



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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PAID

YMCA of Delaware
PERMIT NO. 17
Wilmington, De

WALNUT STREET YMCA

1000 North Walnut Street
Wilmington, DE 19801
302-472-YMCA

SUPPORT BLACK ACHIEVERS

Does the Black Achievers program have an impact? According to Thais Meadows, the recipient of a 2005 Black Achiever's scholarship, the YMCA program made a difference in her life:

"The different Black Achievers Career Clusters helped us to expand our abilities. For me, concentrating on interviewing and public speaking really helped. The Saturday setting was much more different than at school. At the Y we weren't graded, so we weren't as concerned with not doing well. Mentors gave us real life scenarios that challenged but did not threaten us. They helped us to find our own strengths."

Thais graduated with honors from Morgan State University in 2009 with a degree in Mass Communications. While working fulltime for Bancorp as an operations analyst, she is completing studies for a Masters of Business Administration this year at Wilmington College.

HERE'S HOW

To continue support of the Walnut Street YMCA Black Achievers program, please contact Claire Carey at ccarey@ymcade.org or call 302-472-9622.



THE BEACON



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1000 North Walnut Street

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www.ymcade.org

A newsletter for Walnut Street YMCA Black Achievers Program



BLACK ACHIEVER AWARDS COMING

LeVar Burton to keynote December Black Achiever Awards

Roots, Reading Rainbow & Star Trek star to speak at December event

LeVar Burton, television star of the landmark miniseries *Roots*, host and executive director of the acclaimed PBS children's television series *Reading Rainbow*, and a cast member of *Star Trek*, will be the keynote speaker at the Black Achievers in Business and Industry Annual Awards ceremony beginning at 6:30 on Thursday, December 9, 2010 at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington.

The annual fundraiser supports the Walnut Street YMCA's Black Achievers program, which enhances the academic, personal, career and leadership development of youth and teens through specialized culturally-based programs, community resources and relationships. The Y's mission focuses on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility to build a healthy spirit,

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BLACK ACHIEVERS RECEIVES TWO MAJOR GRANTS

The Black Achievers program is the recipient of two major grants recently distributed through the YMCA of the USA. Sam's Club has pledged monies to the YMCA of the USA to support grant awards to local YMCAs. It is intended to enhance the Y's national education and outreach initiatives, including academic achievement and college readiness programs.

Following the submission of a comprehensive Request for Proposal, the Walnut Street Y Black Achievers Program was selected as the recipient of a 2010 Sam's Club Giving Made Simple Grant. The \$15,000 grant will "support teenage youth in the development of key business-related skills that will help them achieve successful careers as entrepreneurs or businessmen & women."

The Black Achievers Program is also the recipient of a Y Higher Education Service Project Grant Award. This grant is strictly directed toward College Access Projects and the use of the \$10,000 grant is for the purposes of starting or expanding higher education services that the participating Ys offer. Our ambitious Request for Proposal included an expansion of the Black Achievers Program to include middle school grade students – thus, establishing a Youth Achievers Program to complement our existing Teen Achievers Program. With a focus on underserved youth, our project plan also includes an expansion of our technology capabilities for those students most often denied such access.



Visit us on the web at
www.ydeblackachievers.org

ADULT ACHIEVERS



It is said that teens with positive mentors in their life are more likely to stay in school, improve their grades and enroll into college. Black Achievers is a program that sets the foundation

for a mentoring relationship to occur between adults and teens. It is through the interaction with successful adults that teens are able to broaden their knowledge of college and career opportunities and also get exposure to new and different experiences to enhance their growth. I had positive role models and advisors in my life to guide me, so I enjoy giving back and helping guide our future leaders down their paths to success. The ability to make a difference in at least one teen's life is irreplaceable and that is why I participate in the Black Achievers program.

KEELYN GRIFFIN
President of 2010 Adult Black Achievers
VP, Small Business Product Management at
Bank of America

"When I agreed to be an Adult Achiever I was thrilled at the idea of giving back, exposing youths to diverse views and subjects, and participating in their journey to



self discovery. Little did I know how much I would gain from this experience! Supporting the Black Achievers program has touched my life in an unforgettable way. I've been impressed by the creativity and intelligence of the youths and have thoroughly enjoyed our discussions and dialogues. The irony is that through this program, I've received the things I hoped to share—exposure to diverse subjects and views from the students as well as participation of youths and Adult Achievers in my journey to self discovery. I've received much more than I could ever have given and I remain eternally grateful for the opportunity to serve in the Black Achievers program."

