

Newsletter of the National Youth Leadership Summit
THE LEADER

February, 2011

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DIAMOND GIRL
LEADERSHIP



**National
Youth
Leadership
Summit**

BEST MEN



LEADERSHIP

24 years of service to youth

BEST FRIENDS FOUNDATION

5335 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 440 • Washington, DC 20015 • (202) 478-9677 • www.bestfriendsfoundation.org

What is Leadership?

To the Leadership student of 2010



Elayne Bennett

You were chosen to be at the 2010 National Youth Leadership Summit because you exhibit the qualities of a leader. There is something about you that gives you the potential to become a leader. With the right amount of help and guidance you can reach your potential.

Leaders are recognized as role models in their schools and communities. Leaders take a stand and do not allow themselves to be victims. Leaders stand tall on the athletic field and play fair. Leaders stand by their friends. Leaders care about their friends – they help them when they're in need or they guide them to a responsible adult who can help and guide them.

Leaders stand up for what they believe in no matter what opposition they face. Leaders take a stand against drug use, alcohol use, dating violence, and promiscuity. Leaders stand up for healthy relationships which lead to healthy marriages; they work to resolve conflicts and to communicate clearly and fairly without anger or ridicule.

Leaders know that now is the time to take a stand for their future – to begin planning for college, career, military service, or vocational training. Leaders know that they may have to do some things that they would rather not do. Things like budgeting for the future, not buying something they can't afford, not going along with the crowd when the crowd is doing wrong. And leaders know that if they can get others to stand with them, great things can and will happen.

We ask you to unplug – put aside television, cell phones, text messages, gossip – and tune into the people around you who are role models for healthy relationships and healthy marriages. We ask you to listen, to think and then to speak out for what you stand for. You may discover as you grow and learn that you may stand for something different than you do now. We hope that you stand for what is best for your future, your family's future and your community's future. We hope that you reveal the courage and strength to express yourself and become a role model for others.

In preparing and planning the National Youth Leadership Summit we worked hard to bring

the Diamond Girl and Best Men Leadership students a top-flight panel of speakers. Our "Stop the Madness" – Prevent Dating Violence panelists are men and women who care about you and whom you can add to your network of supporters. They have achieved great success on their own and they were willing to share the formula with you. They want to motivate and inspire you with their words and by their example.

Your challenge is to utilize your potential and to use skills you may not even know you have or may have never used. Many students your age are seldom given the guidance to become a leader. We ask of you as Diamond Girls and Best Men Leaders, to truly use what you have learned at the Youth Leadership Summit. If you do, we will know our hard work for you was worth it.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elayne Bennett".

Elayne Bennett

President and Founder, Best Friends Foundation

Traits of a Leader

lead'er: *n. one who guides or is in command; one in a position of influence or importance; a role model.*

- A Leader is honest and fair.
- A Leader listens and asks questions.
- A Leader develops a plan.
- A Leader has courage.
- A Leader has vision for the future and sets long term goals.
- A Leader sets objectives and follows them through to completion.
- A Leader can be assertive when it is necessary.
- A Leader treats others with respect and dignity.
- A Leader admits to a mistake and takes responsibility for his or her actions.
- A Leader hears a problem and creates a solution.
- A Leader has integrity and can be trusted.
- A Leader inspires and motivates others to take action in pursuit of the common good.

2010 National Youth Leadership Summit Attendees and Chaperones

DC Diamond Girl Leadership

Hope Ajayi
Kevwe Ajueyitsi
Jasmine Anderson
Samantha Brew
Angel Brock
Amanda Burnham
Alexis Butler
Justice Chestnut
Shaneice Childs
Chyna Cotton
Destinee Crutchfield
Lakea Dade
Armani Dugger
Tori Dugger
Ayanna Felix
Autumn Fennell
Denae Fleming
Ne'Shaun Flemmings
Shanice Griggs
Tenena Grymes
Shawntese Gunner
Breonn Hughey
Yaayaa Hunt
Mi'Asia James
Arnarsha Jones
Ava Lindsay
Lauren Mauney
Portia McKay
Porsha McLaurin
Mbachur Mbenga
Darneya Monk
Diamond Odom
Alexandra Raynor
Raeyona Redhead
Tondelaya Rhembert
Betsy Samanji
Randi Smith

