



# Daily Update

Blacks In Government 30<sup>th</sup> Annual National Training Conference  
Volume 4 – August 14, 2008

## “Rising Above the Storm: Navigating New Challenges with High Professional Competency and Dedication to Public Service”

### *Blacks In Government Youth Empowerment Day*

*Reported by Ms. Laverne Saulny*

Over **200** students from Orleans Parish School (OPSD) and Recovery School District attended **Blacks In Government (BIG) “Youth Empowerment Day”**. The Youth Empowerment Day offered a variety of workshops that were intense, high-energy, participatory and FUN. The students also received a variety of interactive and creative expressive techniques to promote youth empowerment. The workshops brought awareness about issues of concerns to the young people including driving safely, careers in the federal sector, financial planning and leadership skills.



Special thanks to the Department of Defense (DOD) as a sponsor of BIG’s Youth Empowerment Luncheon, which included keynote speaker Mr. Eric Carr an American professional Heavyweight boxer. Carr’s amateur boxing career began at the impressionable age of 14. His amateur career produced a remarkable record of 56 wins with six losses.

The students heard a powerful and gifted speaker, who brought a warm, energetic and humorous “can-do” message that was right on target. Mr. Carr spoke about his life and the relationships that have helped him over the years. He shared with the students his personal deficiencies – such as fear, inattentiveness, and laziness – as well as his areas of personal values, such as self-knowledge, courage and dreams. He

encouraged the students to face life obstacles and be inspired to overcome them in quest of their own dreams. His delivery was powerful and the students were inspired to go to new levels of achievements.

The “**Youth Empowerment Day**” closed in a **BIG way!!!!** Blacks In Government (BIG), BIG chapters, GEICO, Wal-Mart, and Affordable Benefit Solutions, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) supplied the students with new school supplies. Many students start the school year with no or inadequate school supplies, putting the students and the teachers at a disadvantage from the very first day of school. As students return to school, the need for proper school supplies

becomes critical issues in many families already struggling to meet basic needs. Thanks to BIG and their National sponsors for providing these essential supplies to the students for their academic success.

Special thanks to **Thelma French, Assistant to Dr. Darryl Kilbert, Superintendent OPSD**, for all of her assistance for getting the following schools to participate: **McDonough #35, Eleanor McMMain, St. John’s ACE, Boys & Girls Club - Westbank.**

Congratulations to the following students who won the grand prizes. Hien (Linh) Nguyen, McMMain High School, won a Compaq Laptop Computer; Joleel Merritt, West Jefferson High School won a Texas Instrument; Deavon Taylor, West Jefferson High School also won a Texas

Instrument; and Temperance Maupin, John F. Kennedy High School won a rolling backpack.

**Great Job to Mr. Richard Shields and Dr. Doris Sartor for a very successful, informative, and beneficial BIG “Youth Empowerment Day”!!!!**

***The Department of Defense Youth Symposium and Luncheon***  
*Reported by Mr. Hugh Gardner*

The Luncheon opened at the Hilton Riverside Grand Salon Ballroom at 11:30 a.m. Speakers from the Department of Defense were Lieutenant Ejoll Ramsey, Captain Ann Bernard and Ensign DeCarol Davis. The students were encouraged to choose mentors and began preparing for their future today. The luncheon is part of the Youth Empowerment Program which is composed of workshops designed especially for the attending youths.

***National Legislative Luncheon***  
*Reported by Mr. Ronald S. Mathis*  
*National Legislative Chair*

Professor Bryan A. Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative (EQI) gave an insightful and emotional presentation regarding the unfair treatment received by people of color who enter the criminal justice system. He called on BIG members to get involved in the process to insure equitable justice is dispensed. He particularly focused on the incarceration of youth who are housed in adult prisons and encouraged the development of legislation to remedy the problem. At the conclusion of his 40 minute presentation he received a standing ovation from luncheon attendees.

Congressman William J. Jefferson; (D), 2<sup>nd</sup> La. spoke about the congressional initiatives he sponsored in the areas of Education, Economic Development and Community Empowerment. He urged BIG members to get involved in the political process and help him bring about the

changes needed to help the African-American community.

***AE/EEO Luncheon Program***  
*Reported by Mr. Larry Houston*

Rev. Jacqueline Norris, National AE/EEO Chair opened the program by inviting everyone to think out of the box as the dialogue on the subject of diversity is being discussed.

The theme for the luncheon was: **“Diversity: Career Advancement and Upward Mobility.”**

Ms. Marge McKay, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, United States Department of Agriculture Office of Civil Rights. She shared with the audience USDA Diversity programs that have been instituted and how these programs have made a difference in the workplace environment.

Belinda Pinckney, Brigadier General (BG), Director of Army Diversity Task Force. She shared with the audience about her family background, and upbringing and how it profoundly impacted her thinking. The Department of the Army has developed a diversity program around the concept of consideration of others.

***“Achieving Community Success through Coalition Building”***  
*Reported by Ms. Audrene Ellis*

Developing relationships and partnerships is the foundation of building any positive coalition within the community. An example Ms. White cited was the bill that was recently signed by President Bush authorizing funding to community agencies to counsel individuals whose homes are in foreclosure status. She further noted the following strategies that individuals could utilize to build coalitions within the community:

Through collaboration, positive dialogue between the organization and stakeholders

(community) will occur and support for the project can be achieved.

During her discussion regarding collaboration, Ms. White actively engaged the audience regarding collaborating with businesses, faith-based organizations, and non-profit organizations within their individual communities.

Collaboration with businesses, organizations, and stakeholders within the community is essential for the success of any program.

Ms. White further noted that the components of effective coalition building are as follows: Treat coalition building as a business, create long term partners, and ensure that each individual or organization within the coalition understands their role and the expectations.

