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The Afro-American Section C

BUSINESS PULSE

■ Career Corner C3
■ Kids Talk C5

Saturday, February 3, 1990

Mentor program matches youth with local professionals

By Gwen Gilmore
AFRO Staff Writer

Kathy Gwynn used to spend her days reviewing contracts for a fortune 500 company. But these days the young IBM attorney and contract negotiator is on loan to Mentors, Inc. where she works as special assistant to the president.

The Washington, D.C.-based program reaches out to area high school students matching their goals and career interest with professional men and women who have achieved similar careers and want to share their time and expertise.

As special assistant to Mentors president Shayne Schneider, Ms. Gwynn conducts interviews and orientations and matches young people with their partners.

"My favorite part of the job is talking to the children and learning about the realities of being a teenager," said Ms. Gwynn.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE MENTORS program enjoy a day out.

KATHY GWYNN

"More than a quarter of the volunteers are attorneys. The kids want to follow them around and see what its like to file a brief or go to court."

However, men and women in other fields also participate in the program. Companies like C and P Telephone, MCI and the Board of Trade are contacted and asked to get involved in the program, whether in person or with donations.

Matching up a potential "couple" is a skilled job and young people and adults are counseled for interest, hobbies and personality similarities before they begin their relationship.

Students attending Banneker, Anacostia, Cardozo, Coolidge, Mckinley, Roosevelt and Spingarn High volunteer to participate in the mentors program by requesting to do so through their perspective counselors.

"The mentors affect them in a positive way," says Ms. Gwynn. "Their self-esteem and belief in themselves develops while they are in the program."

Mentors also get involved with the families too, attending events, like the annual Mentor Student Parent Luncheon and Picnic, where students, mentors, teachers, counselors, sponsors and family all come together and for the benefit of the students progress.

"One young man was living in a shelter with several brothers and sisters. He did not go to school and was a D and F student. His mentor took a strong interest and now he scored the highest in the school on SAT's and has several scholarship offers. He has the confidence in himself to do what he set his mind to do," Ms. Gwynn said.

Adults also benefit from the program as well. "It's rewarding just being involved and getting to know a teenager. It works wonders. Having gained confidence in oneself if invaluable," she said.

The first graduating class since the start of Mentors, Inc. will be the Class of 1990. The event represents a milestone for the group and a small dent in fighting the city's dropout problem.

"The kids respond fantastically, they just need someone to talk to and be a friend," Ms. Gwynn said.

PACK YOUR BAGS
Conference Update

RURAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The celebration of the Fifth Annual Harvesting Our Potential, a rural women's conference, will be held Feb. 17-18, at the Hotel Fort Des Moines. The conference, sponsored by Prairie Fire Rural Action and the Iowa Inter-Church Agency for Peace and Justice, has annually attracted over 400 participants from across the United States, Canada and Europe. For information call (515) 243-1161.

NAFEO'S NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 15th National Conference on Blacks in Higher Education will be held March 28 - April 1 at the Washington Hilton Hotel, in Washington, D.C.

Sponsored by the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, the theme "Challenge to Change" conference will assess and reassess the needs of Blacks in higher education. An expected 180 exhibitors and spectacular student science and artistic displays and performances are expected to participate. For information call (202) 543-9111.

NSBA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Thousands of school board members from throughout the nation will gather April 21-24 in New Orleans for the 50th anniversary annual convention of the National School Boards Association.

Convention headquarters will be the New Orleans Hilton Hotel. An estimated 20,000 people are expected to attend. Several major events will be held on Friday, April 20. For information call (703) 838-NSBA.

SOCIAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE

"Advanced Computing for the Social Sciences": a conference sponsored by The Energy Division of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and The United States Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census will be held on April 10-12, at the Williamsburg Hilton and National Conference Center, Williamsburg, Va.

The conference will focus upon endeavors in social sciences that either advance or exploit the development of current computing technology. For registration and information call Marjie Hubbard at (615) 574-5961.

CULTURAL PLURALISM CONFERENCE

The Association of American Cultures is hosting a conference: " Open Dialogue IV Cultural Pluralism:" The Next Steps, on June 7-10 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

New stamp for Ida B. Wells

The U.S. Postal Service has unveiled the design of a commemorative stamp honoring civil rights activist Ida B. Wells.

The Ida B. Wells commemorative stamp, the 13th in the Black Heritage series, will be issued Feb. 1 in a Chicago ceremony, in conjunction with Black History Month.

The stamp design, by Thomas Blackshear of Novato, Calif., featuring a portrait of Ms. Wells. A line of pickets form a backdrop Mr. Blackshear also designed tributes to Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable, James Weldon Johnson and A. Philip Randolph.

