

Quad County Urban League holds annual academic banquet for minority youth

The Quad County Urban League held its 26 annual TSTM/PR (Tomorrow's Scientist, Technicians and Managers/Project Ready) banquet in June in Aurora, IL. It is the area's largest and oldest college preparatory and academic achievement banquet for minority youth.

Over the course of two decades, TSTM has inspired over 2,000 students to pursue their dreams through colleges and universities throughout the country. "We are definitely excited about the Tomorrow's Scientist Technicians and Managers/Project Ready Program," says Quad County President and CEO Theodia Gillespie.

Founded as an academic support group for minority families, TSTM serves students from 6th through 12th grades. Via monthly meetings, TSTM inspires youth to achieve their vision in life through workshops, seminars, guest speakers, job shadowing, academic tutoring and national college tours.

TSTM/PR has an average GPA of 3.6; TSTM students completed over 4,500 hours of community service and received over \$75,000 in scholarships and grants.

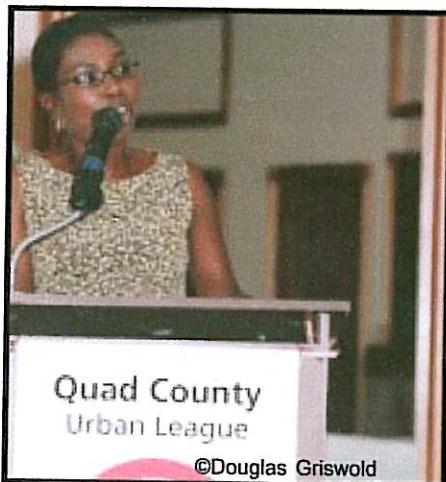
These students are not only the cornerstone of the Urban League movement; they are also key leaders in their schools, churches and communities. "We realize that it is the responsibility of the adults in the community to help young people understand what is required of them to become productive, competitive citizens in the global marketplace," Gillespie concluded.



The graduates and their college gift baskets. Some students also received scholarship awards and book awards.



TSTM seniors (r) perform the annual passing of the torch to the juniors.



Quad County President and CEO Theodia Gillespie thanking students, parents, attendees and corporate sponsors for their support.

TSTM CLASS OF 2008 QUAD COUNTY URBAN LEAGUE



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The TSTM/PR class of 2008 .



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(l-r) Justin Davis, David Swope, Deshon Dixon, Joshua Moor and Carl Bunch revisited the 70s by performing Harold Melvin & Blue Notes classic, 'I Miss You'.



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The teens were kicking up their heels when the banquet ended and dance floor was open.



Kirsten Davis (c), a member of the DuPage County Branch of the NAACP ACT-SO youth organization, won a gold medal in the visual arts category of photography for her region. She will represent DuPage at the national ACT-SO competition in Orlando, Florida at National Convention of the NAACP in July/August. Below, is one of her winning entries. Her exhibit was entitled: "Nuisances of Nature". She is flanked by Justin Davis (left), silver medal and Joy Hamilton (bronze medal).



Sophomore to vie for national honors in NAACP ACT-SO visual arts category

Kirsten Davis, Bolingbrook resident, captured first place at the recent DuPage County NAACP ACT-SO (Academic, Cultural Technological and Scientific Olympics) competition in the visual arts. She won a gold medal for her photography exhibit. Davis, who attends Neuqua Valley, will be one of about 25 teens representing DuPage at the national ACT-SO award competition this summer in Orlando, Florida. ACT-SO was founded in 1978 by renowned author and journalist Vernon Jarrett. ACT-SO provides a forum through which African American youth (grades 9-12) demonstrate academic, artistic and scientific prowess and expertise, often gaining recognition reserved for entertainers and athletes.

ACT-SO programs span most of a year beginning in the fall, followed by planning and coaching of participants through winter months, culminating in

nearly 200 local competitions that run through April. The ACT-SO program is centered around the dedication and commitment of community volunteers and business leaders that serve as mentors and coaches.

Students compete in 25 ACT-SO categories including business, sciences, humanities, performing and visual arts. Music and dramatic performances are a perennial favorite of participants but organizers hope to cultivate growth in the entrepreneurship and science categories in coming years. Major initiatives are being launched to enhance math and science entries that demonstrate young people's analytical and critical thinking abilities.

ACT-SO national winners receive financial awards from major corporations, college internships and apprenticeships. Over the last six years, State Farm Insurance has generously awarded personal computers to all 75 winners



Mario Lambert, second vice-president, DuPage Branch of the NAACP, applauds all the winners.

Famed ACT-SO alumni include musician Kanye West, actress Jada Pinkett-Smith, filmmaker John Singleton and comedian Anthony Anderson.



Chicago's own, Darius Brooks, gospel recording star, was the keynote speaker at the 2008 DuPage County ACT-SO Awards banquet. The event took place on March 15 in Naperville. Brooks also entertained the attendees with his gospel hit, 'Your Will'.

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