

Opinion

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Editorials

Our Muted Black Youth

The planning of a most significant event like the African-American Summit is tantamount to addressing key issues that ill-effect the African-American community here. But one key element was missing that would have made a good planning session a great one: the presence and the voice and of African-American youth.

Perhaps one of the most pressing issues facing African Americans is not the many struggles for economic development that we as adults have countenanced in the past or continue to face today. It is how to equip well enough a generation — our beloved and innocent children — to deal with the struggles they face and will likely continue to face as they grow older and mature.

All children — especially African-American males — are crying out to be heard. And if we continue to mute their cry, we all suffer in the long run.

Although most of the people at the Aug. 28 summit planning session have good-paying jobs and live in nice homes, they don't have all the answers to why black students might have low self-esteem or might feel inferior to other students or might resort to violent behavior. If the issue is to be addressed how to best serve the needs of the next generation, it would be wise to first uncover what some of those needs are. The best way to do that is through dialogue — not among adults but with black teen-agers.

That's why it is imperative that the planners of the African-American Summit include in their planning sessions the very ones they spend a great deal of time discussing.

African-American youth have a voice and they must be heard. They are literally dying to be heard! And theirs is a story that needs to be told. And if the planners, for whatever reason have decided that it would be inappropriate for the youths to attend these planning sessions (and we can't fathom that thought), then they should plan an African-American Teen Summit.

Because all children — especially African-American males — are crying (and dying) out to be heard. And if we continue to mute their cry, we all suffer in the long run.

Commending LIFT Academy's Efforts

To the Editor:

It is imperative that I take time out from my day-to-day activities and express my sincere "thank you's" for all that your academy has done toward the positive development of my son, Anthony Ricucci.

During my initial interview, I was told that the LIFT Academy takes a holistic approach to educating young people who may be deemed "at risk" for crime and/or "high risk" for substance abuse. At this point I must confess that I had some serious doubts about the capability of such a compact staff with limited resources to accomplish the seemingly overwhelming task of embracing, uplifting and redirecting young people who have been suspended, excluded or expelled from the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System. The idea of so few accomplishing so much, with so little in such a short period of time made me quite skeptical. The winning thought which gave me confidence to accept LIFT Academy for my son is the devotion of your motto: "Learning is a requirement and not an elective." This thought swung me over to your side.

Anthony entered the LIFT academy — a 6-foot-1-inch, 210-pound senior with a major chip on his shoulder and a horrible attitude toward your school. To use his vernacular, "I hate LIFT, I hate the South and I hate what school has

done to me. I'm ready to quit and go back to New York. This sucks!" I must also add that in addition to being overweight, my son also had a complex about his inability to master any particular sport. This had a major impact on my son's self-confidence and his overall feeling of self-worth.

The love and professionalism that is in abundance within the LIFT Academy manifested in my son accomplishing the following:

- Bronze Award - "Most Improved" LIFT Academy sports extra weightlifting team (middle-weight division).
- Red Ribbon Week Campaign - 2nd place, Forsyth County, for his essay, "Why I am Drug Free and Proud."
- Sergeant at Arms - Student Government Association, an elected position voted upon by the student body.
- Student Representative - to speak on behalf of the youth in Forsyth County, live broadcast on radio station 102.1 FM, "Let's Stop the Violence Now!"
- High School Diploma - Honors graduate (3.425 GPA).

Thank you, LIFT Academy from the bottom of my heart. I entrusted you with the greatest gift

About letters . . .

The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. The letter must also include the name, address and telephone number of the writer to ensure the authenticity of the letter. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to Chronicle Mailbag, P.O. Box 1636, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.

bestowed upon me, my son. You enrolled an overweight, disgruntled, bad attitude, low self-esteem adolescent, and you molded and shaped him into a trim (165 lb.) positive-minded, clear-thinking, self-assured, assertive honors graduate. A young man "ready-for-the-now," looking forward to college life at Bronx Community College in New York.

Words can never totally express my deepest most sincere gratitude for all that you have done for me and my family. Thank you, God bless each of you and godspeed on accomplishing your mission's purpose.

Marie and Frank Ricucci

Editor's Note: Marie and Frank Ricucci sent this letter to LIFT and

asked also that it be published in the Chronicle.

Thank you W-S

To the Editor:

Words are poor tools with which to fashion what my heart would convey. But however remedial, they are the only instruments with which I have to say, "Thank You!"

May the sun always shine on your face; may the winds always be at your back; may the love of God keep each of you. And, may God richly bless each of you.

