

P R O G R E S S

The P.A.R.K.

Donald W. Reynolds Facility

TWELFTH ANNUAL P.A.R.K. GRADUATION & RECOGNITION CEREMONY

By Monique Palmer, Education Outreach Coordinator

As the 2006-2007 school year came to a close, P.A.R.K. was gearing up for its 12th Annual Graduation & Recognition Ceremony! On May 17, 2007, we celebrated 31 seniors as they left the hallowed halls of their respective high schools and the protective folds of Positive Atmosphere Reaches Kids.

This year's ceremony centered on the importance of education and impacting communities. We were delighted to salute a few shining stars of the Little Rock School District faculty as Educator of the Year honorees. They were Mr. Allen Brewer (Mabelvale Magnet Middle School), Ms. Sandra Carter (Parkview Arts and Science Magnet High School) and Ms. Regina Anderson (Horace Mann Magnet Middle School).

Always instilling in our students the importance of giving back, our Volunteer of the Year was a second time winner, Mr. Matthew Vogler.



Whether tutoring in the learning center or playing with kids on the basketball court, Mr. Vogler has truly been an asset to the program.

Mr. Walter E. Hussman, Jr., publisher of the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* and president of the P.A.R.K. Foundation Board was the speaker for the evening. He delivered an inspiring message about Rafe Esquith, an inner-

city school teacher who taught for 25 years in Los Angeles. His students raised their standardized test scores and often headed off to Ivy League colleges after graduation. Mr. Hussman's prevailing theme was for the graduates to go pursue higher education but to think about coming back and helping to build a great community and great schools right here in Little Rock. (cont'd pg. 4)

P.A.R.K. WELCOMES NEW STUDENTS

By Blenda Downs, Curriculum Coordinator

Congratulations to the 86 students who have been selected to participate in the upcoming summer program here at Positive Atmosphere Reaches Kids. P.A.R.K. received over 200 applications from students aspiring to be a part of the program. All of the students were nominated by a counselor or teacher (at their particular school) who knew their academic potential. The students all have been admitted to P.A.R.K. with the goal being to help each student raise their GPA and become part of the top 50%

of their graduating class.

Students were given a reading and math assessment prior to being selected. This assessment helps the staff at P.A.R.K. understand the deficiencies of each student. Those deficiencies are what the staff focuses on to help each one reach their potential and fulfill the purpose of the program. The students and parents were interviewed and asked personal questions to determine whether or not P.A.R.K. is a good fit for the student and the parents. After all the students were interviewed and assessed, the program

staff met for a selection process.

P.A.R.K. was a match for 86 students selected for the summer program. Each student will be tutored in Math, English, Science, Study Skills, Skills Tutor and Spanish. These students will then be given a pre- and post-test. The overall goal is for the students to have a 30% increase from their original assessment. They also have to meet an attendance requirement in order to be eligible to participate in the fall program. Good luck class of 2010 and 2011, and welcome to P.A.R.K.!



P . A . R . K . ' S C L A S S O F 2 0 0 7



Ralph Armstrong
McClellan High School
Will attend Pulaski Techni-
cal College



Chelsea Barker
Mills High School
Will attend: Pulaski Techni-
cal College/Baptist
School of Nursing



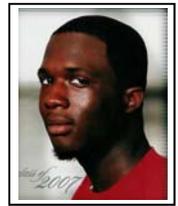
Lastacey Cross
Mills High School
Will attend: Pulaski
Technical College



Brandi Dorsey
Mills High School
Will attend: University
of Arkansas at Little
Rock



Harriet Evans
Mills High School
Will attend: University
of Arkansas at Little
Rock



Matthew Gaines
Parkview High School
Will attend: University of
Arkansas at Fayetteville



Marvin Gilmore
Central High School
Will attend: Ouachita
Baptist University



Jayela Hayes
Mills High School
Will attend Pulaski
Technical College -
Baptist School of Nurs-
ing