Born a slave in 1862, Ms. Wells devoted her whole life to educating people about the horrors of discrimination and lynching. In 1909, she helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

IDA B. WELLS

CENTURY AGENDA CONFERENCE

Heritage of Afro-American Beauty and Barber Industry will host the Annual Heritage Symposium, Feb. 26, at Howard University's Blackburn Auditorium, Washington, DC.

The Symposium will focus on history, culture, education, and economic development. There will be presentations on the historical origin of beauty, barbering, and manufacturing from the ancient era to modern times and displays of historical artifacts, and history of the early pioneers. Admission is free.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

SEEK $25,000 FOR ANACOSTIA YOUTH

The Interested Southeast Parents Association is seeking $25,000 to help it continue its various programs for youth.

For 11 years the association has counseled and trained youths in career workshops, formed and traveled with the Southeast Community Military Marching and Concert Band, worked closely with the DC Public Schools in its Operation Rescue Project, participated in youth seminars, helped with the art festival for handicapped and non-handicapped youth and worked with area universities on career counseling and educational assistance projects.

For information contact Barbara L. Mosley, assistant director,202-563-4165.

BALTO. MCDONALDS ARE TOPS

Three Mcdonald's owner/operators in Baltimore were among the top 50 leading Black business owner executives for 1988 in Maryland. The owners are Osborne Payne, Rufus Stephens and Charlotta Douglas.

Mr. Payne has been a McDonald franchise owner for 15 years and owns four restaurants in the Baltimore area. Both Ms. Douglas and Mr. Stephens own two outlets.

DC TAX STUDY

The Pro-Housing Property Tax Coalition is urging passage of the DC Bill 8-255 that would allow the DC Council to tax buildings at a lower rate than land.

Using the 1990 assessment data, the Coalition showed that a split-rate property tax can reduce the average residential property tax bill by between $300 and $400 per year while encouraging the renovation of boarded up housing. The study also showed tax reductions for most neighborhood business properties.

For information call Pete Farina,202-543-0702

METER READING MADE EASY

Goodbye to estimated gas bills and central meters for large apartment buildings.The Washington Gas Co. within 18 months will soon be able to read over 75,000 meters without even getting near the meter. That's 12 percent of the total..

A vehicle equipped with computer-based data-gathering equipment are driven along a designated meter-reading route. As it travels, it sends out radio signals requesting data from specific meters. The meters upon receiving the radio signals respond with the requested data. That data is later transferred electronically from the mobile computer to the main billing computer.

The automated meter-reading system will enable the gas company to read meters that are difficult to access and will reduce the number of estimated bills to customer. Meters can also be installed inside individual apartments, instead of putting one master meter in a central location.

GIRL SCOUTS EXCEED GOAL

The Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital (GSCNC), the largest Girl Scout council in the nation, with more than 33,000 girls and 18,000 adult members, exceeded the goal for its 1990 annual campaign drive.

The campaign, known as SHARE ("Share Her Annual Real Expenses"), began Oct. 31 and ended Dec. 15, 1989. Funds raised will help purchase troop activity materials, camping equipment, training packets for new leaders, recreational games, and other resources which support Girl Scout programming.

APPLY FOR UNITED BLACK FUND

New member agency applications for 1990 will be accepted by the United Black Fund of Greater Washington from now until Feb. 28. All non-profit, tax-exempt organizations serving the Metropolitan Washington Area are eligible to apply for regular member agency status. For information call 202- 783-0430.

THE BLACK PROFILE

Retail stores have an opportunity to win the loyalty of Black consumers because a large majority of Black Americans are young and spend disposable income on impulse items, according to a report by a New York consumer information agency.

Among other items in the report are that fact that more than half the Black population is between the ages of 18 and 34; the growth rate of this group is increasing three times faster than the White population; more than 42 percent of Black households include children under the age of 18; Black consumers match White consumers in the percentage of high school graduates and Blacks are only slightly behind them in the number of college graduates.

MD FIRM FINED $2,500

Sema,Inc. a registered research facility in Rockville,Md. was assessed a $2,500 civil penalty and was ordered to cease and desist from future violations of the Animal Welfare Act. and in particular from harassing or intimidating in any manner USDA personnel from performing their official duties,the US Department of Agriculture announced this week.

USDA charged that during a routine compliance inspection, Sema employees withheld information about research animals, prevented APHIS inspectors from taking pictures of cages and interfered with their departure by blocking their car in the parking lot. Sema has appealed the decision of the administrative law judge.

PG MINI BOND SALE

Prince George's County, Md. has received applications totaling $3.8 million for its $2 million mini-bond sale, Parris N. Glendening, county executive , announced this week.

This program allows citizens to purchase tax-exempt bonds for as little as $500 and at the same time provide the financial resources for needed public facilities, Mr. Glendening said.