



CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH THE AFRICAN AMERICAN - JEWISH EXPERIENCE

News and Events of Cultural Leadership - www.culturalleadership.com - Vol. 3 Autumn 2008

REMAINDER OF YEAR FOCUSES ON LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Ten months into the program, Class 4 of Cultural Leadership is well on its way to becoming the next group of leaders and activists who will work to make our communities more inclusive and socially just. Class 4 began last January with a weekend retreat over Martin Luther King holiday weekend. They met once in February and once in March to learn about Jewish and African American history, culture and religion. In April, the class met for another weekend retreat to learn about non-violent movements and its leaders including Ghandi, the Civil Rights Movement, and Cesar Chavez. Students also had the opportunity to meet with local, effective change agents: civil rights attorney Frankie Freeman, civil rights activists Percy Green and Eric Vickers, Rabbi Susan Talve, Sister Mary Ebo, and Father Marek Bozek of St.Stanislaus Kostka Church. Students met in May to learn about institutional racism, power, privilege and prejudice.

Bright and early on June 9th, Class 4 embarked on their summer transformational journey. They met with 76 speakers in 24 days and visited 12 cities: New York City; Washington, D.C.; Atlanta; Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma, AL; Jackson and Utica, MS; New Orleans and Jena, LA; Little Rock; and Memphis. They visited Ellis



Class 4 and the house they built with Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans

Island and walked through the Lower East Side where Jewish immigrant communities once settled. They met survivors of the Holocaust who told them first-hand the horrors that took place. They went to Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King preached, and through the Lorraine Motel, where he was assassinated. They learned history through the up-close and personal stories of the very people who made it.

They are now in the final part of their Cultural Leadership year. Our programs and retreats from September through December focus on the tools these students will need to accomplish their inspiring goals to bring about social change. They learned leadership skills and how to refine their own leadership

styles to be more effective. They will develop the techniques to lead and facilitate courageous conversations on tough social issues like race, discrimination, prejudice, power, and privilege. Our students will learn the vital skill of community organizing. Power is always in numbers, and many successful movements for social and civil rights have been the result of great leaders who understood how to organize people around a cause. Finally, they meet one last time in December to learn how to effectively use the media to bring about social change. Our students graduate on January 4th at New City School (5209 Waterman Blvd.) at 3:30pm. You are all, of course, invited to attend.

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Cultural Leadership exists to create a more just and equitable community by educating high school students to recognize and resolve issues of privilege and injustice through the lens of the African American and Jewish experience. Our students develop leadership skills, build relationships, facilitate dialogues and create change in their circles of influence.

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Dear Friend of Cultural Leadership,

It is with pride and a little trepidation that I assume the reins of leadership of Cultural Leadership as the Chair of the Board. Pride because I am so passionate about our mission and short, but substantial, history and promise. Trepidation because failure to reach our ambitious friendraising and fundraising goals could have such dire consequences. We need all the change agents we can get to transform our St. Louis community to be a fair and just place in which to live and raise our families. If we do not have sufficient funds, we have to reduce our class size because each child in the program costs us \$8,000 for travel and programming costs.

In this divisive election atmosphere where racism is blatant, the need for this transformational organization is more evident than it has been. How fortunate the St.

When people stand up for what they believe, they send out a small ripple. If enough people send ripples they end up in a huge wave, meaning stand up and fight for what you believe in.

— Emalie Jacobs, Parkway South

Louis community will be a decade or so from now when the young people who have had the opportunity to have a year-long experience learning and working together begin to take leadership roles in our community.

Our student participants are educated to find allies to help them

solve problems. Although our formal program is a year in length, the graduates stay in touch. On their blogs and in their e-mails, they share with one another efforts they are making on their college campuses to fight societal “wrongs.” When they return home during holidays, they convene at “KK’s” house, their unofficial home away from home, to continue crucial conversations. They mentor students in our current class and they help us solicit and select members for our upcoming Class 5. Applications are open until November 7 for our next class. If you know a young adult who is a junior (or a mature sophomore) in high school who can muster the rigors and commitment inherent in membership, please have them apply. And, if you know people who share our vision and want to support us, please have them contact us.

Sincerely,

Terry Bloomberg

REVELATIONS FROM THE ROAD

Thursday left me with "life's most urgent and persistent question 'what are you doing to help others? (MLK Jr).'"