Jose Holloway
Central High School
Will attend: Henderson
State University



Marcus Johnson
Central High School
Will attend: Hender-
son State University



Brandon Jones
J.A. Fair High School
Will attend: The
College of Aspiring
Artists



Kalbert Lee
Parkview High School
Will attend Pulaski
Technical College &
Barber College



Brittany McCoy
Mills High School
Will attend: Pulaski
Technical College



Micah McDonald
Mills High School
Will attend: Langston
College



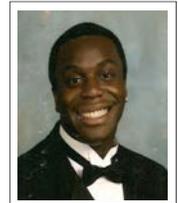
Laquita McPhearson
McClellan High School
Will attend: Grambling
State University



Jazmin Miller
J. A. Fair High School
Will attend: Pulaski
Technical College -
Baptist School of



Christine Morgan
Central High School
Will attend: Arkansas
Baptist College



Darvin Mosley
Joe T. Robinson H.S.
Will attend: University of
Arkansas at Pine Bluff



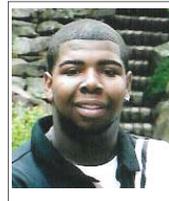
Wayne Olive
Hall High School
Will attend: University
of Arkansas at Little
Rock



Brandon Smith
Central High School
Will attend: Arkansas
State University



Leon Smith
Parkview High School
Will attend: University
of Arkansas at Pine
Bluff



Jason Thomas
Mills High School
Will attend: University
of Arkansas at Pine
Bluff



Deniko Wallace
Central High School
Will attend: Pulaski
Technical College



Bianca Williams
Parkview High School
Will attend Henderson
State University



Jeremy Brooks, Rodrick Davenport, Devon Givens, Jaime Henderson, Tariq Norris



In a previous newsletter I wrote a story called, "A Gift Before Going Home."

It was about a wonderful man by the name of Russell Matchett. The premise of the story was Mr. Matchett and his wife Billie stopped by P.A.R.K. on the way to the hospital. Russell told me he was going to donate some money to P.A.R.K. and he wanted to keep his word. He would give me the gift in person and then go on to the hospital where he went home to be with the Lord. ***What a gift before going home!***

Recently his wife of 53 years went home to be with the Lord also. Billie Matchett was a woman's woman. She had her own personality. She was a woman who cared about her community, spending countless hours volunteering at the

thrift store and soup kitchen with Friendly Chapel Church's Bro. Paul Holderfield's mother Barbara. She was a loving mother to her three children, Rusty, Suzanne and Michael, mother-in-law and grandmother to her grandkids.

Mrs. Matchett loved her husband! She would say, "I miss him, or you think the Lord is going to let me kiss him when I see him." She would often pull out his love letters and read them. Some, she admitted she had to "put in the ice box to cool them off." Those letters came when Russell was defending our country in WWII.

Bro. Paul Holderfield did an eloquent job on the eulogy entitled, "A Love Story." Russell & Billie Matchett were a great example of what a husband and wife relationship

should be like.

Billie Matchett also loved the Lord. When she felt she was slipping away, she wanted to see certain people and I was blessed to be one of the individuals. I had the chance to witness something simple that would stick with me for the rest of my life. Billie called Bro. Paul and told him that more than anything she wanted to have communion. Communion is when Christians recognize the body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. That would be the last Supper!

Why is this story so important? Russell Matchett gave an offering before going to heaven. Billie Matchett had communion before going to heaven. ***What a way to put a comma on a Love Story! What a way to go through those Gates. Amen.***

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

By Melanie Jackson, Community Affairs Coordinator

Kudos once again to Dr. Keith Jackson. On May 5, 2007, Lyon College in Batesville awarded Keith with an Honorary Doctorate. He received a Doctor of Humane Letters degree.

Lyon College bestowed the honor upon Keith not for his athletic accomplishments, but for the hard work, dedication, time, and finances

he has given toward making a difference in the lives of today's youth. Helping kids realize their potential and fulfilling a goal (going to college) never thought of before, is what makes Keith Jackson and P.A.R.K. stand out among others.

In 2004, Ouachita Baptist University awarded Keith with his first Honorary Doc-

torate. He received his Doctor of Humanities degree the same day P.A.R.K.'s first college graduate, Rachel Williams, received her Bachelor of Arts degree.