SAMANTHA JALLAH
Vice President of the 2010 Adult Achievers
Assistant Vice President at WSFS



Youth in Government students are honored at Senior Send-Off: Left to Right Gerrin Velazquez, Aliyah Griggs, Jasmine Tabron, Bianca Velazquez, Margurite White, Jarai Lee, Lillian Nichols (Advisor), Jasmine Wiley, Jordan Anderson; Serena Williams & Linda Smith (Advisors)

NURTURING THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUTH

A Message from Ms. Claire

With the recent announcement of the YMCA's brand and movement revitalization, we are excited that the areas of focus framing the Y's values are Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. The Black Achievers Program epitomizes the essence of the Y's role in service in these areas.

A college readiness program, Black Achievers is designed to help African-American and youth and teens of color pursue high educational and career goals. Through the Saturday activities, seminars, workshop sessions, "World of Work" tours, life skills seminars, college tours, academic support (scholarships, SAT preparation and tutorial resources) and recreational and cultural activities, the Black Achievers Program helps youth raise academic standards, develop a positive sense of self, build character and interact with professionals of color who serve as role models to inspire them to greater heights. These are all essential components of our Youth Development focus.

A key focus in the Black Achievers curriculum is the Health and Wellness Cluster. Using practical tools (innovative games and challenges) as well as lectures, the Black Achievers are taught the fundamentals of Healthy Living and healthy lifestyles.

Built on the concept that community and corporate involvement are critical to building networks and opportunities for youth, the program centers on the relationships established between the volunteer Adult Achievers and the Youth and Teen Achievers. This is a program that depends on the dedicated service of many Adult Achiever volunteers. The Adult Achievers' synergy is derived from positive career professionals who are passionate about affecting the lives of youth and adults within their community, thus demonstrating a commitment to Social Responsibility.

We are excited about the Brand New Day for Youth Development, For Healthy Living, For Social Responsibility. It is what the Black Achievers program is all about!!

COLLEGE TOUR OPENS UP A WORLD OF ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITY

The Annual College Tour has become a critical component of the Black Achievers Program. It provides students the opportunity to visit a variety of colleges and universities, offering them a first hand view of college life. The colleges are strategically chosen and present an opportunity to learn from admissions counselors, multi-cultural directors, college professors and on-campus students the realities of the college experience. The 2010 College Tour was eagerly anticipated and greatly enjoyed by the 17 student participants and 8 adults who served as chaperones. The ambitious five-day tour, began on Easter Sunday. Our goal is to not only expose our students to just HBCU's (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) but to broaden their experiences by including majority universities in the tour.

Recognizing that college selection ranks as one of the major decisions a young person will make, we ensure that our Black Achievers, through the College Tour, have exposure to all aspects of the college settings, curriculum, financial aid counseling, admissions group sessions, and dormitory life. We even take our meals in the college cafeterias. Our ultimate goal is to help our Black Achievers select a college and a major that leads to a fulfilling future.

An important component was added to the trip this year to learn about the history, heritage and culture of African Americans. The students spent a half day visiting the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. It chronicles key episodes of the American civil rights movement and its legacy to inspire participation in civil rights efforts globally. This experience proved to be informative and provocative for the Black Achievers, who only had minimal awareness of this significant movement. The lengthy bus rides from city to city provided the opportunity to discuss in depth with the Achievers Dr. King's contributions, the civil rights era and the impact it has had on their life as they know it in today's society.

An additional and fun component was what has now become a cultural and culinary tradition on our College Tours. The students were delighted to enjoy dinner at the world famous Neely's Barbecue Restaurant in Memphis – known for producing "The Best Barbecue" in the south.