- Lauren Caskey, Villa Duchesne



(L to R) Erik Mills, Maurice Cooksey, Ethan Joseph, and Sean Joyce with Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)

All of our speakers showed us how strong a single voice can be. They have accomplished many things and continue to do so simply because they have the will power. Jimmie Travis is currently a freshman at Jackson state, working to get his degree to teach middle school history. He is 65 years old.

- Arnold Bullock, Ladue Horton Watkins

Blog Archive

▼ 2008 (21)

▼ July (8)

Day 24

Offering her own definition of activism, Letty Cottin Pogrebin said "To be angry about something and become aroused enough to do something is activism." The students also got a kick out of her story about meeting a Civil War veteran who shook the hand of President Abraham Lincoln! She stated, "If you've shaken my hand, you've shaken the hand of someone who has shaken the hand of Abe Lincoln."

- Scott Friedman and Patrick Banks, Trip Leaders

After the tour we heard from Holocaust survivor, Nesse Godin, who really inspired me in a deep way. When she was done, I left with a deeper appreciation for her life and struggle. She taught me that no matter what tragedy happens in your life, don't let it stop you from sharing your experience with the world.

- Maurice Cooksey, Roosevelt H.S.

Day Seven- Emalie Jac

I am truly thankful for my Cultural Leadership family and this opportunity to live history. We are now equipped with the knowledge, contacts, and courage it will take to be change agents, and we couldn't be more ready. Look out world because here we come!

- Meredith Stoner, John Burroughs



Rabbi Beryl Epstein talking to Jasmine Collins at the Chassidic Discovery Center in Crown Heights, NY

Edmund Pettus Bridge - at this stop we were honored to walk across it with our heads held high like the people before us.

- Jazzy Collins, St. Elizabeth Academy



(L to R) Brandon West, Jillian Lynum, and Jessie Swopshire

At Henry S. Jacobs Camp, in Utica, MS, the color of my skin served no purpose in the way the campers and staff treated me. I remember being asked to sit at a table for dinner and feeling so happy that people who didn't even know my name were enthusiastic to invite me to eat with them.

- Brittany Campbell, Incarnate Word Academy

(After building a Habitat for Humanity house in New Orleans) And on this day we did not only plan for action in later days; on this day we took action. Because at the end of the day we had not merely learned, listened, observed, and discussed focusing on contemplated action in future days; through our hard work that day, we had given a displaced family a home, and pushed a ravaged neighborhood one step further on the road to redemption.

- Sean Joyce, Ladue Horton Watkins



Shop at Barnes and Noble - Support Cultural Leadership

Barnes and Noble will host a Book Fair for Cultural Leadership on **Saturday, November 22**. Every purchase **nationwide** of books, DVDs, CDs, journals, food, and more supports Cultural Leadership and our mission to train teens who will work for inclusion, equality, and social justice.

On **November 22**, a portion of all proceeds from purchases made by friends and family of Cultural Leadership will be donated to Cultural Leadership. Please present the voucher at left to the cashier with your purchases to direct proceeds to Cultural Leadership. This voucher can be used **nationwide**. Cultural Leadership students, alums, staff, and board members will be present at the

Barnes and Noble at Ladue Crossing (8871 Ladue Road at I-170) on that day to share their experiences throughout the program.

Furthermore, we are excited to announce that Harper Barnes, author of *Never Been a Time: The 1917 Race Riot that Sparked the Civil Rights Movement*, will do a book reading and signing at **1 pm on November 22** at Barnes and Noble at Ladue Crossing.

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Voucher can be used at Barnes and Noble stores **nationwide**. Cultural Leadership representatives will be at **Barnes & Noble**

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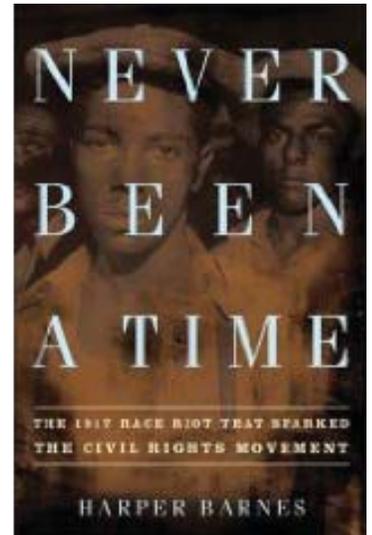
*The purchase of gift cards, Barnes & Noble memberships, text books and magazine subscriptions are not included in bookfair totals. Our discount purchasing program may not be applied to bookfair purchases.



Before the 1992 Rodney King riot in Los Angeles, the deadliest recorded race riot of the 20th century happened in East St. Louis, Illinois. Forgotten today, it was a startling rallying cry for the early civil rights movements.