Laquana Stover
Jasmine Tibbs
Chenel Washington
Monae Washington
Charity Williams
Kashyra Williams
Miche' Williams
Mercedes Young
Lishiona Young

DC Best Men Leadership

Dione Adams
William Adams
D'Angelo Anderson
Nathaniel Arnold
Brandon Artis
Vyon Battle
William Blocker
Tavon Braswell
Edward Brooks
Spencer Brown
Stepherson Burrell
Lonnell Butler
Marquise Carter
Reginald Chambers
Cole Chase
Jamal Childs
Albert Chisley
Tyric Classy
Alanti' Corbie
Judah Delaney
Nathaniel Durpree
Clifford Dyson
William Edwards
Malcolm Frost
Cameron Harris
Darnell Harris

Antwan Hogans
ChristopherHolness
Aaron Hutchins
Jlair Jackson
DannyJohnson
John Johnson III
Derrick Judd
Dealto Key-Davis
Travaugn Kinney
Spencer Lee Brown
Malcolm Lewis
Diandre Lewis
Deandre Long
Edward Lyte
Bruce Mann
Fatoumata Mare
Tavon Mason
Lavonte McCloud
Paul Minor
Jamal Montgomery
Kenneth Moore
Lanre Orekunrin
Yobo Osamwen
David Parker
Marcus Peasant
Torrence Price
Jabarie Smith
Randi Smith
Harry Terrell
Curtis Tyger
TreVonn Williams
Raymond Williams
Prince Williams
Donell Williams
Omari Winslow
John Womack

Chaperones Diamond Girl Leadership

Keydra Anderson
Teresa Beaton
Jaki Davis
Shirley Dozier
Stacia Ellis
Lisa Haileab
Robina Hughey
Shanett McIwain
Michelle Williams
Lanett Williams
Karla Williams

Chaperones Best Men Leadership

Andre Ballard
Marlon Bradshaw
Rasool Crawford
Kalil Crawford
Tyjuan Gould
Antoine Griffin
Edward Harvard
Devin Kennedy
Dawan Parker
Edward Shields
John Tally
Brandon Toles

Diamond Girl and Best Men Leaders Will Stand and Deliver

By Rita Burns

The **6th Annual National Leadership Youth Summit** was held at the National 4H Youth Conference Center on September 10th–12th, 2010. The students arrived Friday evening with their bags packed, energized and focused. For many students this was their first time participating in a Diamond Girl / Best Men Leadership event funded by the Healthy Marriage / Healthy Relationship grant from OFA.

The Summit opened with a welcome at dinner by Director of Programs, **Pauline Hamlette** and President and Founder of the Best Friends Foundation **Elayne Bennett**. They set the tone as they asked the participants, “WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?”

The “**Point System**” competition was introduced. Participants were asked to write in their Leadership Organizer on various topics to earn points. Following the dinner, things were put into motion with **Rita Burns, Robin Williams, Jon Carter, Antoine Griffin and Tommy Taylor** with choir, dance, step and chant rehearsals. Afterwards everyone had the opportunity to relax by enjoying the recreation room, arcade and cyber café.

Saturday, students participated in workshops on HIV / AIDS & STDs, dating violence, college and career planning, financial planning, and healthy marriage / conflict resolution led by **Melissa Sellevaag, Elayne Bennett, Angela Rice, Tod Rovin, Tavarious Butts and Reverends Dionne and Anthony Moore**. After lunch students participated in the “Stop the Silence, Prevent the Violence” panel presentation led by field experts and community leaders **Judge Anita Josey – Herring, Dr. Curtis Adams, Elaine and Seth Liebsohn and Kyle Mimms**, a former Best Men member and graduate of Temple University 2010. The panelists shared personal experiences, gave advice and encouraged everyone to help each other by speaking up if they or someone they know is involved in a relationship that is abusive. Following the panel, **Deana’s Educational Theater** presented a compelling play entitled, “**The Yellow Dress.**” “**The Yellow Dress**” addresses dating violence, sexual coercion and bystander intervention. It was an intimate and honest look into relationships, how to recognize early signs of an unhealthy relationship



the
yellow
dress

Presented by Deana’s Educational Theatre –
Acting to prevent violence
www.deanaseducationaltheater.org

and strategies to safely leave one. Following the play, **Tommy Taylor and Lisa Haileab** used popular music and comedy in a skit to illustrate what a healthy relationship should be. After the powerful presentations, the **Leadership Choir, Performance Dance Troupe and Best Men Leadership Step Team** had the opportunity to perform in front of an enthusiastic audience of their peers. It was a great opportunity to stand up for what they believed in! After a long day of workshops, Saturday night was rewarding and fun. A very exciting dance party with DJ Teck concluded the jam packed, thought provoking and inspirational day.

