

# Youth Congress

## of South Alabama

### **Youth Forum 2009: Rap on Relationships Report**

The Relationships Subcommittee of Youth Congress of South Alabama 2009 developed and presented a youth forum that was held on the evening of March 13, 2009 at Davidson High School to which all high school students in Mobile and Baldwin Counties were invited. The Subcommittee designed the two hour forum to give students opportunities to get some answers to various relationship issues. The stated objectives were to:

- Get students educated on the social climates in the community
- Allow students an opportunity to get answers to relational problems
- Help students see they share many concerns and they can get help
- Provide resources for help

The projected outcomes were:

- Improved confidence and self-esteem
- Increased understanding and respect for others
- Possession of tools for developing better relationships

The main component of the forum was a panel composed of four subcommittee members and three professional counselors from Lifelines Family Counseling to make presentations on the topics and to answer questions from students. Each of the subcommittee members made a prepared presentation dealing with the topics of improving your self esteem and improving relationships with others. Students were then given the opportunity to write their questions on a card and to ask questions from the floor, after which panel members gave answers. The four committee members were Annalise Anise, Glenn Wiggins, Jhory Buskey, and Jessica Rogers. Counselors from Lifelines Family Counseling were: Chandra Brown, Executive Director; Shawna Mayo-Vokley; and Kelsey Bryant. Ms. Brown facilitated a group discussion, evoking more questions and feedback.

Other components were:

- Short testimonials on the topics from two young, successful professionals (Kim Pettway and Jeremiah Newell)
- Three student performances (Alpha Elites, Diedre Graham, Sigma Phi Nu Service Org.)
- Door prizes and drawings (including 6 tickets to Kappa League Step Show and Chik-fil-A coupons)

*Youth Congress of South Alabama is a partnership of The Community Foundation of South Alabama, Drug Education Council, Mobile Area Education Foundation, University of South Alabama Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Youth Leadership Mobile*

**The Community Foundation of South Alabama**

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- Food and drinks
- Video on relationships (made by Amy Tippit)
- Distribution of brochures and material from various counseling agencies
- Master of Ceremonies, Cortney Hicks from WBLX 93
- Provision of Forum evaluations
- Opportunity for private counseling after the forum

There were about twenty-five youth in attendance along with youth advisors from Big Brothers Big Sisters, Girl Scouts, Youth Leadership Mobile, Principal Advisory Councils, and the Youth Grant Allocation Board. The forum atmosphere was relaxed and informal with positive audience participation throughout.

Some of the written questions youth presented were:

- How do you handle an ex-boyfriend that is in your circle of friends?
- How do you deal with untrustworthiness?
- Why do people feel the need to have multiple partners?
- What should I do if I have six guys that I am interested in and can't choose between them?
- My best friend leaves me out when she and my other friends plan activities. It hurts my feelings.
- How do you tell your parents you're gay when you know it will cause problems and they won't understand?
- What do you do when a good friend of yours wants to be more than that but that's not what you want?
- What do you do when your parent's goals aren't your goals?
- My best friend and I are going to separate colleges and I'm afraid of us growing apart. What do you suggest I do?
- How can you build the perfect relationship with your parents?
- How do you handle argumentative people?

The evaluation forms consisted of five questions to which youth responded Yes, Some, Unsure, or No. The results of the returned forms were:

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Did this forum help you?                                 | Yes-17; Some-8; Unsure-0; No-0 |
| 2. Was this information relevant to you?                    | Yes-20; Some-3; Unsure-2; No-0 |
| 3. Have you enjoyed attending?                              | Yes-22; Some-3; Unsure-0; No-0 |
| 4. Would you attend another event like this?                | Yes-23; Some-1; Unsure-1; No-0 |
| 5. Have you learned something new about yourself or others? | Yes-14; Some-5; Unsure-5; No-1 |

The participating members of the Relationships Subcommittee were: Annalise Anise, Jhory Buskey, Diedre Graham, DeAntonio Reed, Jessica Rogers, Amy Tippit, Glenn Wiggins.

The original Relationships Subcommittee that met in September 2008 also suggested the following activities to address relationship issues: support "Make a Change" forums; meet monthly at schools; have a Day Camp where upper Classmen teach lower classmen.