Both of these occasions have been rewarding experiences for Keith, yet like the Bible says in Luke, 6:38, "give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure,

pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Dr. Dr. Jackson is reaping from all he has sown over the last sixteen years.

Congratulation!

P.A.R.K. Foundation Board

Walter E. Hussman, Jr., President
 Margie Duncan, Secretary
 Bob Althoff
 Gus Blass, III
 William (Bill) Cravens
 Merritt Dyke
 Dora Jane Flesher
 Jeff Fox
 Jim Harris
 Jay Heflin
 Carmie Henry
 Jeff Johnson
 Chris Ligon
 Russ McDonough, III
 Sonya Mendelsohn
 J.D. Simpson, III
 Bud Whetstone
 Alonzo Williams, M.D.
 Andrew Turner, Emeritus

P.A.R.K. Inc. Board

Keith Jackson, President
 Estel Jeffery, Jr., Chair
 Stephanie Johnson, Secretary
 Junious Babbs
 Gus Blass, III
 David Coombs
 Mark Fortune
 Andrew Harper
 Schawnee Hightower
 Colette Honorable
 Melanie Jackson
 Mark Leverett
 Evangeline Parker
 Dwayne Stuart
 Wes Sutton
 Andrew Turner, Emeritus

WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.POSITIVEKIDS.ORG

A Celebration to Remember

By Melanie Jackson
 Community Outreach Coordinator



Keith, Meri Love, Nancy & Estel Jeffrey

With a lei around his neck and straw hat on his head, Keith Jackson greeted board members and donors to his birthday/donor appreciation party. The festivities, which had an island theme, took place April 26, 2007, at The Women's City Club. Invitations were luggage tags with a map of The Caribbean Islands asking invitees to "Come Island Hopping With Us!"

Those in attendance were treated to an island delight filled with food, fun and dancing to *Integrity*, a Temp-

tation, Four Top like group that had even the birthday boy up on his feet.



Darrell & Lisa Walker



As a sweet treat for all, a five-tiered birthday cake with a different flavor for each tier was brought out. Each tier represented some of the most memorable moments in P.A.R.K.'s history. Estel Jeffrey, Walter Hussman, J.D. Simpson and Melanie Jackson

refreshed everyone on the vision and incorporation, the pilot group, the Donald W. Reynolds grant and the first college graduate. Keith topped it off with P.A.R.K.'s new endeavor, a \$10,000,000 endowment to secure the future of P.A.R.K.



Party Mark & Shay Fortune

go - ers had a great time island hopping, with food any authentic islander would be pleased with. The party was deemed a huge success and continues to be a topic of conversation for those able to attend.

Graduation

cont'd from pg.1

college out of state. They will be enrolled at Langston College and the University of Tulsa. This year's class brings our total number of graduates from the program to 163!

As these young people enter the world seeking to forge their own niche in their communities, we hope that they will continue to carry with them all the memories made, lessons learned, and seeds sown at Positive Atmosphere Reaches Kids!

CLASS OF 2007 WE LOVE YOU!



Walter Hussman, Jr.

President Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

P.A.R.K.'s largest graduating class to date will be heading off to some fine Arkansas institutions of higher learning in the fall. Students will be going to the University of Arkansas, Little Rock; the University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff; Henderson State University; the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Arkansas Baptist College; Ouachita Baptist University and Pulaski Technical College. Two students that will be attending

STUDENT OF THE YEAR REPRESENTS P.A.R.K. WELL



Marvin Gilmore came to P.A.R.K. five years ago as a shy, withdrawn 1.75 GPA student who lacked motivation. He graduated as this year's Student of the Year. How did he

make such a dramatic turnaround?

"Marvin is a good example of what Positive Atmosphere Reaches Kids is all about," explained Community Outreach Coordinator, Melanie Jackson. "It's about change of attitude, self-motivation and better grades. That shy, withdrawn kid changed not only his attitude, but also his GPA!"