Delores "D" Smith
W-S Urban League

CHRONICLE MAILBAG Our Readers Speak Out

"I Know Why Mama Hid the Slavery Books From Us"

Most of us knew Mama was twenty-five years ahead of herself when she told us we lived in the suburbs (actually we or seven of us were born on Yadkin Valley Road in Davie County about fifteen miles from Winston-Salem). For a long time now most people who live on Yadkin Valley Road worked in Winston-Salem. Mama would say keep your property, DON'T SELL IT. In fact Mama wanted to put in her will that the property we owned would never get out of the Kimbrough family. Dad talked her out of that. He didn't feel that any of the children wanted to continue to live there.

Mama and Dad were preceptive in another way. They valued education and did what they could to send as many children as they could to private school, public school and college. Mama made you get homework before you played, and she checked it, English, spelling, geography and reading. Dad checked arithmetic and word problems.

Mama instilled in each one of us the value of property, real estate. That is one reason why I took the course for a real estate broker. Mama told us to buy all the property you could and hold it. No more land is being made so one day it will be valuable. Mama's prediction

is true. Mama was always busy. She was never idle and neither were the children. It was our lot to feed the horses, mules or cows, put them out to graze, help collect fruit to sell, sew, clean the house, wash dishes, sweep the yard, study your books.

There were physiology charts and spelling books in our house, because the original room was a log school house where my great uncle, Edward Kimbrough, taught school, and Dad was one of his pupils. (We were told Dad solved the word problems for Uncle Ed).

Most of us after elementary school had to leave home to attend our accredited school. We were at least in high school or mature enough to be in high school when Mama told us she hid the slavery books from us. Mama and Dad never talked about slavery. Growing up in Davie County was fun and full of love and laughter. There was so much love from Mama and Dad, brothers and sisters, church members, schoolmates and friendship from our neighbors, it was accepted as the norm.

Mama and Dad did talk about outstanding black men and women who had achieved. Frederick Douglass was a slave child who was taught to read by the slave master's

wife. Other outstanding blacks who had achieved were: Booker T. Washington, Simon O. Atkins, Mary McCloud Bethune, Maggie L. Walker, Sojourner Truth, Mary Church Terrell, Harriet Tubman, Charlotte Hawkins Brown and J.C. Price. There was always a conversation on the achievements of blacks, even in our family, the preachers, the physicians, the teach-

would have had on me as a youngster growing up in Davie County with white neighbors.

It is conceivable that one could develop some sense of inferiority or little self-worth. Anyway, my family was spared and that's why I want to thank Mama for protecting all of us at such young years. Even as an adult it is almost too much to handle. I wonder how many scars exist today in adults who heard about or



GUEST COLUMNIST

BY VIRGINIA K. NEWELL

ers. The entire atmosphere in our house was upbeat and positive.

Now I know why Mama hid the slavery books from us. I understand why Mama said she would cry when she read the slavery books. After recently reading about the sad tales of degradation and dehumanization of black slave children, I was emotionally devastated. It has been difficult to fathom how anyone could dehumanize children so as to make them eat out of a trough as a horse or a pig.

I wonder what effect that

read the slave stories? I wonder what effect this has on achievement. The one thing that all of us can do is to compare the accomplishment of the blacks in spite of segregation, discrimination, poor education and sometimes no education.

(East Ward Alderman Virginia K. Newell is former chairman of the Math and Computer Science Department at WSSU. She is headmaster of the Math and Science Academy of Excellence for Middle School Students.)

Credo of the Black Press
The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from antagonisms when it accords to every person - regardless of race Creed — full human and legal rights. Hating no person, the Black Press strives to help every person, in the firm belief that all are hurt as long anyone is held back.

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NNPA National Newspaper Publishers Association
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WHERE I'M COMING FROM

BY BARBARA BRANDON

AUNT LYNRICIA TOLD ME HOW HARD IT WAS FOR YOU TO TELL HER ABOUT YOUR HOMOSEXUALITY.

IT WAS! BUT ONCE I TOLD MOM, I FELT TOTALLY FREE. NOW I CAN'T STOP TELLING FOLKS.

NOW I DON'T THINK IT'S NECESSARY TO TELL THE ENTIRE WORLD WHAT YOUR SEXUAL PREFERENCE IS, DO YOU?

I GUESS NOT. YOU'RE RIGHT. I JUST NEED TO RELAX ABOUT IT.

EXACTLY! ... HEY HERE'S MY GIRL ALISHA. MEET COUSIN DEE, ALISHA.

HI.

HI. HOW ARE YOU?

I'M GAY. HOW ARE YOU?

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