



Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition

QUARTERLY ALERT

Prevention News to Use

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition is to reduce factors that lead to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and increase resiliency factors of adolescents, children and families in high-risk environments in Jackson, Mississippi.

CALENDAR

- Bi-Monthly Coalition Meeting
October 8, 2007
- Peer Educator TOT
Oct. 8, 2007
- Nov. 19-20, 2007
- Dec. 8, 2007
- End-of-the-Year Celebration
Dec. 14, 2007

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"Keep on Going, Keep on Pushing, Be Self-Motivated"

Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition honors '07 grads

The Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition (MJCPC) family gathered at Center Stage of the Jackson Medical Mall Thursday, June 14 to congratulate three of its junior peer educators who graduated from high school this year.

Leondria Brown, Clinton High School; **Destiny Garvis**, Callaway High School; and **Jasmine Shelby**, Mississippi School for the Arts; were the honorees of the evening.

The celebration theme was, *"Keep on Going, Keep on Pushing, Be Self-Motivated."* Dr. Evelyn Leggette, dean, Jackson State University Division of Undergraduate Studies, served as the speaker for the affair.

Leggette's message was both inspiring and challenging for the students and audience attending the ceremony. She outlined and redefined the ten steps to success listed in *Roads from the Bottom: A Survival Journal for America's Black Community* by C. K. Chiplin. Everyone, especially the graduates, were empowered by learning what one needs to succeed: 1. Know Yourself, 2. Respect Self and Others, 3. Have Faith, 4. Get a Good Education, 5. Never Give Up, 6. Associate with People who are Striving to Advance, 7. Help Somebody, 8. Stand up for Something; 9. Trust in God and 10. Make Sure you Pray.

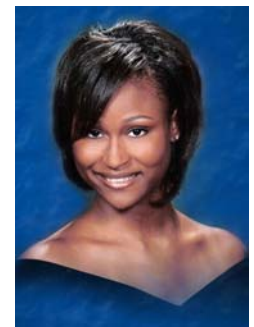
The honorees participated in the MJCPC Peer Educator Leadership Training Project which trains youths to become prevention



Brown



Garvis



Shelby

educators/presenters in order to reduce the risk factors that lead to alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use among Jackson area youths.

Shelby was the lone graduate who had completed five years of training in the peer educator project. Brown and Garvis each had one year of training.

According to the Project Director, Velesha P. Williams, this group was the most impressive that completed the peer educator training course. Williams said, "It is very obvious that these graduates have given some serious thought to the experiences they had as peer educators and they have grown tremendously as a result of the leadership training provided by MJCPC."

This growth was clearly reflected in the remarks that each honoree offered during the ceremony.

Brown said, "Being a peer educator this year has been a very wonderful experience. Although I was a late beginner, I warmly welcomed the teachings of Mr. Clark, Ms. Gooden and Mrs. Bennett, as well as the friendship of the other peer educators.

Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition honors '07 grads continued

"Throughout the year, I have been to instructional meetings to learn exactly what it means to be a peer educator. I presented a PowerPoint presentation on HIV/AIDS at the Mississippi Department of Health's National HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Program. Along with other peer educators, I participated in a short television segment about this program. And get this, probably for the first time, we were able to teach our parents something, during a segment called 'Teach-back to our Parents.' I thoroughly enjoyed this program because it challenged me beyond my comfort zone, as well as, encouraged and motivated me to become a leader. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of such a needed and great program. I would recommend it to anyone," Brown said.

Garvis in reflecting on her experiences said, "I wanted to become a peer educator so I could make a difference in someone's life or help them make smart, mature decisions for a brighter future, even my own if it was needed. Being a peer educator made me face my challenges, so I could have an impact on younger peers as they strive for

their best. Being a peer educator has also taught me to take responsibility in my work. While in the training sessions, I learned facts that enlightened me about my everyday surrounding and circumstances. There were also many things that I thought I knew about the topics we reviewed; but some of my 'facts' were flawed, so I learned better.

"What I like about being a peer educator is knowing that I can help others make smart decisions about everyday challenges. I also like meeting and talking to the motivational speakers that come to speak with us and give us tips on everyday life challenges. Finally, I would like to thank the staff and friends for taking out the time to help

us become who we are today."

Alvin L. Clark, MJCPC program manager said, "Destiny (Garvis), being one of the few seniors, brought a mature flavor to the peer educator training sessions, which were primarily filled with high school freshmen and sophomores."

"Jasmine (Shelby) came to us when she was in the eighth grade, primarily because her mother signed her up. She expected more lectures and stories about 'the facts of life,' but she was pleasantly surprised," Clark stated.

