

YMCA BLACK ACHIEVERS PROGRAM IS HELPING YOUNG MEN REALIZE THEIR POTENTIAL

May 2022



The YMCA of Greater New Orleans in partnership with Sarah Reed High School, Carver High School, Ubuntu Village and Broadmoor Community Church has successfully completed our Inaugural Black Achievers program. The spring session concluded with a parent/child trip to the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel and a tour of the University of Memphis. This overnight trip was the culmination of a series of events, outings, and motivational talks held with 20 young black men who are students at Sarah Reed and Carver High Schools in inner-city New Orleans. Parents, teachers, coaches and school administrators participated alongside these young men in all of the activities.

Black Achievers is an immersive program that introduces high school students to the opportunities available to them after graduation. Listening and learning sessions focused on valuable life skills such as forming a lifelong set of values, celebrating a strong work ethic, maintaining personal health, and building positive relationships with others. "The young men that are participating in this program have incredible potential. They are working and studying hard to achieve their dreams. Giving them the tools to realize that potential and achieve those dreams, as well as reinforcing the important role of our schools and families, is what the Black Achievers program is all about," said Rev. Gregory Manning, Pastor of Broadmoor Community Church and YMCA of Greater New Orleans Board Member, who helped to lead the program this year.



The 2022 Spring Session commenced with a parent/child dinner at Acme Oyster House in the French Quarter, where Saints Linebacker Demario Davis was our guest speaker. His words had a tremendous impact on everyone in attendance, as he shared his own story of success and the work and dedication it has taken to reach the top of his profession. He told the young men "Before you can have the things you're supposed to have, you have to do the things you're supposed to do and be the person you're supposed to be." Other activities included visits to Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Congo Square, Studio Be, and a tour of the New Orleans Saints training facility.

Today's news often focuses on the negative behaviors of our city's young people -- the Black Achievers Program seeks to affirm the gifts, talents and hopes of our youth. At the conclusion of our trip to the National Civil Rights Museum, parents and children enjoyed dinner together and participated in a heartfelt conversation about what they had experienced. They also engaged in activities to build trust and promote communication between one another. When asked to describe the emotions they felt after visiting the museum, the most common responses were "proud, grateful, enlightened, amazed and inspired."

We recognize and thank our dedicated Program Leadership Team: Pastor Gregory Manning of Broadmoor Community Church and YMCA of Greater New Orleans Board Member, Ernest Johnson Director of Ubuntu Village, along with YMCA Leadership Staff Louis Ogle and Joey Roberts. Their commitment to creating an inspiring program framework and shepherding the participants through to completion was integral to the program's success.

We are grateful to the Rosamary Foundation, the Reynolds Foundation, and the National YMCA family whose generous funding made all of this possible. A huge thank you goes out to all of the people and organizations of our community who contributed to the success of this program: Sarah Reed High School, Carver High School, The New Orleans Saints, CBS affiliate WWL-TV, Demario Davis, Mike Rodrigue owner of Acme Oyster House, Southeastern Louisiana University, Studio Be, the University of Memphis, the National Civil Rights Museum, the Brown Foundation, New Orleans City Councilwoman Lesli Harris, Hotard Transportation, Raising Canes, Chick-fil-a, Marriott Memphis East, Five Guys, Reverend Gregory Manning, Ernest Johnson, D'Lacie Monk, Anna Mueller, Ethridge Foster Jr, Bobby Roy, Louis Ogle, and Joey Roberts.

The YMCA of Greater New Orleans is now working to secure funding for a fall semester session of Black Achievers for high school girls. For more information, please contact Louis Ogle, Chief Operating Officer for the YMCA of Greater New Orleans: louis@ymcaneworleans.org or (985) 237-8752.

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