The exhilarated students returned to Wilmington extremely impressed & awed by the week's activities. The collegiate experiences were most impressionable and the Civil Rights Museum left a lasting and haunting imprint. The eight exhausted chaperones were equally as pleased with the tour and happy to have had the opportunity to introduce these students to the world of higher education. They were Keelyn Griffin and Pat Johnson, current Adult Black Achievers; Lillian Nichols, past Adult Black Achiever; and Claire LaMar Carey, the director of the Black Achievers Program. Because of the vast distances covered, we also traveled with 5 bus drivers who provided additional oversight of the tour participants.

The College Tour will continue to be a cornerstone of our efforts to motivate our students to attend college. The results of these tours have been astonishing: over 95% of our Teen Black Achievers go on to college!



As part of the college tour, students visited the Kresge Learning Center at Meharry Medical College and met with the Dean of Admissions, Dr. Henry Atwater



Jubilee Hall, the Fisk University dormitory, where program director Ms. Claire spent her freshman year 46+ years ago!!!

SPRING COLLEGE TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Sunday, April 4

Bus departs

Monday, April 5

Lane College, Jackson, Tennessee
University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee
National Civil Rights Museum
Dinner at Neely's Barbecue Restaurant

Tuesday, April 6

LeMoyné –Owen College, Memphis, Tennessee
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee
Meharry Medical College
Parthenon and Nashville sites Tour
Opry Mills

Wednesday, April 7

Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee
Tennessee State University

Thursday, April 8

Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland
Coppin State University

Return to Walnut Street YMCA

THE SATURDAY SESSIONS: THE CORE OF THE BLACK ACHIEVERS PROGRAM

The Black Achievers Program is built on the notion that community and corporate involvement are critical to building networks and opportunities for youth and teens. The program centers on the relationships established between volunteer mentors and youth during CAREER CLUSTERS. Clusters are workshops/ seminars or "World of Work" tours dedicated to specific areas of professional interest. Youth participants and mentors, who are experts in their fields, complete projects or go on field trips that are designed to explore their career interests through real-life application of skills. Each Saturday morning throughout the year, the Black Achievers gather at the Walnut Street Y to work on a specific Cluster.

The Career Clusters are: Arts & Humanities, Business, Communications, Computers & Technology, Education, Health & Medical, Law & Government, Engineering & Design, Personal Development as well as Community Service.

Clustor Mentors

Irving Bell – DuPont
Roy Baptiste – WSFS
Shawn L. Browder – Delmarva Power
Ugochi Emeribe - Astra Zeneca
Keelyn Griffin – Bank of America
Yolanda Hill – Bank of America
Samantha Jallah – WSFS
Patricia Johnson – AstraZeneca
Christopher Holman – WalMart
Arthur Jenkins, III – City of Wilmington

Rashaunda Jones – JPMorganChase
Darlene Mason – JPMorganChase
Patricia Ponzo – Wilmington Trust
Jineen Redden-Huff – Christiana Care
Cheryl Proctor – AstraZeneca
Robert Redden - Huff – Christiana Care
Theresa Simpson – WalMart
Michelle Shorter – Bank of America
Rose Thorpe – Pepco Holdings, Inc.
Yolanda Yarbrough – DuPont



Achievers engage in an informative workshop through the Health and Medical Cluster presented by Dr. M. Mack- Williams, an area pediatrician who discussed career paths in medicine.



Table discussion led by Adult Achiever Shawn Browder (Delmarva) second from right.



Teen Achievers practice Oral Communications skills



The visit by the Youth and Teen Achievers to Christiana Hospital was hosted by Adult Achievers Jineen Redden-Huff (left front) and Robert Redden-Huff (right front) from Christiana Care

WALNUT STREET YMCA DELEGATION ATTENDS YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

Beginning Friday, April 9, 2010, eleven participants from the Walnut Street Black Achievers Program attended the three-day Youth In Government mock legislative program. Sponsored by the YMCA of Delaware, students gathered to debate bills that they researched and drafted earlier. Bills were presented on issues ranging from auto insurance to light bulbs to college tuition. Delegations were in session Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. They did break for fun on Friday evening with a mixer and on Saturday for the Youth Governor's Banquet.



