

SISTERMENTORS

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

Summer 2008

A Newsletter for Donors and Friends of SisterMentors

From the Executive Director of EduSeed

Dear Donors and Friends:

Welcome to our annual summer newsletter. Last fall, SisterMentors celebrated its tenth anniversary and is now charging forward into its second decade. Thank you for your strong, continuing support of SisterMentors.

Some of our recent accomplishments include our rising twelfth graders' advanced preparation for college admission. These six girls have taken college preparatory tests including the SAT. They have contacted their teachers about recommendations and are drafting their application essays this summer.

We are also proud to welcome two 10-year old girls into our program. They were brought into our program by their older sisters who have been in SisterMentors since seventh grade.

Thanks to your generous donations, in April we took 23 girls, ages 10 to 17, on a four-day college visit to North Carolina to visit Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill. The girls experienced the differences between a small private university and a big public university.

SisterMentors also helped three more women of color to get doctorates bringing the number of women of color we have helped to 30. All three women are the first generation in their families to graduate from college.

We will give you a further report on SisterMentors' activities in our fall newsletter. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason. I can be reached at 202-778-6424 or director@sistermentors.org.

In the meantime, have a wonderful summer!

Shireen K. Lewis, Ph.D.



Girls' Four-Day Visit to Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill

"I fell in love with Duke and am grateful I had the chance to visit," said one of the girls who visited Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill in Spring 2008. Twenty-three girls of color, ages 10-17, from low-income families in the Washington, D.C. area spent four days on the campuses. SisterMentors' connections to Duke go deep --- not only is SisterMentors' founder, Dr. Shireen Lewis, a Duke alumna, but a SisterMentors girl, Megan Tuck, just completed her first year at Duke, and a SisterMentors woman is a doctoral candidate in Art History at Duke.

One highlight of the trip was the visit with Duke's President Richard Brodhead who graciously took close to an hour out of his very busy schedule to talk with the girls, inspiring them to live up to their full potential. The girls also spent some time in the company of Linda Orr, emeritus professor of French, and learned to use the language lab equipment including how to access the news on French television.

The girls also met Ikee Gardner, an African American teenager from Chicago who graduated from Duke this May at the age of 19, with a double major in Economics and English. Ikee spent a lot of time with SisterMentors girls and encouraged them to pursue their dreams.

SisterMentors Girls Complete First Year of College

The five girls we helped to send to college last fall just completed their first year. Megan Tuck at Duke had a GPA above 3.0 her first semester and is taking classes at Duke this summer including Economics. Shannon Scott, who is at Virginia Commonwealth University, has a GPA above 3.0 and loves her college experience. Arsema Ghirmai finished her first year at Tidewater Community College and will transfer to a community college nearer to home for the second year. Arsema will transfer later to a four-year university and major in photo-journalism. Sara Estefanos is also at Tidewater Community College. Roxie Jairrels spent two quarters at Savannah College of Art and Design and will begin Northern Virginia Community College this fall. Roxie returns home to continue college to better manage ongoing health issues. She will continue her studies in Photography and begin learning Japanese.

Social Skills and Etiquette Workshop

"I learned so much in seconds, minutes, and hours. Thank you so much!" said one of the 24 girls who participated in our social skills and etiquette workshop in May. Thanks to support from one of our donors, Christine Boehm, SisterMentors had its fourth annual workshop led by Ms. Fannie Allen, of the prestigious Allen Etiquette Institute. Thanks to their commitment to supporting youth, the workshop was held at the upscale Madison Hotel, just blocks away from the White House. The girls were taught social skills and treated to a four-course meal where they learned the etiquette of fine dining.

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Three More Women of Color Doctorates

We have now helped 30 women of color to get doctorates, including three in the last year. Our first Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics, Calandra Tate, received her doctorate from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is one of the few African American women to earn a doctorate in Mathematics and is currently teaching at West Point. Jessica Floyd received her doctorate in Psychology from Rutgers University. Adriane Williams earned her doctorate in Educational Policy Studies from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and will begin a teaching position at West Virginia University in the fall.

A Big THANK YOU!!!

Thanks to all 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; Reverend Sylvia Sumter of Unity of Washington D.C.; Father David Bergner; the Jerry Taylor and Nancy Bryant Foundation; the Crowell & Moring Foundation; the Meyer Foundation; the D.C. Women's Bar Association Foundation; the Stentzel Foundation; Davis, Sita & Company P.A.; the Princeton Review; the Madison Hotel; Whole Foods Market, P Street and Java Green.

Many thanks to our wonderful volunteers: Dawn Nelson, Mary Helen Coleman, Margerie Sullivan, Megan Adair, Cherry Powell, Renae Baird and LaShoun Christian. Special thanks to everyone at Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill for making the girls' visit a success.

Tenth Anniversary Fundraising Goal Exceeded

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we exceeded our fundraising goal for SisterMentors' 10th anniversary. Our goal was \$120,000 from September 2006 to December 2007 and we raised \$139, 000. Thank you!!!