"I realized that this program is not lecturing, but about teaching and building strong leaders. Attending the (summer teen) camps really increased my awareness and



JSU Dean of Undergraduate Studies Division Dr. Evelyn Leggette (center) is presented with gifts of appreciation for serving as keynote speaker for the MJCPC Peer Educator Graduation Ceremony. Making the presentation are (left) Velesha P. Williams, project director, and Alvin Clark (right) program manager.

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MJCPC honors '07 grads continued

perception on life because there, we were taught the defense mechanisms to use when faced with situations of drugs, peer pressure, alcohol abuse and sex," Shelby said.

"Admittedly, Jasmine says that her parents offered that same advice, but there was something 'reflective' about hearing it at this program and teaching it to her peers versus getting parental advice," Clark explained.

"Being a peer educator has been a blessing to me for several reasons. One, I have had the opportunity to travel and meet other youth who are striving for the same goals. Two, I can relate and communicate with my peers with confidence and assurance. Three, I can move forward with clarity and perseverance knowing that I can achieve any goal when I receive it in my mind and believe it in my heart. And four, being around people who are nurturing and who show a genuine concern to educate youth today help prepare us for a better tomorrow."

"As the MJCPC staff reflects on the current accomplishments of these three young ladies, we are humbled to think that we played a small part in shaping these beautiful, articulate, confident young ladies. Then pondering the awesome potential they possess stimulates us to continue encouraging youth to be drug-free. But we are further gratified knowing that these are the type of persons we need in our community to challenge the factors that lead our youth towards alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and abuse. We are convinced that if we continue to do what we are doing, the fruit of our labor will be more peer educators looking towards the future bright eyed and optimistic. So while each of these young ladies thanked us, we in turn thank them for remaining drug-free and being peer educators," concluded Clark.

Join the Coalition

One of the most gratifying experiences anyone can have is knowing that you helped shape the future. That is the reward we get from working with our peer educators, providing LifeSkills Training in the community and presenting substance abuse prevention education lectures to youth.

You can be certificated as a LifeSkills and/or Project ALERT trainer, be a camp counselor, a field trip chaperone or serve as support service personnel. You will **Teach! Learn! and Have Fun!** You can join us as an MJCPC volunteer.

For more details, call MJCPC at 601-982-0861

Peer educator Courtney Holmes profiled

Courtney Holmes is a junior at Hinds Community College, Raymond, majoring in nursing. Before going to Hinds, Holmes spent six years with Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition's (MJCPC) Peer Educator Program. We learned that Holmes' hobbies include watching television, hanging out with friends, talking on the phone, bowling and shopping.



Holmes

Her favorite quote is: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Her favorite subjects in high school were human anatomy and physiology. She enjoys R&B and gospel music. Pizza and macaroni and cheese are her foods of choice.

Holmes' favorite movie is "Love & Basketball." Orange is her favorite color. In high school, Holmes was a National Honor Society member. She won 3rd place in the Mississippi General Missionary Baptist Convention Essay Competition. Persons she most admires are her parents, Terrence and Brenda Holmes.

"By being a Peer Educator, I learned a lot of information that most of my peers aren't aware of or don't care to learn about. These life lessons have helped me to make the right decisions in my life on a daily basis. The staff at Metro Jackson has had a positive influence on my life and I hope they continue to work with youth to influence their life like they have done for me," Holmes stated.

Terry Bennett, MJCPC outreach worker, said, "I met Courtney six years ago when I spoke to a youth Bible Class on Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Prevention. I asked if anyone were interested in participating in our Peer Educator Program but got no volunteers. So, I choose some students, including Courtney who did not really want to participate but would if her friend did.

"Courtney was a quiet young lady who never says anything unless asked. She is now serving as a dorm advisor at Hinds and speaking out and sharing her gifts and training with the students there in part because of the life skills training provided through our program. I am so proud to see how she has blossomed and I know this program had a lot to do with that. She is an inspiration to us at MJCPC to continue nurturing our peer educators. Congratulations Courtney!" expressed Terry Bennett.

Drug Prevention Web Sites

Parents can obtain facts and information about keeping children drug-free from the following Web sites:

Freevibe.com

TheAntiDrug.com

TeachersGuide.com

Drugstory.org

MediaCampaign.org

WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov

HelpYourCommunity.org

Health.org

For additional information, please visit the Parent Resource Center in the offices of the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition located in Suite 2260 of the Jackson Medical Mall, Thad Cochran Center, 350 West Woodrow Wilson Ave., in Jackson, Miss.

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