Sunday morning, students participated in an open microphone session. Students had the opportunity to speak about their thoughts, concerns and feelings related to the challenge “WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?” The outstanding comments during open microphone were a testimony to the impact of the Youth Summit. Following the student led session was a testimony to the impact of the Youth Summit; the winners of the Leadership Point System were announced. There were a total of 8 winners; each of them received Visa gift cards. All of the students received certificates for their participation in the 10 hour instructional curriculum on the goals outlined by the Healthy Marriage / Healthy Relationship grant.

Elayne Bennett closed the National Youth Leadership Summit, by congratulating and personally shaking hands with all 105 participants. She encouraged everyone to embrace the principles of leadership emphasized during the NYLS, to take a stand against Dating Violence and share the life enhancing messages of the conference with their peers, families and communities.

A student leader who used what he learned to help his cousin

Rita Kelly Burns

Brandon Jones, 2010, graduating senior from McKinley Technology High School, has found the information from the Best Men Leadership Healthy Marriage / Healthy Relationship Curriculum to be helpful to him and his family. His cousin was in an abusive relationship. She had been involved in this unhealthy relationship for quite some time. She, like many other victims of dating / domestic violence, felt ashamed and fearful and did not tell anyone of the abuse she was receiving.

Because Brandon had participated in the Healthy Marriage / Healthy Relationship curriculum sessions, he recognized the signs of physical abuse. He noticed a slight limp and a black eye. He took action and approached his cousin. She was able to

share with Brandon the circumstances of abuse. Brandon recalled the information and life enhancing messages learned through the Diamond Girl / Best Men Leadership meetings and the Best Men Leadership Healthy Marriage / Healthy Relationship Organizer. He made sure she understood that the abuse she was receiving was wrong and help was available. He gave her the telephone number to the National Domestic Violence Hotline. Brandon's advice had an impact his cousin's life. She is no longer in an abusive relationship and now attends a local university. We, at Best Friends know Brandon will continue to share the messages he has learned through the Healthy Marriage / Healthy Relationship grant to help his family, peers and community.

Foundation student survey results

- 80% of Best Friends and 70% Best Men students did not miss days of school because they felt unsafe. Many students skip school because of fear of violence.
- 91% of Diamond Girls and 76% of Best Men Leadership students did not miss days of school because they felt unsafe.
- 82% of Best Friends and 79% of Best Men did not drink alcohol.
- 80% of Diamond Girls and 75% of Best Men Leadership did not drink alcohol. Alcohol use can increase violence.
- 73% of Diamond Girl and 79% of Best Men Leadership students reported they had not been violent towards someone at the start of the program. After one year of Best Friends Foundation curricula 86% of Diamond Girl and 86% of Best Men Leadership students reported they had not been violent towards someone during the school year.
- 94% of Best Friends and 87% of Best Men are not in gangs.
- 100% of Diamond Girls and 82% of Best Men Leadership students are not in gangs. Gang membership increases the risk of violence.
- 100% of Diamond Girl and Best Men Leadership students graduate from high school.

2008-09 survey data from DC Best Friends, Best Men, Diamond Girl and Best Men Leadership students.



Diamond Girls Betsy Somanji and Michelle Williams

“Stop the Silence, Prevent the Violence”

Panel Discussion



Dr. Adams



Judge Josey-Herring



Seth Leibsohn



Judge Walton



Kyle Mims



Elayne Bennett

This is the 5th year of our panels on the importance of healthy relationships and prevention of alcohol and drug use, sex, and violence among adolescents. This year's panel includes community leaders from the Metro D.C. area who share a concern for preventing violence among the youth in our area. The panel was followed by a production of “The Yellow Dress.”

