

Evolutions

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FUTURE
FOUNDATION

Trumpet Award Honors Future Foundation Founder Shareef Abdur-Rahim



Future Foundation founder Shareef Abdur-Rahim was honored for his work improving the lives of Atlanta youth when he received the prestigious Trumpet Award during the 16th Annual Trumpet Awards Ceremony at the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center on Jan. 13.

Abdur-Rahim received the Usher Raymond Altruism award for his accomplishments as founder of the Future Foundation, a nonprofit organization he started in 2001 in East Point, Ga. Abdur-Rahim, 31, was one of 11 honorees who received the Trumpet Award, which honors African American achievements in law, business, medicine, politics, entertainment and public service.

"We know that by empowering youth with enrichment and educational programs like the Future Foundation offers, they'll be able to rise above any challenge in life and become adults who will change the world," said Abdur-Rahim, an Atlanta native and former Atlanta Hawks basketball player who currently plays for the Sacramento Kings.

Other Trumpet Award honorees included actress Halle Berry; rapper Christopher "Ludacris" Bridges; actor Danny Glover; Drs. Vance and Vincent Moss; and musician Najee.

Reef Teen Center Exposes Students to Cultural Events, Academic Enrichment

It's not everyday that students have the opportunity to attend an Alvin Ailey troupe performance at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta. But that's exactly what a group of 30 teens did last February when they attended the legendary dance troupe performance as part of a field trip organized by the Reef Teen Center.

"We want them to be culturally aware," said Shaunae Motley, Director of Programs at the Reef Teen Center. We want them to know there's something besides MTV and BET."

Exposing teens to cultural events — and providing life skills training, academic enrichment, career coaching and job skills — is the mission of the Reef Teen Center. Opened in Oct. 2007, the center serves 30 teens and is named in honor of Future Foundation founder Shareef Abdur-Rahim.

The center is located inside the Wayman and Bessie Brady Recreation Center at 3571 Brenningham Drive in College Park. It provides intensive one-on-one interaction with students from 3 p.m. - 8 p.m. Monday through Friday at a time when many children need intervention the most.

"A lot of times, people feel like teens are a big hassle," said Shaunae Motley, Director of Programs at the Reef Teen Center. "But these years are so key. Our goal is to provide a close connection and serve as a liaison between home and school."

Included in the Reef Teen Center's mission is exposing teens to things they might not experience at school or home. Students participate in college tours and vocational skills career training for careers in culinary arts, plumbing and carpentry.

Academic courses such as preparation for the SATs and Georgia high school exams are also offered at the Reef Teen Center. The program also gives students access to abstinence, substance abuse, healthy relationship skills training and recreational activities.

"Our goal is to help our teens become more self sufficient by the time they leave," Motley said.

Parents are given the opportunity to learn as well. Parents must participate in at least six bi-monthly parenting workshops a year and complete 10 hours of volunteer work at a charitable organization for their children to attend the Reef Teen Center.

The focus on parents has a two-fold approach.

"We want to strengthen our children and the entire community because we have to provide a sustainable future," Motley said. "Parental influence is very important. Parents are kids' first role models. Our efforts will be in vain if parents don't reinforce at home what children learn at the Reef Center."



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Students Receive Needed Supplies at Back-To-School Expo



"Our plan was to be able to send our young people off to school with as few barriers as possible," said Angela Turner Williams, coordinator of the Abstinence 'Til Marriage Program at the Future Foundation. "We knew that if we could send children to school with as many tools as they needed for school, it's one less thing to stand in their way of getting a good education."

The expo featured a motivational speech by Future Foundation founder and Sacramento Kings forward Shareef Abdur-Rahim, and performances by teenage R&B artist Erica Hampton and Phusion Performing Arts Alliance.

of a teen summit moderated by Karlos Markland, a 12th grader at Westlake High School, and Zaakira White, an 11th grader at Banneker High School.

"It was an opportunity just for teens to talk — and parents had to listen," said Turner Williams. "The teens were very open, and it gave us a chance to let us know how teens think."

Future Foundation's Food Service Outreach program pre-screened participants for food assistance, and ATM Connections distributed free materials at information booths.



Kicking off the school year on a positive note, more than 400 children in grades K-12 received backpacks with school supplies as part of Future Foundation's 6th Annual Back To School Expo last summer at Greenbriar Mall.

Children received grade-appropriate school supplies, including crayons, notebooks, pencils, calculators and rulers. The expo, held on Aug. 4, 2007, was held in partnership with Greenbriar Mall and Atlanta Party Starters.

The expo featured activities for the entire family.

Elementary school children participated in face painting, made picture frames, hats and bracelets; a clown and Superman action figure also provided inspiration for children to do their best in school.

Teens also participated in a fashion show, where they modeled appropriate and inappropriate fashions for school and work. More than 150 teens discussed drugs, sex and violence as part

ATM Connections Spreads Abstinence Message to Local Teens

A new Future Foundation program that promotes abstinence and healthy relationship skills to teens is reaching record numbers of high school students in Fulton County.

