



# QUARTERLY ALERT

## Prevention News to Use

*Making Choices for a Better World*

### MJCPC observes Take Our Daughters & Sons To Work Day 2008

“Making Choices for a Better World” was the message to the students who participated in the 2008 Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day observance spearheaded annually by the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition (MJPCPC). The program is designed to give students a firsthand look at the world of work by allowing them to shadow a professional on Jackson State University’s main campus, the JSU e-Center or the Jackson Medical Mall.

Jasmin Searcy, Miss Jackson State University, 2007-2008, who served as the guest speaker, gave a thought-provoking message to the students that required their participation in her presentation. Searcy invited audience volunteers to share their experience as a shadow to a professional. She followed that by telling the students, “My goal today is to challenge each and every one of you to adopt new goals for everyday situations that you are faced with whether it is peer pressure involving cigarette smoking, drugs, alcohol, and so on or simply just making decisions for your future.

Let me introduce to you what I call the three Cs: Challenges, Choices, and Consequences. As students, we all are faced with Challenges, and then we are forced to make Choices whether they are good or bad and then our choices are followed by Consequences, which is by definition something that logically or naturally follows an actions or condition.”

Searcy further explained, “We want to make sure that we make the right choices so that the consequences that follow our choices will become positive and not negative. The key to making better decisions is to know yourself, your values, your priorities, your direction, your goals. If you have a handle on these elements of your life, it’s much easier to evaluate the opportunities the world has to bring you.”

She also provided tips for making better choices: 1. make peace with your past choices, 2. look for a pattern, 3. decide to make better choices and 4. ask for help.

Angelia Gooden, MJPCPC training specialist, said, “The students were very excited and very eager about going to the various offices located within the Jackson Medical Mall, JSU e-Center and on the JSU main campus to shadow an employee. The students were excited about learning what that department/division did and how it worked. They all talked about what they did from the time they left their work site until they got off the bus at their school. I hope that these young teens keep that enthusiasm and remain focused when they get older and enter the work force.”

“From start to finish, the success of the annual Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day observance by MJPCPC is always a reflection of the dedication and fortitude of Mrs. Terry Bennett, MJPCPC outreach worker, said Alvin L. Clark, MJPCPC program manager. “That success is measured by the response and enthusiasm of the students toward the observance and their



**Take Our Sons and Daughters to Work Day participants (left to right) Jalesa Gatlin, W. Samuel Bell, and Kenya Odems are pictured with Miss Jackson State University 2007-2008 Jasmin Searcy, who served as the guest speaker.**

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition is to reduce factors that lead to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and increase resiliency factors of adolescents, children and families in high-risk environments in Jackson, Miss.

#### CALENDAR

- Peer Educator Training-of-Trainers November 11, 2008
- Coalition Meeting October 6, 2008
- End-of-the-Year Celebration December 12, 2008

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*Making Choices for a Better World***MJCPC observes Take Our Daughters & Sons To Work Day 2008 continued**

willingness to continue with MJCPC as Peer Educators. This year, of the 50 students who participated in the program, we were able to recruit 34 who want to encourage their peers to be drug-free. That is the testimony to the great work of Mrs. Bennett and the eagerness of the students to create a drug-free community.

“As we continue to observe Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day, the students, the parents, the MJCPC staff, the professionals at JSU, the JSU e-Center and the Jackson Medical Mall are all helping our students “Make Choices For A Better World. We owe a huge debt of gratitude this year to

Hardy Middle School, Peoples Middle School and the parents for entrusting us with the welfare of their students for this world celebration,” Clark added.