Developing leadership skills at the Youth In Government Model Legislative Weekend were:

From left to right:
 Bottom row: Rasheeda Johnson, Aric Johnson-Liddell, OsShan Chapman, Gerrin Velasquez;
 2nd row: Marguerite White, Jarai Lee, Marcus Miller, Bianca Velasquez
 3rd row: Jasmine Tabron, Aaliyah Griggs, Courtney Frasier, Jordan Anderson
 Top row: Linda Smith, Lillian Nichols



Lillian Nichols, a past Adult Achiever and current advisor to the Walnut Street Youth in Government delegation displays the Award she received.

Two bills sponsored by delegation members were signed by the Youth Governor: 1) The Child Breathe Right Act by Marguerite White; and 2) The Nutrition Chart Act by Jasmine Tabron and Aaliyah Griggs. Aric Liddell was selected as an Outstanding First Year Delegate and as a delegate to the YMCA Youth Conference on National Affairs held in July in North Carolina. Advisor Lillian Nichols, a past Adult Achiever, was honored for her 8 years of dedication to YIG with the Adult Service to Youth Award.



During an innovative Engineering Cluster exercise, the Teen Achievers practice the art of building a suspension bridge with popsicle sticks, rubber bands and glue! Exercise was led by Adult Achiever Irving Bell from DuPont.



Teen Achievers visit the WalMart Logistics Center hosted by Adult Achievers Christopher Holman (far right on back row) and Theresa Simpson (far left on front row) from Walmart.



Performing Community Service by staffing a water station at the Delaware Marathon are Bianca Velazquez, Phil Glass, Avery Griffin, Gerrin Velazquez, Adult Achiever Irving Bell, Alexis Fischer, Adult Achiever, Theresa Simpson, Kayla Williams, Adult Achiever Yolanda Hill.



The Black Achievers visit Widener University School of Law hosted by the Law School Admissions Council Mr. Anthony Pledger, Esq, Director.

mind and body. With the human resource and economic support of community businesses, the Black Achievers program provides college readiness experiences and exposure to community business environments. An annual highlight of the program is the spring tour of college campuses.

Last year 17 youth along with advisors & chaperones visited nine colleges.

"Because of his concern for youth development and social responsibility—themes that are a part of the fabric of the YMCA's value—LeVar Burton is an ideal model for program," said Claire LaMar Carey, director of the Walnut Street Y's Black Achiever program. "He promises to deliver an address that is both educational and inspirational."

Burton was born in Landstuhl, West Germany, where his father was stationed during military service. He was two years old when his family returned to the United States, where he was raised and educated in the parochial tradition.

As if following some implausible Hollywood scenario, Burton's first professional audition, at age 19 while pursuing his undergraduate studies at USC, led to his role as Kunta Kinte in the landmark miniseries *Roots*. The phenomenal success of *Roots* launched his career as an actor, and earned him an Emmy nomination for Best Lead Actor in a Miniseries. Starring roles in television movies followed, including *Dummy*, *Grambling's White Tiger*, *The Guyana Tragedy* and *A Roots Christmas*; *Kunta Kinte's Gift*. His more recent work includes *Parallel Lives*, *Yesterday's Target* and *Firestorm*. He also performed in the television series *Christy*. Among his early feature film credits are *Looking For Mr. Goodbar* and *The Hunter*, with Steve McQueen.

An avowed science-fiction buff as well as a devoted fan of the unique vision of Gene Roddenberry, Burton considers his longtime association with the *Star Trek* franchise as nothing short of a dream come true. Burton is internationally known for his portrayal as Lt. Commander Geordi La Forge in the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. He starred in the box office hits *Star Trek: First Contact*, *Star Trek: Insurrection*, *Star Trek: Generations*, and *Star Trek: Nemesis*.

Having grown up in the 60s and 70s, he remembers how rare it was to encounter positive portrayals of people who looked like him represented in the popular culture.

"Gene Roddenberry's vision of the future provided validation as well assurance. It was a window into the future... that included me!" Having both appeared in and directed numerous *Trek* incarnations over the years, Burton adamantly adheres to his optimistic view of the future, saying "I'm betting on our ultimate success at rising to our highest level of human expression."

Burton has directed episodes of all three *Star Trek* series: *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*, and episodes of the newer series, *Enterprise*. His first dramatic television movie, *The Tiger Woods Story*, received three Emmy nominations. He also directed the Disney Channel original film *Smart House*.