More than 500 students have participated in the Abstinence 'Til Marriage (ATM) and Connections program, held at churches, recreation centers and high schools, since October. That's well above the program's original goal of 400 students, said ATM Program Coordinator Angela Turner Williams.

"Students love the program because it causes them to think about relationships in a way that they never thought about before,"

Williams said. "We take a real-life approach, but it's not preaching and it's not textbook; it's dealing with their issues on their level. We present them with information that almost forces them to make the best decisions."

The program emphasizes abstaining from sex until marriage and healthy relationship skills using role playing games and skits.

"We like to think of it as a play on words: We tell them that they make deposits into their accounts when they have healthy relationships," Williams said. "And when they make unhealthy decisions such as sex before marriage or domestic abuse, they make withdrawals."

Several Fulton County high schools, including Banneker, Douglass and Westlake, have recently introduced the ATM and Connections program to students. Douglass High School students have formed tight-knit bonds with ATM and Connections' staff members, who visit daily.

"The time we get to spend with our young people can be scary sometimes because you get personal stories from students about how our program has affected them," Williams said. "They open up to us about different issues, which can be surprising."

Julie Aziz Wins Volunteer Spotlight Award



What started as an internship at Future Foundation turned into a long-term commitment for volunteer Julie Aziz. A human services management major at the University of Phoenix, Aziz became a volunteer at the Reef House five days a week to fulfill an internship requirement in fall 2006.

But Aziz was so impressed by the programs, staff and children at the Future Foundation that she continued volunteering three days a week — after her courses ended. Aziz's volunteer work included serving as a chaperone on trips, leading discussion groups and, "giving children a hug to let them know someone cared," has earned her the Volunteer Spotlight Award.

"It really makes me feel like I'm apart of the organization," said Aziz about her award. "I love kids, and the Future Foundation is such a great program. They really treat kids with respect as individuals. There's such a love for the kids, and the staff really cares about what happens to them. I get so much out of my work here."

Aziz also volunteers as a mentor at her church, but she knows that her work with the Future Foundation is important to help children in disadvantaged communities succeed, she said.

"Black children are in such dire straits," Aziz said. "Children are our future, and we have to take care of them. It will take all of us to get out of the situation that we are in."



STUDYING HARD PAYS

for Kelton Clark With Most Improved Student Award

Kelton Clark used a simple approach to improve his grades.

"I hit the books," said Kelton, whose grades in math went from a C to a B and reading went from a C to a B. "I studied more, I watched less TV, and listened to less music."

Kelton, 13, a 7th grade student at Renaissance Middle School in Atlanta, was honored with Future Foundation's 2007 Most Improved Student of the Year Award. Kelton participates in academic enrichment classes at the Reef House — which has been instrumental in raising his grades — and plans to improve his grades even more, he said.

"My goal is to keep getting better and better," said Kelton, whose favorite subject is math. "I'm relieved that my grades improved, and this is a big accomplishment for me."

An aspiring chef who can't get enough of watching cooking shows on the Food Network, Kelton counts Atlanta native Chef G. Garvin as his professional role model. But his every day role model is his mother, Evette Person, who always encourages him to pursue his dream of becoming a chef.

"I like cooking a lot, and my mom helps me cook," said Clark, who loves to prepare steak dinners with his mother.

KELTON CLARK, Right



"My goal is to keep getting better and better."

Kelton Clark

REEF HOUSE

STUDENT OF THE YEAR
Samuel Mathis



Samuel Mathis is a big believer in setting goals. The 13-year-old writes his goals on paper and frequently reviews them — a strategy that he credits with helping his grades rise from a 3.54 G.P.A. to a 3.83 G.P.A. Samuel's academic achievements have earned him Future Foundation's 2007 Student of the Year Award.

Samuel Mathis Scores with Future Foundation Student of the Year

"I set goals every day," explained Mathis, a 7th grade student at Paul D. West Middle School in East Point and a regular participant at the Reef House for the past two years. "And I review them as often as I can."

Future Foundation honors two students at the Reef House with a Student of the Year Award and Most Improved Student each year.

"We really want to encourage our students," said Javana Monson, Program Coordinator of the Reef House. "We have so many students who used to have straight Fs, but now mostly all of them have improved their grades."

Future Foundation isn't the only organization honoring Mathis. He was recently honored for his grades when he won his school's Honor Roll A-B Award.

Mathis' secret to success? Achieve to do your best.

It's a goal Mathis is taking to heart as he pursues his next goal --- earning all As on his next report card.

Mathis always believes in challenging himself. Science is his favorite subject in school and he plans to become a chemist when he grows up. Mathis knows it will take studying and hard work to accomplish his dreams, but his mother, Willette Mathis, is his inspiration, he said.

"She's an accountant and she's a very positive role model," Mathis said. "She does a lot for me."



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Mission

To improve the lives of inner city and at-risk youth in the metro Atlanta community.

Vision

Future Foundation will be recognized nationally as an exemplary organization in providing stable and effective youth programming for inner city and at-risk children.

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