

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ST. PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

State-wide Teacher Meetings
OCTOBER 18-19, 2007

Parent/Teacher Conferences
NOVEMBER 12, 2007

CHOSEN TO ACHIEVE

Team Leaders Meeting
OCTOBER 18, 2007
6:30-7:30 PM

CHOSEN TO ACHIEVE TEAM LEADERS

Carol Carter
Saint Paul Public Schools Liaison
Joann Clark
Day Care Owner
Henry Combs
Saint Paul Public Schools Coach
Metric Giles I
Saint Paul Public Works Department
Patrice Howard
Assoc. Minister Progressive Baptist
Denise Loving
3M Advanced Information Analyst
Andrew McGlory
Saint Paul Public Schools Architect
Yvette Mims
Housing Management
Joe Morrison
Deacon & Business Owner
Tonya Smith
3m Engineer

Chosen to Achieve's First African American Summer Culture Camp a HUGE Success



Researching important African American leaders



Writing about African American history

"I learned a lot about Africa and about my peoples' history. You don't learn that stuff in normal school." This was one student's response after attending Chosen to Achieve's first annual African American Culture Camp, which took place July 1-August 5, 2007. The camp was held weekdays from 8AM to 2PM at Saint Thomas University in St. Paul. The ten-day learning experience featured five classes and was provided free of charge to all participants.

Funding for the culture camp was provided through a grant from **Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty**. The Great Lakes Corporation and Affiliates are dedicated to "changing lives for the better through higher education" by collaborating with schools, community organizations, and lenders to help students pay for college. This non-profit organization has served millions of students and is a national leader in integrity

and philanthropy. Thank you to Ms. LaToya Sykes of Great Lakes for her support of Chosen to Achieve. The culture camp would not have been possible without resources from of Ms. Sykes and Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty. **THANK YOU!**

Plans for an African American Culture Camp began when Chosen to Achieve staff and mentors noticed a disconnect between African American students and their history. Many mentees had a lack of knowledge about major elements of the African American experience, and there was an urgent need to fill this hole. In addition, Chosen to Achieve team leaders traveled to Chicago to meet with representatives from the Chicago School District and a professor from Chicago University. There they discussed the consequences of failing to teach young people to appreciate the learning process.

(Culture Camp continued on page 3)



Anna's Notes

It's simple. If you are willing to be a friend to a young person, BE A MENTOR with Chosen to Achieve!

ATTENTION!

The faith-based workshop with Pastor Tommy McClam that was originally scheduled for Thursday and Friday September 27 & 28, 2007 has been **POSTPONED**. Stay tuned for details!!!

Culture Camp Photos & Student Quotes



Everyone participated in the closing ceremony



Parents attended the final ceremony, art showcase, and dance performance

“The classes were cool because the stuff we learned had something to do with my culture and where my people came from.” - Culture camp participant

“We did lots of different activities that made the learning fun, even though it was hard work!” - Culture camp participant



Participants learned about history through art in Ms. Ellis's class



Learning African Dance



Having fun with classmates and staff



Students discussed African history in El-Kati's class

African American Culture Camp Staff



Mahmoud El-Kati is an internationally renowned and respected writer, lecturer, and historian on the African American experience. He is currently a lecturer of history at Macalester College in Saint Paul, and the director and co-founder of the Pan-African conference at Mankato State University in Mankato, MN. El-Kati wrote the curriculum for the culture camp and taught the course on **African American History**.



Gwendolyn M. Ellis is an African American cultural consultant who specializes in customized curriculums for students. Her unique programs often include traditional songs, folklore, oral histories, and visual arts. Ellis creatively and successfully integrates African American history and self-expression through art and music. At the culture camp Ellis taught **Visual Arts Enrichment**.



Phillip Ray currently teaches Geography at Murray Magnet Junior High School in Saint Paul, and is a General Education Development test tutor for Project Reconnect in Minneapolis. Ray's infectious passion and uncanny ability to stimulate the minds of young people has made him an expert at connecting African American students to their history and culture. At the culture camp Ray taught **Reading & Writing**.



Kehnide Reuben has been a dance instructor for over ten years, specializing in African movement. She has taught dance courses at various schools, churches, camps and community events throughout Minnesota. While teaching dance, Reuben incorporates other elements of African and African American tradition such as music, dress, and language. At the culture camp Reuben taught **African Dance**.

(Culture Camp continued from Page 1)

Therefore, the culture camp was created with two goals in mind. First, it would exist to socialize students to value education. Teachers would not simply teach “at” students, but would show them how to be critical thinkers. Second, the camp would teach students about important elements of the African American experience they may not otherwise learn, including the tradition of education. Through the generous support of Stephen Severance of Saint Paul Public Schools’ Inter District Partnership, Chosen to Achieve was able to collaborate with St. Thomas University and establish plans for the camp. The culture camp was an intensive, academic experience where students became immersed in African American history and culture. Each class was designed to fulfill the camp’s mission and provide students with a fun, safe, and open learning environment. The following classes were offered at the camp:

African American History:

- Abridged chronology of the African American experience, from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade to the Civil Rights Era.
- Major contributions of African peoples to the material, spiritual, and social development of America.
- Helped students shape a new understanding of their individual selves and a connection to the community from which they came.

Reading and Writing:

- Basic grammar, effective writing, and critical thinking skills.
- Materials from African American History studied in greater depth through responsive writing, film, music, and technology.

Visual Arts Enrichment:

- Designed to cultivate positive self-image, respect, and worldview of African American culture and heritage. For example, students created a quilted pillow as they learned how quilts helped slaves escape to freedom.
- Students showcased their completed projects at final ceremony.

African Dance:

- Students learned traditional African dance in a structured routine while learning about African music, dress, and language.
- Dance routine was performed at final ceremony.

Athletics:

- Sporting activities taught students the importance of physical education, teamwork skills, and sports in relation to culture.

Chosen to Achieve’s first annual African American Culture Camp was a huge success because the entire community was united to support our young people. It takes *everyone* for an event like this to be successful. Thank you to our assistants, Shantella Barnes, Otis. C. Clark, Augustus Young, Rae Woods, and to the teachers, University of Saint Thomas staff, parents, and students who participated! See you next year!!

DANCE & ATHLETICS



Football!



Performing at the final ceremony!



Students practiced teamwork while playing sports



Young women learned an African Dance routine from Ms. Reuben



STUDENT ART



Quilted pillows at art showcase



African weaving project



Each student created a “Legacy Tree” to learn about their family’s history



Weaving projects at art showcase



Decoupage project taught students about slavery in America



Parents, *your support matters.*
We cannot do this without you!



Research shows that students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, be promoted and earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills, and graduate and go on to college.

Adapted from KSA Plus Communications' "As a parent, 12 things you should know about and expect from your schools and yourself."

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