Burton's first honor of the new millennium was a Grammy Award for his narration of the book, *The Autobiography Of Martin Luther King Jr.* Included in the titles Burton has recorded on tape are *The Watsons Go To Birmingham*, *The Miles Davis Story* and *The Jackie Robinson Story*.

In 2006, after 25 seasons as the host and executive producer of the highly acclaimed PBS children's television series *Reading Rainbow*, Burton ended his long time commitment to the show. While taking great pride in *Reading Rainbow's* total of 13 Emmy Awards, five NAACP Awards and numerous nominations, he continues to be most proud of its ability to help create "human beings who are passionate about literature." As a staunch advocate for children's literacy, Burton is frequently called upon to lecture on the subject by organizations around the world. He also co-chaired PBS's literacy campaign, *SHARE-A-STORY* with First Lady Laura Bush.

Burton made his debut as an author in 1997 with his novel *Aftermath*. This science fiction thriller from Warner Books takes place in the



year 2019 and chronicles the efforts of four individuals who are struggling to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of a race war that all but destroys America. With phenomenal reviews from critics and colleagues, *Aftermath* is still in bookstores nationwide.

Burton's first feature film was *Blizzard*, starring Whoopi Goldberg, Christopher Plummer, Brenda Blethyn and Kevin Pollak. His most recent feature film project, *Reach for Me*, stars Alfre Woodard and Seymour Cassel and is now playing on the independent festival circuit.

TICKETS

Tickets for the fundraiser are \$150.00 per individual and \$1,500 for a table of 10. For information about the Black Achievers program or tickets, contact Claire LaMar Carey, program director, at (302) 472-9622.

SENIOR SENDOFF

A Time for CELEBRATION

The Senior Send-Off has become an annual end-of-the-school-year celebration of achievement and graduation. Recognition is given to the graduating seniors and scholarship awards are announced. Other student Achievers are recognized for their accomplishments during the school year. This tradition is an integral part of the Black Achievers Program and a special time for the Achievers and their families.



Graduating Seniors and Scholarship recipients:

- Justin Hurtt-Dunkley – Morgan State University – Mass Communications
- Jeremy Giles – Delaware Technical Community College – Graphics Design
- Tariq Jackson – State University of New York – Performing Arts
- Monica Johnson – North Carolina State University – Education
- Jasmine Tabron – Johnson C. Smith University – Communications
- Briane Washington – West Virginia University – Psychology
- Marguerite White – Benedict College – Communications
- Aaron Jackson – Delaware State University - Communications
- Mikel Yearwood – Delaware College of Art and Design - Graphic Design
- Ailiyah Griggs – Johnson C. Smith University - Business Administration
- Darryl Wade – Hampton University – Biology
- Gloria Williams – Benedict College – Psychology

Teen Achiever Briana Moore is recognized by Mrs. Carey for being selected as Miss Black Delaware Teen - 2010. Joining her at the podium is her brother Brandon Moore

“AS THE FATHER OF TWO YOUNG MEN

who have been participants in the Black Achievers, I find that the program provided a positive arena for my sons to learn about and appreciate the knowledge of self, academic excellence and unity among ourselves. I served as an Adult Achiever with the 2008 class and continue to be involved in my alumni status as a mentor, coach and role model for the youth who participate in this very valuable program.”

Raheem Akil, Adult Achiever, Class of 2008
Wilmington Police Department

“I CREDIT A GREAT DEAL OF THE SUCCESS

of my two children, one a graduate of Howard University and the other a matriculating student at Morgan State University to the Black Achiever Program. Black achievers impacted my children by providing lifelong friendships, positive role models, and the quest for a higher education through the various enrichment programs and culminating activities. It put my mind at ease knowing that my children were in a nurturing environment that was challenging and stimulating. The saying, “it takes a village to raise a child” speaks volumes especially when it comes to Ms. Claire and the powerful influence she has had. The ability to receive scholarship money to pursue a college education was also a great incentive for my children to to wake up early on a Saturday morning. Black Achievers is a remarkable program that gives young children the resources, information and confidence to excel and become leaders for America and the global community.”

Marlene Hurtt-Dunkley
Mother of Two Past Youth Achievers