

Teen Program Encourages Setting and Achieving Personal Goals



BY KAIA ZAWADI

Spring Creek Towers' Teen Central program has embarked on a mission to empower young people with a sense of importance about self-awareness, education and possession of employable skills. Teen Central has added the Delta GEMS and Delta GENTS programs to its list of youth oriented activities.

Created by the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the GEMS (girls) and GENTS (boys) are mentoring programs that are aimed at young people 11-18 years old. The programs meet twice a month and include workshops, panel discussions, arts and cultural trips, volunteer service and information sessions with accomplished professionals.

Program participants interact with peers and the community at large. They are introduced to life long skills such as citizenship, leadership training, networking, etiquette, and an appreciation for

being well educated. According to the program's leaders, these skills are the core essentials that will help the young people to successfully plan and meet their individual goals.

A natural extension of the Delta sorority, the GEMS focus on self acceptance and confidence. Through its activities, young women have positive interactions with students pursuing college careers and professionals from all walks of life.

Sharon Brown, Director of Teen Central and a member of the sorority, invited the Deltas to bring the program to the center. "It was important for the girls to hear college educated women speaking about careers, not jobs," she said. GEMS have heard from female executives such as the Vice President of Diversity for HBO, Director of the Meals on Wheels

program, and a PhD candidate. "They're excited and anxious to hear our stories. [Guest speakers] are movers and shakers who are content with what they are doing but are also moving on to bigger things after becoming successful," she continued.

Brown's teens feel a sense of reward when receiving advice filled with jewels of wisdom that they can take with them into adulthood.

Artisha Arthur, a freshman at Edward R. Murrow High School, expressed satisfaction with the Delta GEMS. She said, "The program helps to enhance women's [self-image], to be well rounded and to have the confidence to be who you want to be." Arthur, who

change my attitude towards other kids, and my public speaking skills have really improved," said the Xaverian H.S. junior who says he now knows that education can help him to attain his goals. "This program will help to open up doors to new opportunities and experiences. I plan to major in mortuary science when I go to college," the teen continued.

Teen Central's Assistant Director Hiawatha Rogers works with the young men. He teaches them etiquette, to give back to the community through volunteer work and to prepare for work in the Summer Youth Employment program.

Rogers describes Teen Central and its activities as a place that young people can go and where they can be themselves. "The GENTS is something the boys can call their own. It shows them that the community cares about them. We are constantly reaching out," he says.

"Many of our teen volunteers and alumni come back to thank us and to express their appreciation for what we have done for them," he said.

Located on the lower level of the Brooklyn Sports Club, Teen Central is open Monday through Friday, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. The program is open to all teen residents of Spring Creek Towers. For more information contact, Ms. Brown or Mr. Rogers at 718/642.7168.



speaks proudly of her parents' support, also thinks of others, "It's very important to give back to the community. I plan to attend either Harvard or Spelman University and become a lawyer."

Lamiek Melrose, 17, believes the Delta GENTS has positively affected him. "The program has helped me

Haiti Earthquake Relief Information

As the *Spring Creek Sun* goes to press, the tragic and devastating effects of last week's earthquake in Haiti continue to be felt and responded to by people around the world. Listed here is important information for those wishing to make contributions to help victims of the earthquake.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reminds Internet users who receive appeals to donate money in the aftermath of the earthquake to apply a critical eye and do their due diligence before responding to those requests. Past tragedies and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions for a charitable organization and/or a good cause.

Before making a contribution of any kind, donors should adhere to certain guidelines, to include the following:

- Do not respond to any unsolicited (spam) incoming e-mails, including clicking links contained within

those messages.

- Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as surviving victims or officials asking for donations via e-mail or social networking sites.

- Verify the legitimacy of nonprofit organizations by utilizing various Internet-based resources that may assist in confirming the group's existence and its nonprofit status rather than following a link to the site.

- Be cautious of e-mails that claim to show pictures of the disaster areas in attached files because the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.

- Make contributions directly to known organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf to ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes.

- Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone who solicits contributions:

Providing such information may compromise your identity and make you vulnerable to identity theft.

CONTACT NUMBERS

NYS Governor David A. Paterson Office

Online:

<http://www.ny.gov/governor/pres/s/HelpingHaiti.html>

Action Against Hunger

247 West 37th Street, 10th Floor

New York, NY 10018

1-877/777.1420

CARE

151 Ellis Street

Atlanta, GA 30303

1-800/521-CARE (521-2273)

Doctors Without Borders

USA/Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)

333 7th Avenue, 2nd Floor

New York, NY 10001-5004

1-888/392.0392

Save the Children

Haiti Earthquake Children in

Emergency Fund

54 Wilton Road

Westport, CT 06880

1-800/728.3843

United Nations Central

Emergency Response Fund

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

380 Madison Avenue, 6th floor

New York, NY 10017

United Jewish Appeal – Federation of Jewish Philanthropies on New York

P.O. Box 4227

New York, NY 10261-4227

1-212/ 836.1486

World Food Program

733 Third Avenue

New York, NY 10017

1-866/929.1694 (toll free)

World Vision

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