Through his determination, Marvin graduated from Central High School, with a 3.37 GPA and will attend Ouachita Baptist University next year on a P.A.R.K.-secured scholarship.

This determined, persistent, persevering, tenacious, unfaltering and unwavering young man is well on his way to his goal of being the first African American trillionaire.

As Student of the Year, Marvin received a laptop computer with a printer donated by ClearPointe Technology, Inc. to get his college entrance off to a great start. He also received a plaque from P.A.R.K.

Congratulations, Marvin Gilmore, P.A.R.K.'s 2007 Student of the Year.

MICHAEL WOODS

Assistant to the President



As a former P.A.R.K. volunteer, Michael Woods found it easy to step into a staff position, serving as Keith Jackson's assistant. Keeping up with Keith Jackson's scheduling is a full-time job in itself, but the position also involves fielding phone calls, helping with correspondence, assisting with staff interaction, and whatever else he's called on to do.

Woods' former jobs and life experiences have given him the tools he uses as part of the P.A.R.K. family. Having served in the ministry, he assists in Bible studies and planning. Being the first in his family to graduate college (with a Bachelor of Arts degree in organizational management from Philander Smith College) he understands the value of a good education, and as a former realtor he does an excellent job of "selling" P.A.R.K. to all who come in contact with his positive attitude.

Woods, father of Tia, Joshua, and Samiah, set three goals for himself in 2004: to be married in 2005, to be debt free, and to be reacquainted with ministry at a more challenging level. Having married his wife, Tonia, in November, 2005, he met the first goal and is well on his way to the other two. Likening his beliefs to a country song (music he grew up listening to), Woods said, "I love God, family, and people." That's a winning combination for working at P.A.R.K.!

Trading Spaces – Parking Spaces That Is

By Michael Woods, Assistant to the President



P.A.R.K. can finally see the light at the end of the paved tunnel. Some may recall Keith's 40th birthday celebration as being a fundraiser for a new parking lot at P.A.R.K. The money raised from the fundraiser went toward the purchase of two lots on the corner of Geyer Springs Road and Browning Road (same side as the facility).

The long awaited parking lot is in the completion stage. Friends and guests will be able to park closer to the facility without crossing the busy thoroughfare as in past years. With the concern for patrons who walked across the street, P.A.R.K. thought it necessary to purchase the available lots.

The parking lot will encompass 48 parking spaces and be enclosed with an iron rod fence with brick columns. Donors, patrons and visitors will be able to enjoy a stroll through the beautiful P.A.R.K. park as they make their way from the parking lot to the facility.

Thank you to all who donated to such a much needed cause.

My Experience at P.A.R.K.

By Chelsea Barker, 2007 P.A.R.K. Graduate

My experience at P.A.R.K. has been a mind blowing one. If I could describe P.A.R.K. in one word it would be "spectacular." P.A.R.K. has helped me come a long way in five years by not just teaching me to excel in academics but in life.

When you come to P.A.R.K. you feel like family and not an outcast. The staff at P.A.R.K. is like your best friends if you get to know them and don't get on their bad side. When you're away from home and you come to P.A.R.K. you should feel like you're at home because its just like a home away from home.

P.A.R.K. does not play when it comes to academics; either you're on the ball or off. When your grades are good at P.A.R.K. you never know what you will be rewarded with. If your grades are bad, the only things you will be rewarded with are a pencil, paper, and a book in "Skill Builders" group. Academics are not the only things P.A.R.K. students concentrate on; they also concentrate on respect for yourself and others. If you let them, P.A.R.K. staff will make your life and high school a whole lot easier.

I have gained so much from P.A.R.K. I don't know where to begin. I know that I can say the first day I introduced myself to Mr. Jackson I told myself "Wow he is big, I'm not ever getting in trouble." I did not want to deal with him. I learned a lot from how to deal with boys to how to excel on the ACT at school. I just want to say if you don't think P.A.R.K. is the place you want your child to be, you are dead wrong. It has made a tremendous difference in my life.



6915 Geyer Springs Road
Little Rock, AR 72209

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Little Rock, AR
Permit No. 1741