“There is a secret history of American race relations, things they never taught us in school—the wanton terrorism visited upon African-Americans by white mobs from the end of the civil war to the beginning of the modern civil rights movement. Harper Barnes takes one of the very worst episodes—the East St. Louis race riot of 1917—and uses it to illuminate and exorcise a past that we need to confront. This is a very important book, heartbreaking and riveting, history that is as fresh as today’s news.”

—Joe Klein, Time magazine columnist



Coming Home Transformed

by **Jasmine Collins, Class 4**
St. Elizabeth Academy

Coming home from the trip was like walking into a new dimension for me. When I got off that bus, this realization came over me—I have become an official change agent. The trip was eye-opening for me. We met with civil rights activists, leaders and change agents. We also visited famous and historic places around the US. While in New Orleans, we even helped build not one, but two houses for Habitat for Humanity. I started to appreciate the freedoms I enjoy in life. With that, I truly began to appreciate the work others did before me to provide those freedoms. Now that I have learned about my own history and culture, I have a new respect for my African American heritage and more respect for myself and where I come from.

When I returned, I was so excited to tell my family and friends all about my experience. My Cultural Leadership friends experienced it all with me and I knew they were supportive. I was worried, though about how my old friends would accept the new me. Well, let’s just say that I have learned the meaning of a real friend. Overall, the trip was a great experience and I would do it all over again in a heartbeat!



Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts
 forth a tiny ripple of hope and crossing each other from a million different
 centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of
 oppression and resistance. - Robert Kennedy

RIPPLES

Ron Bronstein, Class 1, has joined a Jewish Muslim dialogue in Israel.

Brian Hamilton, Class 1, is the PR Chair for the Association for the Betterment of Culturally Diverse Educators (ABCDE) at Mizzou, which hosts voter education forums with representatives from the College Democrats and Republicans.

Tony Westbrook, Class 1, was inducted into the National Residence Hall Honorary and selected to participate in the NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) Fellows program for students wishing to learn more about the field of higher education.

Jeremy Cropf, Class 2, was elected president of the NYU chapter of STAND (Student Taking Action Now Darfur). He is the first ever freshman elected to this office. **Jeremy** will also debut his first feature length film, *The Disk: Code Zero*, which will have its first screening at the Tivoli Theatre on December 28 at 7 pm. The film features CL alums **Brittany Johnson, Anthony Neal, Gus Cotten** and **Nick Desloge** as members of cast and crew.

Sean Scott, Class 2, is an intern at World Wide Technology, Maryland Heights, MO, the largest minority-owned business in the U.S.

Anna Dardick, Class 3, attended Girls' State this summer. Only students with strong leadership potential, interest in government and civil responsibility are chosen to attend.

Kyriah Shannon, Class 4, was appointed 2nd Vice President of Top Teens of American Confluence Chapter. She is also President of Ladue's African American Alliance. **Brittany Hale, Class 4**, is her Vice President.

Nate Seeskin and Meredith Stoner, Class 4, have joined the Jewish Light teen staff as writers. Nate has also joined a JAM (Jews and Muslims Teen Dialogue), and he and **Meredith** have begun a STAND chapter at John Burroughs School.

Mimi Brown, Class 4, attended Global Youth Leadership Conference last summer. She met teenagers from all over the world during this conference designed to develop leaders with a global perspective. **Mimi** had an amazing opportunity to visit the United Nations and even delivered a speech to 350 students from 100 different countries.

Hannah Novack, Class 4, has co-founded a Young Democrats club that will work to register voters and organize students to canvass for Obama's campaign.

Students Meet Leaders at September Program

by **Brionna Jimerson**
 Metro Academic Classical High School

Throughout the Cultural Leadership experience, we have been closely examining exactly what makes a leader effective. We have met and learned about countless

people who possessed key qualities that allowed them to relate to the masses and efficiently propel them toward a common goal. To further our understanding, the cornerstone of our September meeting was leadership—what qualities valuable

THANK YOU

Cultural Leadership would like to thank the following people for their generous donations of time and talent:

Rabbi Susan Talve, Percy Green, Eric Vickers, Father Marek Bozek, Frankie Freeman and Sister Mary Ebo for their willingness to share their stories of activism.

Professor Terry Jones for his insights into racism and housing patterns in St. Louis.