– *Elayne Bennett*

Why we need to be concerned about violence:

- 40% of teenage girls know someone their age who has been hit or beaten by their partner.¹
- More than 60% of children surveyed were exposed to violence within the past year.²
- 30% of youth, nationally, are estimated to be involved in bullying either as a target or as a bully.³
- Children who are exposed to (physical and emotional) violence may undergo lasting physical, mental, and emotional harm. They may be more prone to dating violence, sexual activity, substance abuse, delinquency and further victimization.⁴
- One out of every 10 high school students has been a victim of dating violence. Nearly 80% of girls who have been physically abused in their intimate relationships continue to date their abuser.



1. Mary, By. "Dating Violence Is a Serious Threat to Teen Girls." *By Parents For Parents*. Web. 27 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.byparents-forparents.com/parenting/dating-violence-is-a-serious-threat-to-teen-girls.htm>>

2. US. U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. October ed. 2009. Print.

3. "School Bullying and Teasing Statistics Teen Bully." *Family First Aid*. Web. 27 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.familyfirstaid.org/bullying.html>>.

4. US. U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. October ed. 2009. Print.



Diamond Girl Leadership



Yaayaa Hunt



Elayne Bennett, Ann Goldsmith and student leaders



Diamond Girl Leadership on stage



Best Men Leadership networking winners and chaperones



Kenneth Moore



Michael Kilgore and Jon Carter, Best Men Director



Prince Williams and Tyjuan Gould



Lonell Butler



Lonre Orekunrin



Derrick Judd and Antione Griffith

WHAT IS BEST FRIENDS FOUNDATION?



“Best Friends and Diamond Girls mean a lot to me. In a way it is my safe haven, my quiet place.”

Tori Dugger, Senior Diamond Girl, McKinley Technology High School, Washington, DC

Elayne Bennett, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, developed a scientifically researched and developmentally sound gender-specific curriculum model that became the Best Friends Program Guide, for middle school girls. The program models were expanded for middle school boys and high school girls and boys. The curriculum is updated regularly to incorporate the most recent medically and scientifically accurate information.



Best Friends students in the middle school program

Best Friends (BF) and Best Men (BM) are youth development programs with a character-building curriculum for adolescent girls and boys with messages of abstinence from drugs, alcohol and pre-marital sex. The programs provide a developmentally sound curriculum in an educational setting that promotes fun, companionship and caring. Through a cohesive peer support group and one-on-one mentoring, BF and BM help students develop positive self-worth, set personal goals and achieve academically with skills that will benefit them throughout life. When BF and BM students reach 8th grade, they have the opportunity to participate in the Diamond Girl (DGL) and Best Men Leadership (BML) programs. The BFF programs have been offered in 14 states and 28 school districts. The programs are currently provided in the Washington, DC and Milwaukee Public Schools.



Best Men students in the middle school program

BFF provides age and gender-appropriate in-school curricula for the BF, BM, DGL, and BML programs. The curricula cultivate life and social skills needed to resist negative pressures that in turn lead to teenage risk behavior. Each of the curricula consists of units addressing friendship, love and dating/relationships, self-respect, decision-making physical fitness and nutrition, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and HIV/AIDS and STDs. At the end of the school year, students, parents, teachers, mentors, principals, school administrators and community leaders attend the Annual Family and School Recognition Program.



Diamond Girl Leadership students in the high school program.

“The friendships, lessons and morals that I have gained simply from being a part of this program are things that I will cherish throughout my life. I can apply all that I have learned and make the best possible choices.”
Ada Carr, Senior, School Without Walls

“Now I am doing something with my life. This program is about becoming part of a network. Take this as your life lesson.”
Cameron Harris, Senior, McKinley Technology High School

“This program means a lot to me. It’s the foundation for my leadership skills, the principles I live my life by and the guidelines to a better future. Best Men Leadership gives young males a support system they can trust in and believe in as well as relate to.”
Julian Mujihad, Senior, McKinley Technology High School

Girls likely to abstain from sexual activity



Adjusting for the survey year, student’s age, grade, and race and ethnicity, the study reported that Best Friends Girls were nearly 6.5 times more likely to abstain from sexual activity.

Study: Lerner, R. (2004). Can abstinence work? An analysis of the Best Friends Program. *Adolescent and Family Health*, 3(4). 185-192

“The program stresses the development of self-control and the avoidance of drinking, drug use and sexual activity. The data analyzed in this study consists of responses to questionnaires filled out by program attendees at the beginning and at the end of the year, which are compared to the responses of a sample of girls to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) of Washington, DC.”