This year’s participants included: **Hardy Middle School** students: Shapaula Barnes, Adrienne Brazzle, Diquari Brown, Lakicia Brown, Arsenio Burton, Aereal Church, Hero Clincy, Chastidy Demby, Alexander Gatewood, Jalesa Gatlin, Michael Hansberry, Marketa Harrington, Toriante Hinton, Jeremy Hoard, Ariel James, Branden Kincaid, Jacquelle Lindsey, Jessica Lyle, Joycelyn

McEntee, Kristen Rogers, Edward Samuel, Jeremei Shelby, Keanna Turner, David Winfrey, and Roger Woods; and **Peoples Middle School** students: Derrick Allen, Roneshia Armstrong, D’Kirah Atkinson, Briana Fitzer, Glenn Greer, LaDarius Gustavis, Alfred Hicks, DeAngelo Howard, Zebulum James, Valerie Johnson, Kaliyah Jones, Quinton Kelly, Corey Moffett, Ukamaka Nwakorie, Kenya Odems, Elva Randle, Travis Reginal, Carmen Rhymes, Jamie Slaughter, LaZundrea Smith, Rachel Stamps, Sierra Stewart, Briana Thomas, Chaya Vance and Megan Woods

**Nakia J. Walker profiled as Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition peer educator**

Nakia J. Walker became involved with the Peer Educator Program in January of 2007. She graduated



**Nakia J. Walker**

from Jim Hill High School with the Class of 2008. Her hobbies include: reading, writing, church activities, singing, skating and swimming. The Mississippi /American Choral Directors Association European Tour “Sounds of America” and first Soprano in the All State Honor Choir are her most cherished honors.

Angelia Gooden, MJCPC Project ALERT specialist, said, “Nakia Walker has a quiet sweet spirit and is always willing and able to do what is asked of her. Even if we don’t ask she will happily volunteer to help us out. Nakia knows what she wants in life and she is going for it. She wants to do the work of the Lord by becoming an evangelist after studying at Oral

Roberts University. I really admire her for continuing forth with her calling. You can’t find many young adults her age willing to do that. May the Lord our God continue to use her and guide her in all she does.”

“Nakia has been a joy to work with as a Peer Educator,” said Alvin L. Clark, MJCPC program manager. “Open and receptive to new information and always willing to assist made her a valuable asset to the staff and her cohorts. She was always full of positive energy and a good role model for the incoming students.”

She counts Calandra Daniels, Minister Rigel Robinson and Mrs. Bonita Hinton among the persons she most admires. Her favorites include - “Think Before You Ask” (quote), history (school subject), gospel (music), caramel popcorn (food), yellow (color) and she calls Sherrina Robinson her best friend.

Walker said, “Being in the I.B. (International Baccalaureate) Program (at Jim Hill High School), a proud participant of my school’s ‘Tigers for Christ’ leadership gatherings and becoming a part of the (MJCPC) Peer Educator Program” are some of her

proudest moments. She also said, what she enjoyed most about the Peer Educator training program is “the amount of information given to me.”

Terry Bennett, MJCPC outreach worker, said, “Nakia Walker, a very quiet young lady who always volunteers not only in our program but in her community and church. Nakia, started working on her mission a long time ago. I understand from Nakia and her mother that she always wanted to be an evangelist. I know that through her hard work and dedicated service that she will be very successful in her endeavor.”

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*“Education Plus Determination Equals Success”*

## Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition holds peer educator graduation ceremony



**Seated (left to right) are MJCPC Peer Educator graduates: Nakia Walker, TaQuilla Haralson and Kenisha Bennett. Standing are: Alvin L. Clark, Terry Bennett, Brenda Gilmore, Dorlisa Hutton, Angelia Gooden and Velesha P. Williams.**

Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition (MJCPC) held its annual graduation recognition ceremony in honor of four Peer Educators that graduated from high school during the 2007-2008 school year. The theme for this year's celebration was "Education Plus Determination Equals Success" and exemplified the character of the four graduates: Kenisha Bennett, Provine High School; TaQuilla Haralson, Forest Hill High School; Courtney Harris, Murrah High School; and Nakia Walker, Jim Hill High School.

Dorlisa Hutton, program manager, My Brother's Keeper, Inc., and chairman of the MJCPC Advisory Board, served as the guest speaker. Hutton's message to the graduates and parents began with the definition of determination: **D**-Decisions, **E**-Excel, **T**-Time, **E**-Endure, **R**-Responsibility, **M**-Multi-tasking, **I**- Integrity, **A**-Active, **T**-Thrive, **I**-Internally, **O**-Obtainable, **N**ew. She then encouraged them to be determined to succeed.

