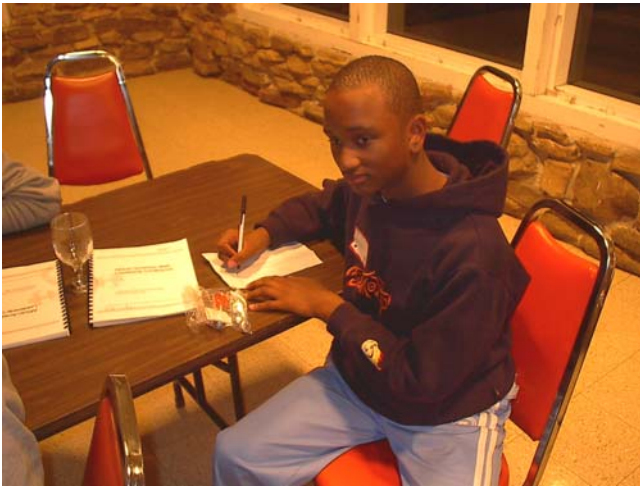
Mr. Neal tunes into a little advice from Mr. Rudy Wilson.



L to R: Mr. Neal, The Late Paul Simon, former US Senator, and Mr. Young.



Students listen to SIUC students talk about college life.



Daryus Wilkes taking scrupulous notes.



Students engaged in leadership activity.



Students share a moment in community building activity.



Time to Go! Students and staff departing sleeping quarters.



Students arriving at Touch of Nature retreat site.



Charter School students wait patiently for program to start.



Chow Time...Franklin Edwards loading up.



Rudy Wilson and student Franklin Edwards share a moment together.