“... girls who have attended the Best Friends program are substantially less likely to smoke, drink, take illegal drugs, and have sex than a comparable sample of YRBS respondents. These findings were analyzed using multiple logistic regression techniques controlling for grade, age, race, and year of survey.”

The above excerpt was published in the article "Can Abstinence Work? An Analysis of the Best Friends Program," by Robert Lerner, PhD. The article appeared in Volume III, Number 4, 2005 of the Adolescent & Family Health Journal.

When compared to their peers in the DC Public Schools, the data on students in the Best Friends Foundation programs indicates the program’s impact on reducing risk behavior. The following chart compares the 2007-2008 data on Washington, DC high school students in the Diamond Girl and Best Men Leadership programs to the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data on high school students in Washington, DC.

| Survey Question | Diamond Girl Leadership | 2007 YRBS Girls | Best Men Leadership | 2007 YRBS Boys |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Had used alcoholic beverages (%Yes) | 36% | 68% | 32% | 64% |
| Had used illegal drugs (%Yes) | 11% | 39% | 21% | 41% |
| Had sex (%Yes) | 25% | 51% | 43% | 64% |
| Had smoked cigarettes (%Yes) | 7% | 48% | 13% | 53% |



A performance by Best Men Leadership students in the high school program.

- In the fall 73% of Best Men boys agreed that abstinence was the only sure way to avoid an STD, rising to 81% in the spring.
- In the fall 35% of Best Men Leadership students said they were sure they could stay away from situations that might lead to sex, rising to 57% in the spring.

Diamond Girl Leadership (DGL) – the High School Girls Program

Gains in Knowledge

- 89.2% of the DGL girls in the fall agreed that abstinence was the only sure way to avoid STDs, rising to 95.0% in the spring.*
- In the fall, 86.6% of the DGL girls were sure they could tell someone about the benefits of marriage, rising to 90% in the spring.

Positive Attitudes, Positive Self-Perception and Boundary Maintenance

- In the fall, 45% of the DGL girls said it was OK for unmarried persons to live together, dropping to 36.8% in the spring.*
- In the fall, 47.3% of the DGL girls said it was alright for unmarried people to have children. The percentage dropped to 37.6% in the spring.*

Abstaining from Risky Behaviors

- Sex. In the fall, the mean age of first sexual intercourse for the DGL girls was 14.3 years. In the spring, the mean age rose to 15.1 years.*

Best Men Leadership (BML) – the High School Boys Program

Positive Attitudes, Positive Self-Perception and Boundary Maintenance

- In the fall, 40.4% of the BML boys said girls should wait until married before they had sex; in the spring, the percentage rose to 50%.*
- 34.7% in the fall said they were sure they could stay away from situations that might lead to sex, rising to 57.1% in the spring.*

Positive findings that are statistically significant are denoted with an asterisk ().*

Dance with the Stars



On May 13, 2010 over 300 guests joined the Best Friends Foundation at the Four Seasons Hotel for its annual fundraising benefit, “Dance with the Stars”, to raise funds for the Best Friends Foundation College and Technical School Scholarship Fund and to honor “Shining Stars” – Joe Robert, Lawrence and Susan Kadish, Margaret Auger, Angie Marriott and Kitty Martinez. During the evening, guests participated in a live and silent auction, danced to the music of “Peaches and Herb” and “Retrospect”.



Ada Carr, Joe Robert, Lauren Mauney and Elayne Bennett

Joe Robert receives “Reach for the Stars Award”

A dedicated supporter and one of our “Best Men,” Joe Robert is also at the forefront of championing resources for Washington, DC school children. It is because of his keen awareness of the needs of children in our community and his tireless efforts on their behalf, that the Best Friends Foundation presented the “Reach for The Stars Award” to Joe Robert on May 13, 2010 at the Foundation’s annual fundraising event, “Dance with the Stars. Andrea Roane, the host of 9 News Now and a member of the Best Friends Foundation Advisory Board introduced Joe Robert as a “bright, Shining Star,” who is “a fighter, a winner.” Andrea also praised him for the “immeasurable good he has done and for the invaluable hope he gives children.” Best Friends Diamond Girls Lauren Mauney and Ada Carr escorted Mr. Robert to the stage to receive the “Reach for the Stars Award” from President and Founder Elayne Bennett.