Felice Joyce, Raizell Kalishman, Elaine Seeskin, Nancy Novack, Leslie Wright, Marcene Menendez, Sabrina West, Jeanne Golden, Barbara Morrow, Sharon Caskey, Michele Hayes, Sharon Byrd, Diane Swopshire, Debbie Nelson-Watkins, Steven Hale, and Lucius Cooksey for providing delicious food at monthly programs.

Aaron and Nancy Novack for providing their welcoming space, the Souldar Preservation Hall, for our "Going Away Party."

Tonya Ogden, Tony Westbrooks, and Mr. Muhammed for chaperoning our students at the April retreat.

Stewart Halperin for taking wonderful pictures during our summer journey.

Dr. Will Ross and Carrie Marsh for sharing their leadership experiences.

Nubian Jewels of the Nile for their African dancing performance and lesson.

leaders exemplify and how we can emulate them. We learned how to hone our leading skills and put them to use successfully. We zoned in on local leaders, and then branched out, discerning what leadership is to us as individuals and to Cultural Leadership Class 4 as group.

We met with Dr. Will Ross, Associate Dean and Director of Diversity at Washington University Medical School.

A young, disadvantaged African-American from Memphis and a natural introvert, Dr. Ross was thrust into a leadership role not by choice, but by circumstance. By stepping out of his

see *Leadership*, page 7



...From the Parents

by Judith Lynum, mother of Jillian Lynum, Class 4

Most parents experience the anxiety of seeing their child “grow up”. That anxiety fuels many questions. “Do they have the skills necessary to be successful in the next phase of their lives? Are they reflections of what you want to see in an adult? Have I done all that I could to prepare them?” These questions and many others have run through my mind these past seventeen years.

Knowing that there are many social learning experiences in the community, the decision of which one is best for your child can be daunting. Cultural Leadership was something that piqued our curiosity through various newspaper articles. It seemed like a good fit for Jillian’s desire to learn more about diversity-related issues. The enrollment process was relatively simple because Jillian was prepared on paper and ready for the commitment. However, never would I have anticipated the social growth and development that I have seen in my daughter. Jillian has always been strong-willed and determined, having decided on a career and preferred college of choice at a very early age. No matter what experiences had come her way she remained steadfast in these choices. That is, until Cultural Leadership became a part of her life.

By the time the summer trip concluded, Jillian determined a new career path and was less committed to her previous number one choice of college. Her world view was broadened by the experiences she had. She overcame an illness that isolated her from the group for a few days, but she used the time to meditate and reflect on what she had been learning and experiencing first-hand. As a believer in all things happening with a purpose, I feel that if Jillian had not had the opportunity to participate in Cultural Leadership (all the sessions, retreats, speakers and the trip where she met those who have championed her beliefs and had the time for deep reflection), she would not have grown so much in her commitment to public service.

Each day she amazes me. A seventeen year old with spunk, power and a voice that is not silenced by fear and intimidation is truly a rare find. I do not know where these experiences will lead her but I do know that Cultural Leadership has played a significant part in who Jillian is today. From what I am witnessing, she is working daily to be the change that she wants to see. Having said that, I commend Cultural Leadership for providing her the opportunity to truly explore and develop her consciousness.



Class 4 Parents Sharon Byrd and Felice Joyce talk with board member Peggy Cohen Voss (right).

by Marsha Jacobs, grandmother of Emalie Jacobs, Class 4

Cultural Leadership is a great program for our young people as it raises their awareness and teaches them ways to work together to make our world a better place. After the June trip, my granddaughter, Emalie came back with a greater understanding of Jewish as well as African-American lives, history and culture. I’m sure she will use the knowledge she learned from Cultural Leadership to accomplish her goals. It has also raised my awareness as I have enjoyed the parent meetings and have gotten to learn more about the differences in the world.

Cultural Leadership shows all of us there are differences in every walk of life and the bottom line is we need to treat all with respect and kindness—just as we want to be treated. Soften your heart and look inward, quicken your step to help one another, open your arms to help change hate into love. Because of Cultural Leadership and our new change agents, maybe one less man will suffer the consequences of discrimination and injustice. We cannot forget the past. I know I won’t, thanks to my granddaughter. Our immediate future shows great promise and we all need to remember that knowledge should always be seen over color, truth always over lies, and most importantly that all people are of great importance.



comfort zone (something we CL students are asked to do on a monthly basis), he experienced a world that had previously been closed off to him, one of limitless opportunities to make our world a better place. He reiterated the idea that, “at some point, [you] have to have core values and stand up behind them.” Ross is a self-proclaimed nerd, and admits to having to reevaluate his life plan after seeing the possibilities in leading others, even though, intrinsically, he was happy working alone in a science lab. But the possibilities were too great to ignore, so he left his comfort zone in the laboratory and began taking on leadership roles.

