



Chasmyne Carter, left, asks a question about relationships as Yasmine West-Houston looks on during the "Generational Conversations: A Day of Facilitated Fruitful & Positive Dialogue" event on May 21. Both girls attend Hanes Middle School.

Photo by Donna Rogers

**Event**

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where we will share dialogue," she said.

"I don't think girls spend enough time together," said Judge Denise Hartsfield, the facilitator for the event. Her job was to "engage the panel and audience in how women can come together and build intergenerational relationships that will create opportunities for each

woman to share their own HERstory!" according to publicity material. The judge did just that.

She said that she doesn't see a lot of girls in the juvenile criminal justice system, in which she works, "but I see enough." Hartsfield said she hopes events such as Generational Conversations will help girls understand that "power comes from within," not emulating the hip-hop image or other images

that are not positive for girls.

The Rev. Dr. Felecia Piggott-Long told about how a tradition in Africa is for the older generation of women to fellowship and impart wisdom to the younger generation while all worked on tasks. She mentioned how she and her mother, who died last year, went through rites of passage together in the African tradition and made a quilt using parts of memorable clothing. She said fellow-

shipping with her mother helped strengthen her spiritual being.

"You listen to the other women talking while quilting" and capture the wisdom they impart, she said.

Piggott-Long brought the quilt to show the audience and pointed to various pieces of memorable clothing.

Although only one panel had the task to deal with spirituality, references to God were made throughout other conversations as panelists mentioned how they are being led by God to make decisions in their lives. For instance, a girl asked the question "Have you reached your goal?" to the h e Work/Education/Finances/Career panel. Hartsfield; Donna Taylor, an attorney; and Tamara Turner, an administrator with Quality Education Academy, spoke about being led by God as they navigate through their careers.

And in one case, when the topic was Health/Wellness/Mental Health, Jesus entered into the conversation when a girl questioned a panelist about what she said in answering the question



Piggott-Long

"Where do you get strength and motivation from?" The conversation, which appeared to be a misunderstanding, ended with the girl and the panelist professing their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

At least two panelists brought their daughters, who participated. One panelist, Shenell Thompson, and her daughter Kymberly Michael Thompson, 16, were on the panel addressing family and relationships.

They both talked about how important structure is in family life. Shenell Thompson has been married more than two decades and Kymberly spoke highly of her father. "My daddy is the best man I know," she said.

Kymberly said girls should know themselves.

"You can't search for yourself in someone else because you don't know who you are," she said.

She said girls should keep their priorities straight and resist following the crowd — and boys. She says girls should say to boys: "You should have to work for me."

"This has been some really good conversation," Shenell Thompson said.

"Networking and telling your story is the most effective way to keep change happening," Hartsfield said.

ACEY is an acronym that represents goals of the group: Achievement in the education of women and girls about the power of philanthropy; Commitment to connect with women and girls in the community; Encourage self-esteem and empowerment of women and girls; and Yield women and leaders and philanthropists.

Dr. Betty Alexander, a retired educator who is president of the group, said. "This has been a wonderful day, a tremendous day, a day of learning, a day of sharing and a day of loving."

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