Peaches and Herb



Andrea Roane



Susan and Lawrence Kadish

“Hope for the Future Award”

Lawrence and Susan Kadish were awarded the “Hope for the Future Award” for their steadfast and generous support. Lawrence is a successful nationwide investor in commercial, retail and industrial real estate. He is thought to be one of the most selfless and generous patrons we have in our country. Susan is an accomplished artisan and gifted jewelry designer who has donated her beautiful work to provide funds for our students. The Best Friends Foundation is full of gratitude to Lawrence and Susan – they are truly a source of hope for the future.



Angie Marriott



Kitty Martinez

“Shining Star Awards”

In gratitude for their commitment to the Best Friends Foundation Board and for their dedication to the development of programs that help adolescents build leadership and decision making skills to avoid risk behavior, Margaret Auger, Angie Marriott, Kitty Martinez and Vicki Tiaht were awarded the Best Friends Foundation “Shining Star Award.”



Margaret Auger



Vicki Tiaht

“Dance with the Stars” Live and Silent Auctions

The silent auction was held throughout the evening. Guests bid on sports items that included jerseys signed by John Riggins and Joe Namath as well as tickets to the Preakness and a Nationals baseball game. In addition to distinctive pieces of jewelry and autographed books, other items included were a signed photograph by the “Twilight” cast and a signed photograph of Taylor Swift.



*Former Governor of Oklahoma,
Frank Keating*

We were honored to have the former Governor of Oklahoma, Frank Keating, serve as auctioneer for a successful live auction. Among the many exceptional items offered was a Chevy Tahoe from Ourisman Chevrolet, a Caribbean Vacation, a New Orleans experience with James Carville

and Mary Matalin and a lunch in New York with Anderson Cooper. Contributing to the spirit and spontaneity to the evening, Laura Ingraham took the microphone and donated two luncheons, followed by Jeri Thompson who auctioned a luncheon with Senator Fred Thompson. The final and greatly anticipated dance with the former *Dancing with the Stars* contestant, Tom DeLay, was auctioned and won by Cheri Murphy.



Cheri Murphy dancing with Tom DeLay



Elayne Bennett, Laura Ingraham and Vicki Tiabrt

Our most heartfelt thanks to our donors to the 2010 "Dance with the Stars" Foundation benefit

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Please know how grateful we are for your gift.
Your generosity helps to ensure the success of our students.
– *Elayne Bennett, President and Founder, Best Friends Foundation*

Comments from Summit attendees

I learned a lot. Not just about marriage and relationships but life itself. Do what you do – every day is a different possibility. You’ve got friends – use them. They will help you.

*D’Angelo Anderson, Senior,
McKinley Technology High School*

The friendships, lessons and morale that I have gained simply from being a part of this program are things that I will cherish throughout my life. I am confident that as I enter college that I can apply all that I have learned and make the best possible choices.

Ada Carr, Senior, School Without Walls



This is my 5th year in Best Men program. This is one of the best times I’ve had during this program. I hope to see you all at other events. Thank you all!

*Danny Johnson, Sophomore,
H. D. Woodson High School*

Danny Johnson



Lauren Mauney

I’ve been in the program for 6 years. One of the things I’ve gotten...it’s like a brotherhood and sisterhood. We’re like a family. I’m very proud that I see new faces and new people. I know when I leave there will still be people here to experience what I experienced.

*Lauren Mauney, Senior,
McKinley Technology
High School*

The Best Men program means a lot to me. It’s the foundation for my leadership skills, the principals I give my life by and the guidelines to a better future. Best Men gives young males a support system they can trust in and believe in as well as relate to. It’s a program where you are surrounded by your peers who have the same positive outlook on life as you do and who feel comfortable about expressing them.

*Julian Mujihad, Senior,
McKinley Technology High School*

Leaders: Dancing their way to new heights!

By Robin Williams

Usher? Beyonce? None of these superstars have what it takes to keep up with the exhaustive dance moves from our Washington DC’s own Diamond Girl and Best Men Leaders! Signature moves ranging from the “Two Step” and the “Electric Slide” to popular dance moves such as the “Cha Cha Slide” and the “Dougie”. These popular moves were all displayed on the dance floor at the National 4H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland. It was exciting to witness students with caterpillar personalities as they transformed into social butterflies. The entire weekend was highly enjoyable if not, simply amazing.

