

Brothers support group provides University family for black men

By Winifred Sease
Staff Writer

"It's like a gas station," said Michael Bowden. "You can go there and get energy."

Bowden, a sophomore public policy analysis major from Charlotte, offered this metaphor for Brothers.

Brothers is a discussion and support group for and about black males. The group, which was begun in the fall of

1987, was founded and is facilitated by Clifford Charles, counselor and coordinator of minority student programs at the University Counseling Center.

"The purpose of the group is three-fold. It provides social support, cultural affirmation and educational programming," Charles said.

Topics of discussion include academic achievement, career planning, relationships, positive identity, religion, multicultural living and such specific

issues as the Persian Gulf War and "The Student Body," the infamous statues moved from in front of Davis Library. These are all discussed from a perspective that focuses on the black male experience, Charles said.

Andre Tippens, a senior business major from Charlotte, said, "Brothers lets you know you are not alone, build confidence, share cultural identity, and talk about anything."

"It is an excellent group," Tippens said. "It allows you to focus on what you have to do."

One concern raised by Tippens was the fact that there were decreasing numbers of black males on campus and the ones that were here were not staying for four years.

Charles said that joining a group such as Brothers is a solution to many of the problems students face on campus. For example, Tracy Cameron, a sophomore business major from Middlesex, said he did not feel as if he belonged at UNC. He started attending Brothers as

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Lionel Williams
Brothers member

inviting a speaker who gives a presentation and answers questions to having the members meet amongst themselves.

Lionel Williams, a junior pharmacy major from Jackson Springs, said, "I learned to think about the future, graduate school, for example, and the group allowed me to gain a broader perspective and see the world differently."

"You get information you wouldn't otherwise get," he said. It is a safe and confidential environment where one feels comfortable enough to express his thoughts without criticism, he said.

Williams said, "The group is a place where black men get together and express ourselves on issues unique to us."

"I feel very positive about the group, how it has evolved, and where it is going," Charles said.

The members encourage and invite newcomers to attend the meetings on Thursday nights, from 6 p.m. until 7:30 p.m., in the first floor lounge of Hinton James.

a freshman and now feels he is a part of the University, not because he is black, but because of his grades and achievements.

Also, Brothers has done outside activities. Last year, its members attended Glenwood Elementary and talked with black male sixth graders about academic achievement and setting goals early in their school careers.

The best aspect of the group is the

friendship, said Aaron Bell, a sophomore business major from Gastonia. "You meet people, make friends and have somebody you can confide in who understands. We are all on the same level."

Bowden said, "The group is very positive; it's like a comfortable gathering of friends or a little family."

He also said one could learn a lot. The format of the meetings varies from

Campus Calendar

FRIDAY
Noon: CGLA Lesbian Lunch will be held in 218 Union.
TARP will wrap-up Recycling Week in the Pit with a drawing for all pledge signers. Fifty prizes will be awarded, and you need not be present to win.

1 p.m. UNC Slave Club will sponsor a "Russian Table" in 218 Union.
IM-REC Sports: Rugby vs. UNC-Charlotte on Carmichael Field.

3 p.m. Graduate Art Student Association will sponsor a talk by Jaroslav Folda on "Byzantine Travels in the Soviet Union, Aug. 6-22, 1991" in 117 Hanes Art Center.

8 p.m. Henderson Residence College invites everyone to come to the Cabaret for a little night music, free munchies and beverages. Co-sponsored by Carolina Dining Service and Harris Inc.

SATURDAY
8 p.m. The Carolina Union will sponsor The Pixies with Pere Ubu in Memorial Hall. Tickets are available. Questions? Call 966-3837.

Noon: The Senior Class of 1992 invites all seniors to come to Hams to watch the UNC-UVa game. Food and drink specials will be available.

SUNDAY
9:30 a.m. Pumpkin Sale until noon at University Methodist Church and the Newman Center.

1 p.m. IM-REC Sports: Women's soccer vs. NCSU at Finley Field.

IM-REC Sports: Football Club vs. Pack Club, away.

3 p.m. IM-REC Sports: Men's soccer vs. Wilson at Finley Field.

5 p.m. The Black Interdenominational Student Association will have worship services in the Wesley Foundation followed by fest and fellowship.

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. invites all interested women to attend the fall 1991 Sigma Tea at 5 p.m. in Gerrard Hall. Formal attire is required. Questions? Call 933-2352.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Anyone interested in KIDSREAD should come to the Campus Y before Saturday for more information on the next training session.

Tar Heel Target will hold an interest meeting at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 21 in the Upendo Lounge.

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Notre Dame vs. Air Force
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UNC YEAR-AT-MONTEPELLIER

Informational Meeting
Thursday, Oct. 24th
3:30 - 5:30 pm

3:30 Video Presentation
4:00 Student Panel

in Toy Lounge
4th Floor DEY HALL

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