The tools that can be utilized to overcome collaboration challenges include: (a) bring in Specialists who can address particular issues, such as, identifying funding within the community; (b) locate replacement partners if current partners are not working toward the desired goals; and (c) identify multiple funding, such as, contacting individuals within the community.

### ***“Championing Diversity In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century-Healing Racial Wounds***

*Reported by Mr. Larry Houston*

The central topics in this workshop were: Characteristics of Champions; Cultural Pride and Awareness; Cultural Stories; Releasing Negative Emotions and Reactions; and Being an Ally. Ms. Imani stressed to the audience that when you are talking about racial issues, she wanted them to always keep these thoughts in mind—NO BLAME, NO SHAME, NO GUILT. Many interesting and thought provoking discussions occurred with lively audience participation.

### ***“Becoming the Agent for – Change: A Blueprint for Creating, Managing, Dealing with Change in the Workplace”***

*Reported by Ms. Melinda Shelton*

Hurts. Hang-ups. Habits. Fear. Worry. Doubt.

These are words with significant meaning to people who fear the C-word: Change. And according to Johnny “The Transition Man” Campbell, everyone is afraid of letting change into their lives, personal or professional.

Campbell, a motivational speaker from Chicago, provided a one-man show complete with anecdotes, pointers, and self-promotion (“I’m my OWN agent of change”) during his Tuesday afternoon workshop, “Becoming an Agent for Change: A Blueprint for Creating, Managing, Dealing with Change in the Workplace and Life.”

To illustrate how we can overcome our ingrained fear of change, Campbell offered a three-step process to “cracking the change code.” A person must first understand the barriers to creating change, then understand the “true drivers” of change, and finally embrace change and move past resistance.

“To start the change, you must have a cause,” Campbell told his audience. A cause creates commitment, inspires courage, and builds a community. By establishing or creating a cause or reason for changing something, “you are then DOING, which starts the whole change process.”

The next step to cracking the code is to structure the change, which requires determining a clear purpose, including objectives. “Objectives take you where you want to go,” Campbell said. However, keeping the focus on the purpose isn’t easy because people fear the future, worry about the past, and doubt the present. “Staying in the present will chase away the fear, worry, and doubt,” he added.

The final step in cracking the change code is to maintain the change by offering a “reward.”

Everyone wants more, whether it's more recognition, more respect, more responsibilities, even more money, Campbell said.

Campbell offered yet another tidbit in not only embracing change but acting as your own "agent of change": "Remember, change is nothing more than an acceptable transition. An **ACCEPTABLE** transition."

## ***Gospel Extravaganza***

*Reported by Ms. Audrene Ellis*

The Gospel extravaganza was exciting, thought provoking, and soul lifting. The attendance was outstanding with standing room only. Throughout the program, the audience was captivated with the talent and passion the performers displayed. According to Shirley Francis from Washington D.C., the "GOD Chosen" dancers from California were exceptional, the "BIG" choir, under leadership of Ms. Sandra Glenn, Region IV, General Chappie James Chapter, was awesome, and the local talent was amazing.

### ***Conference Attendees: "What are you thinking?"***

Dawn Criddle works for the Department of the State from Houston, Texas. She is attending the NTC for the first time. She is extremely impressed with the NTC's training workshops. Her most memorable special event was the Opening Plenary Session. According to Ms. Criddle, the personal development and self-motivational workshops have been the most beneficial for her career development. She is very impressed with the conference, and will recommend it to others. In regards to improving the conference, she felt that the accommodations for the receptions and shuttle services can be improved. She mentioned that the "food lines were too long at the President's reception."

Ellen Buckler who works for the Department of the State from Washington, D.C. stated that she has enjoyed meeting the different attendees from all over the country as well as the various workshops. This is her second conference and will recommend it to others. Her most memorable events so far, have been "the Opening Plenary session ...". She felt that all the workshops that she has attended have been beneficial to her career. Ms. Buckler felt that the numerous cancellations of workshop should be improved for future conferences.

Unita Williams, a Department of the State employee from Washington, D.C. is thoroughly enjoying the workshops, and the agencies' booths at the 'Exhibit Hall. This is her first NTC Conference and she would recommend the conference to others. She felt that all the workshops she attended were beneficial to her career. She suggested more frequent shuttle service for conference attendees in the future would be helpful.

Mr. Tony Cheatham of Hyattsville, Maryland who works for the Environmental Protection Agency stated he has attended six conferences. His favorite workshops were centered around career development and leadership and management. He considered the EPA forum as his most memorable event which addressed the rebuilding of New Orleans after Katrina, the pitfalls and the progress. He would like to see the more popular and engaging workshops given more presentation time. He stated that he really would like to see upper management attend the BIG conference to see how fantastic and invaluable the training is to dismiss the perception that it is "just partying".

***ATTENTION! ~ ~ ATTENTION!***

The National Communication and Public Relations Committee has developed a template for a National Training Conference After Action Report. The template will be available on the BIGNET website, <http://www.bignet.org>.

You are encouraged to prepare a report for your supervisor, manager or agency head, etc. This is a good way to let them know what you have gained through your attendance at the 2008 National Training Conference.

**Youth Information Superhighway Competition and Oratorical**

Friday, August 15, 2008

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Hilton Jefferson Ballrooms

**DOD Military and Civilian Meritorious Award Reception**

Friday, August 15, 2008

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

**Excellence in Government Service Awards and Recognition Banquet**

Friday, August 15, 2008

6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m., Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

**Join Us in 2009**

**For the**

**Blacks In Government**

**31<sup>st</sup> Annual National Training Conference**

**August 25-29, 2009**

**Baltimore, Maryland**