After a long intense day of workshops and curriculum, the students anxiously awaited to be excused for dismissal to hurry to their rooms to get ready for the dance party of the summit! All Leadership students were required to wear their Best Men and Diamond Girl Logo Polo and T-shirts during the Leadership Summit; the dance night was the only exception. The students were allowed to wear their favorite outfit that displayed their personal style.

The students rushed to their rooms to put on signature outfits for the dance. The Diamond Girl Leaders adorned themselves and applied their favorite perfume, shiniest lip gloss, and the results were dazzling. The Best Men Leaders were dressed in their coolest outfits that exuded their youthful leadership “swag”. (*Student lingo for self confidence*)

You could hear the voices of excitement over dinner as they listened to the sound of DJ TEK as he conducted his “sound check”. When the Leadership students entered the ballroom, they exploded with excitement and began moving to the music before they entered the door to the party. The ballroom was aglow with flashing lights of red, blue, green, orange and yellow and featured a huge dance floor. Even the chaperones were excited. They stood ready to give the students blinky rings, necklaces, and bracelets. This fun “bling” flashed on and on throughout the ballroom as the students danced the night away! Oh what a night!

Shining stars...that's who they are!



Jawara Johnson

Thanks to Best Men I have become the chivalrous man I am today. I attribute a lot of my success and work drive to my brothers in the Best Men Program, without their help and support I could have never done the things I have in my life.

Jawara Johnson, 2009



Jamila Lee

The Best Friends Foundation is a wonderful program that has truly become my Best Friend who keeps me grounded mentally and spiritually. I am fortunate to be a part of the Best Friend's family who enforce moral decisions, principles and values which has helped mold me into a unique and respected young woman.

Jamila Lee, 2009

The years that I have been with the program I can say that it has been incredible. I am and always will be a Diamond Girl and I appreciate the opportunity that has been given to me to participate in such a life changing organization. Being a Diamond Girl is something to be proud of and cherish and be used throughout life.



Brianna Wilson

*Brianna Wilson
2009*

The Best Friends Foundation Staff work tirelessly and devote countless hours to help lead participating students to success. In June, 2009 they had the opportunity to see three of their leadership students exhibit a combination of successful attitudes, behaviors and academic skills. **Jawara Johnson**, Senior, Benjamin Banneker Academic High School, Washington, DC, **Jamila Lee**, Senior Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Dance Department, Washington, DC and **Brianna Wilson**, Senior, McKinley Technology High School, Washington, DC were selected by the Department of Health and Human Services /Administration for Children and Families to serve as panelists at the annual *Healthy Marriage, Healthy Relationship Conference*. The students gave an excellent presentation on the benefits of participating in the program. They received a standing ovation. The conference participants were very impressed with the students' performance. The Foundation received calls requesting additional information on the Saturday Leadership program held at Catholic University and on how the Foundation keeps the students' long term interest. Jawara, Jamila and Brianna are very successful college sophomores. Jawara attends Lincoln University in Lincoln University, PA, Jamila attends Temple University in Philadelphia, PA and Brianna attends Trinity University in Washington, DC.

SHINING STARS...THAT'S WHO THEY ARE!

THE LEADER

February, 2011

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National
Youth
Leadership
Summit

Quotes from Famous People

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Martin Luther King Sr.

"My motto was always to keep swinging. Whether I was in a slump or feeling badly or having trouble off the field, the only thing to do was keep swinging."

Hank Aaron

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

John Quincy Adams

You're not obligated to win. You're obligated to keep trying to do the best you can every day.

Marian Wright Edelman

"A leader is a dealer in hope."

Napoleon Bonaparte

"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."

General George Patton

"You are never a loser until you quit trying."

Mike Ditka

"It isn't hard to be good from time to time in sports. What's tough is being good every day."

Willie Mays

"Every person who has grown to any degree of usefulness, every person who has grown to distinction, almost without exception has been a person who has risen by overcoming obstacles, by removing difficulties, by resolving that when he met discouragement he would not give up."

Booker T. Washington

"I play to win, whether during practice or a real game. And I will not let anything get in the way of me and my competitive enthusiasm to win."

Michael Jordan

"I demand perfection in what I do, and I practice very hard before I give a concert, sometimes three to six hours a day."

Nina Simone

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24 years of service to youth

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