

# SISTERMENTORS

Promoting Education Among Women and Girls of Color  
A Project of EduSeed

Summer 2009

A Newsletter for Donors and Friends of SisterMentors

## From the Executive Director of EduSeed

Dear Donors and Friends:

Welcome to our annual summer newsletter!

Some of our recent accomplishments include six SisterMentors girls starting college this fall including at Goucher College and Bates College. These girls are following the first group of girls we sent to college in 2007, who are now entering their third year.

Thanks to your generous donations, in April we took 23 girls, ages 10 to 17, on college visits to American University and the University of Virginia. The girls attended classes, including a science class where the younger girls learned to make ice cream using liquid nitrogen.

SisterMentors also helped two more women of color to get doctorates bringing the number of women of color we have helped to 32. We expect at least two more women to earn the doctorate this year.

We are thrilled to announce that SisterMentors is featured in an upcoming book by Allison Silberberg titled, *Visionaries in Our Midst*, which will be released this September.

We will give you a further report on SisterMentors' activities in our fall newsletter. Thank you for your strong, continuing support of our work.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason. I can be reached at 202-778-6424 or [director@sistermentors.org](mailto:director@sistermentors.org).

In the meantime, have a wonderful summer!

Shireen K. Lewis, Ph.D.



## SisterMentors Girls Start College this Fall

"I consider myself very lucky that I became part of SisterMentors at a young age, when I was eleven years old and in the seventh grade. Now I am well prepared to take on college and do my very best," said Ruhama Yared, who is heading off to college this fall.

All six of SisterMentors' twelfth grade girls, five of whom have been in SisterMentors since seventh grade, will start college this fall. Here are their names and colleges: **Rediet Abate**, University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia; **Cindy Ayala**, Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, Virginia; **Kedest Firdaweke**, Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia; **Alinah Mphofe**, Northern Virginia Community College in Manassas, Virginia; **Nathalie Navarrete**, Bates College in Lewiston, Maine; and **Ruhama Yared**, Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland.

## Girls Visit American University and the University of Virginia

"I love AU's diversity, especially the international students from all over the world," said one of the girls who visited American University in Spring 2009. Twenty-three girls of color, ages 10-17 from low-income families in the Washington, D.C. area, visited American University (AU) and the University of Virginia (UVA).

At AU, girls were hosted by Fanta Aw, Vice President of Campus Life. Ms. Aw is also among the women that SisterMentors is helping to earn the

doctorate. One highlight of the visit was a class taught by Professor Caleen Jennings of AU's Department of Performing Arts. The girls had lots of fun acting out a scene from Shakespeare's Henry VI.

Our first stop at UVA was a visit with UVA's President John Casteen. Girls sat down with President Casteen in his office for a chat about the university. "An awesome man," said one of the girls after the visit.

"I really liked being taught a class at the law school. The teaching style was wonderful and the class-room setting was inviting," said one of the girls about the criminal law class designed and taught by Professor Darryl Brown of UVA Law School. The girls were very excited to experience a real law school class because many of them want to become lawyers.

### **Social Skills and Etiquette Workshop**

In June, SisterMentors held its fifth annual *Social Skills and Etiquette Workshop* led by Ms. Fannie Allen of the prestigious Allen Etiquette Institute. "Wonderful, very detailed, the best one yet," said one of the 26 girls who participated in the workshop. This year, the workshop was both a tutorial and a celebration for the girls starting college this fall. Shannon Scott and Roxie Jairrels, two of our girls who are currently in college, returned to share their college experiences. The highlight of the workshop was instructions on public speaking and the etiquette of dining at a fine restaurant.

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*Promoting Education Among Women and Girls of Color*

### **Two More Women of Color Doctorates**

We have now helped 32 women of color to get doctorates, including two this year. **LaNitra Walker** earned her doctorate in Art History from Duke University in March. **Tisha Lewis** earned her doctorate in Reading from the State University of New York at Albany in August. Tisha is a native Washingtonian who attended the District of Columbia public schools.

### **A Big THANK YOU!!!**

Thanks to all of our wonderful individual donors for your continuing support. We would also like to thank the following individuals, businesses and foundations: the Diversity Committee of the law firm of Schiff Hardin LLP; Reverend Sylvia Sumter of Unity of Washington D.C.; Dr. Carroll Hardy; the Jerry Taylor and Nancy Bryant Foundation; the Crowell & Moring Foundation; the D.C. Women's Bar Association Foundation; the Stentzel Foundation; Davis, Sita & Company P.A.; the Westin National Harbor; Whole Foods Market, P Street; and Java Green.

Many thanks to our wonderful volunteers: Renae Baird, Dawn Nelson, Mary Helen Coleman, Cherry Powell, LaShoun Christian, John Teschner and Wayne Richardson. Special thanks to Robyn Nichols of Sidwell Friends School, who volunteered her time to teach our girls a workshop.

### **Special Thanks to Our Summer Interns**

Binta Bayoh and Sherifa Idris, two eleventh graders in SisterMentors, volunteered as interns with us this summer. They helped with various assignments, including drafting this newsletter. Thanks to you both for all of your help!