Our second speaker was University City High School graduate Carrie Marsh. At University City High School, gay and lesbian students struggled to survive each day knowing the student body looked disapprovingly upon them with hatred blazing in their souls. Carrie Marsh saw this

crippling fear in her fellow students’ eyes, and made their problems her own. She founded U-City High’s first Gay/Straight Alliance-Diversity Awareness club (GSA-DA) to give the gay and diverse student body a strong voice. She implemented change, bringing awareness to her student body about diversity, oppression, and gay rights. She helped breed leaders by giving confidence, inspiring, and leading by example. Carrie strategically dealt with powers of opposition, never losing sight of her main goal- creating a safe atmosphere for all students regardless of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other potential prejudicial grounds.

Inspired, we then examined our own leadership skills. We ranked our leadership traits (curiosity, passion, creativity, risk taking, charisma, respect, etc.) by importance and all compared our rankings. The results were shocking, to say the least! By taking part in this exercise, I was able to take stock of what is vital to

me in a leader, as well as what leadership qualities others value.

Next, we ranked these characteristics based on what we felt we each personally possess, and what Class 4 of Cultural Leadership embodies as a whole. This exercise provided us with insight into how we see ourselves compared to how we see Cultural Leadership as a group of change agents, further putting into perspective what makes a leader successful, both when standing alone and when with a group of allies. We all left with a better understanding of how to become more effective leaders and change agents. And, I made a declaration to myself to become a better leader by acquiring those characteristics that I lack.

How Cultural Leadership Changed My Life

by **Brittany Campbell, Class 4**
Incarnate Word Academy

Growing up in a sheltered household and community has been the only life I have ever known. Stepping outside of my comfort zone was not in my repertoire before Cultural Leadership. Going into the program, I thought of no one other than myself, my friends, and my family. I viewed the world with a judgmental eye and I was quick to put down the ideas of someone who opposed mine. Because of Cultural Leadership, all of this has changed.

I am a more outgoing individual and I find myself doing things that I would not have done nine months ago - like walking up to a stranger and asking his or her name to be more inclusive. Cultural Leadership has also made me more aware of the diverse society in which we live and more appreciative of the fact that I can meet and learn from so many different people. My attitude prior to Cultural Leadership was, “They’re not like me so, why care?” Cultural Leadership has great-

ly altered that perspective. I now worry about things that do not affect just my life and I love learning about the history, culture, and religion of different people.

Another thing that Cultural Leadership has helped me with is my confidence. Before I became a member of Class 4, I would see a problem and walk away because I felt as though there was nothing I could do to solve it. I wanted to help others but I did not have the confidence to do so. Cultural Leadership made me realize that with hard work and effort, anything can be achieved - and I’m just the individual to do it. All one needs is a strong attitude and “allies” to help. I am now changing my home, my community, the city, the state, and maybe even the world. Because of Cultural Leadership, I now realize that I can achieve anything. I am very grateful for every moment spent with my friends and “allies” and the people who have aided me in truly becoming a leader. Cultural leadership is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will always have a special place in my heart.

Help Us Recruit Class 5

We are recruiting the next class of courageous, passionate, curious “change the world” students. The application for Class 5 is due November 7th and is available for download on our website www.culturalleadership.com (or one can be mailed to you by calling **314-725-3222**).

We are looking for mature sophomores and juniors in high school who possess a passion for social justice, leadership potential, and a strong sense of civic responsibility. This year, Cultural Leadership will accept applications from **anyone** who believes in our mission to create a more just and equitable community. Applicants can be of any race, religion, or ethnicity. Our curriculum is dynamic and extensive and will continue, in part, to focus through the lens of the African American and Jewish experience. We are excited to find students who will see a problem, grab an ally, or two, roll up their sleeves, and get to work to make our community more just and equitable.



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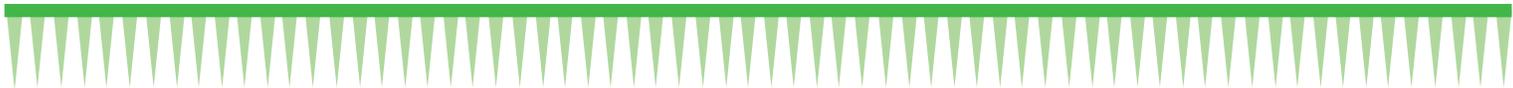
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