

SISTERMENTORS

Promoting Education Among Women and Girls of Color

Summer 2004 Newsletter

A Newsletter for Donors and Friends of SisterMentors

From the Executive Director

Dear Donors and Friends:

Welcome to our first summer newsletter. There is so much happening at SisterMentors that we decided to send you some news now so that you can get a preview of our activities. Of course, we will also send you our annual newsletter in the Fall so keep an eye out in September.

We are very excited about the work we are doing this year which is made possible by your strong, continuing support. This newsletter reports on some of the work your donation has funded, including our technology workshops for our girls this May. This was our first year offering the workshops. 18 girls of color in 7th, 8th and 9th grades participated in the workshops which taught them new computer skills and how to build a Web site. The level of excitement and enthusiasm of the girls contributed to the workshops' stunning success.

Your donation also helped fund the girls' campus visit to the University of Maryland, College Park and George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Twenty-six girls of color, 12 to 15 years old, went on the trips. They are so excited about their visits that months later they are still talking about their experience.

We'll give you a full report on these and upcoming activities, in our Fall newsletter. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason. I can be reached at director@sistermentors.org or 202-775-6846.

In the meantime, have a great summer!

Shireen K. Lewis, Ph.D.



Making It Real: Our Girls Experience College

On April 6 and 7, 2004, our girls experienced two exhilarating days on local university campuses. In collaboration with the Office on Women in Alexandria, Virginia and Thurgood Marshall Middle School in Prince George's County, Maryland, 26 girls of color visited the University of Maryland, College Park and George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Girls ranged in age from 12 to 15 years old in 7th, 8th and 9th grades. Some girls were continuing their second year with SisterMentors and were a part of our first college visit last year.

At the request of our girls, we visited two college campuses this year. At both campuses girls listened to presentations by Admissions and Financial Aid officers, dialogued with women of color undergraduates, visited dormitories and had lunch on campus. At the University of Maryland, girls accompanied women to classes and listened to a presentation on academic achievement programs. At George Mason University, the girls had a walking tour of the campus.

Celebrating Codou Diaw

In December 2003, SisterMentors celebrated its 18th Ph.D. Codou Diaw received her doctorate from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Her research interests are in gender theory and education policy. As a SisterMentors graduate, Codou continues to mentor our girls.

Evaluation of SisterMentors Reveals “High Degree of Satisfaction” With Our Program

SisterMentors was evaluated for the first time this winter. Interviews with the women in SisterMentors revealed “a high degree of satisfaction with the program.” Also, the evaluators reported that “girls are getting the message that they can be successful in a university setting and that school is important to their future.”

Tech-Savvy Girls: SisterMentors Technology Workshops for Girls of Color

“I feel really smart. I learned a lot about computers today,” said 13 year old Abena to another SisterMentors girl at the end of one of SisterMentors’ technology workshops. Abena and her friends are middle school girls of color who learned how to build a website in SisterMentors’ technology workshops in May. Eighteen girls ages 12 to 15 from middle and high schools in Alexandria, Virginia and Prince George’s County, Maryland spent part of their Saturdays in computer labs learning HTML (hypertext markup language), the computer coding used to create Web pages. The girls also learned other computer and internet skills, including how to do sophisticated searches on search engines, copy multiple files simultaneously, execute commands from the keyboard instead of from the pull down menu, and the uses of the left and right clicks on the mouse.

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EduSeed Welcomes New Board Member

We welcome Doug MacKinnon to the EduSeed board. MacKinnon is a syndicated columnist, television commentator, and director of federal affairs and communications at the law firm of Sullivan & Worcester. He also served as Senator Bob Dole’s communications director. MacKinnon is a published author and has written a memoir dealing with his childhood growing up on welfare and being homeless.

A Big THANK YOU!!!

We would like to again thank all our wonderful individual donors for their continuing support. Thank you!!! We would also like to thank the following new and continuing donors: Linda Orr, The Twenty-First Century Foundation, the Jerry Taylor and Nancy Bryant Foundation and Saks Foundation Incorporated.

Thank You to Sullivan & Worcester!!!

Special thanks to Sullivan & Worcester for generously donating office space to EduSeed. Thanks for this valuable support, and everything else you do for EduSeed and SisterMentors!