Each graduate was given the opportunity to express reflections of their experience as an MJCPC Peer Educator. Bennett said, "Memories are something we never forget, but always cherish. As I stand here today, I look back at a time full of laughter, fun, enrichment and exploration. MJCPC has really been an inspiring factor in my life. I have been a member of MJCPC since I was 13 and each year has been life-changing. Looking back over the years, I give reflections on various camping trips, outdoor summer activities, different educational sessions, and last but not least, the end-of-the-year celebrations. Once I was told to write a reflection, I began to get emotional. Although they were tears of joy, I have tears that represent the struggle we have faced as teen Peer Educators. Becoming a Peer

Educator is an educational process that requires a focused mind and motivation. At times I could have been doing other things during my summer, spring and various breaks, but instead I chose to be a midwife, giving birth to knowledge we sometimes never knew we had. Words can never express how MJCPC has played one of the most important roles in my past and my future success. I give thanks today, tomorrow and forever more. MJCPC, you're the greatest. My completion of childhood and high school years speaks to that tremendously. I must carry on and represent MJCPC in a Christian and professional way. In conclusion, I would like to give top recognition to my mother. Mama without you always being there through thick and thin, I could not have overcome all the obstacles that I have been through. I love you always and forever. My heart goes out to all 2008 graduates."

The Peer Educator experience for TaQuilla Haralson was life-enriching. She said, "I endured in so many things and experienced so much here. Being in this program made me realize that people care about how our generation develops. I've met new people who showed me it's okay to be yourself. Being in this program was like being adopted into a new family. I enjoyed my time here and to Mrs. Bennett, Mr. Clark, Ms. Gooden and Mrs. Williams, may God be with you and may God bless you."

Nakia Walker said, "In today's society, the outbreak of gang and domestic violence, teen pregnancy, drug abuse, and so forth are all issues that need to be resolved in the Jackson area. Only with understanding and knowledge of the situations at hand can that be done. One of MJCPD's teaching methods that I recall for reducing the problems in the Jackson area is to educate all through awareness. Awareness is the only way that the Jackson area will succeed on decreasing these issues. Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition has opened my eyes to the problems in the Jackson area, as well as, given me the tools to be able to reach out and help. Now, I understand what it means to be a Peer Educator, an individual that sees problematic hardships in his or her community, and puts forth effort to make a change. Yes, coming to the Medical Mall 8 in the morning till 5 in the evening has made a difference. MJCPC also helped me to appreciate and understand the role of African-Americans in today's society. I extend my thanks to my parents, Mrs. Williams, Mr. Clark, Ms. Gooden, Mrs. Bennett and others who have taught me. In addition, I now realize that my continuous journey in life is not as hard as it seems; only until you have become involved and dedicated to something will your existence be truly realistic."

Due to a prior commitment, Harris was not available to offer her Peer educator experience personal reflections.

## Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Use Prevention Links

### The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS)

The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools is under the supervision of the Assistant Deputy Secretary who reports to the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary on policy and program administration matters. The Immediate Office of the Assistant Deputy Secretary provides overall direction, coordination, and leadership to the following major elements: Health, Mental Health, Environmental Health and Physical Education, Drug-Violence Prevention - State Program, Drug-Violence Prevention - National Program, Character and Civic Education, and Policy and Cross-Cutting Programs.

**Web site address:** <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html>

### National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)

The principal purpose of ONDCP is to establish policies, priorities, and objectives for the nation's drug control program. The goals of the program are to reduce illicit drug use, manufacturing, and trafficking, drug-related crime and violence, and drug-related health consequences. To achieve these goals, the director of ONDCP is charged with producing the National Drug Control Strategy. The strategy directs the nation's anti-drug efforts and establishes a program, a budget and guidelines for cooperation among federal, state, and local entities.

ONDCP also evaluates, coordinates, and oversees both the international and domestic anti-drug efforts of executive branch agencies and ensures that such efforts sustain and complement state and local anti-drug activities. The director advises the president regarding changes in the organization, management, budgeting, and personnel of federal agencies that could affect the nation's anti-drug efforts; and regarding federal agency compliance with their obligations under the strategy.

**Web site address:** <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/about/index.html>

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