



Black Male Development Symposium Fact Sheet

History: BMDS Historical Overview

The Black Male Development Symposium was initiated by the leadership of Chicago's Third World Press, one of the oldest African-American publishing houses in the United States. The venue was established as a national tour that promoted community discussions on the plight of African American Males (AAM). The symposiums were held in Chicago, IL; Columbus, Oh; Detroit, MI; Harlem, NY; St. Louis, MO; Birmingham, AL; Atlanta, GA; Minneapolis, MN; Memphis, TN, and Little Rock, AK. The first Philadelphia symposium was held March 2004 as the community outreach project of the Annual Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education. The attendance at the first symposium was expected to be 300-400 attendees. Those numbers were surpassed with well over 700 attendees. The simple adage "*If you build it they will come,*" continues to drive the attendance numbers of the symposium that now boasts well over 1100 attendees during the annual event. It must be noted that the Philadelphia symposium, to date, is the longest running and the largest attended BMDS event nationally. This is due to the continued and overwhelming support that the event has received every year and the sad and inescapable truth that AAM live at great risk and they, their families and communities are eagerly searching for strategies of survival and empowerment. The Symposium provides a forum for practical solutions by providing presenters and interactive workshops to assist attendees in developing realistic strategies and concrete recommendations that they can put into practice in their respective communities. The BMDS becomes a place of finding practical models of solutions and not just a forum for pontification and "drive-by conversation." BMDS is currently a non-profit organization under the auspices of The Village Builders Resource Network, with Dr. Doreen E. Loury as the Executive Director/Founder.

Who attends?

Students: The largest student group (69%) over the last five years has been African American males 12-15 years of age with the 16-18 age group ranking second at (18%). The largest ethnic group represented has been African Americans (88%) and Latinos at (7%). The largest single grade group has been 8th graders representing (29%) and high school students grades 9-12 the highest attending group at (33%). Participants have come from various neighborhoods in the city and surrounding suburban areas. In rank order (1) Olney/West Oak Lane, (2)Southwest/Germantown, (3) West Philadelphia and (4) Lower North Philadelphia. (Students from the Tri-State areas and DC and Maryland have also attended)

Adults: The attendees run the spectrum of occupations with the top three being: (1) Educators, (2) Social Workers and (3) Non-profit program managers.

Pathways/Workshops

The symposium offers workshops under five distinct areas or Pathways that are presented by individuals/groups who were selected through a national competitive call for papers process. The

Pathways: Reclaiming the Black Male Image, Educate to Elevate, Family and Relationships, Health, Wellness and Spirituality and Strategies & Techniques in Service Delivery to African American Males are designed for potential speakers to share their expertise and best practice strategies. Each workshop presents a 90 minute presentation and has a distinctive set of issues that are to be addressed during the presenter's session. The Symposium offers three distinct formats for presenters to share knowledge and experience that facilitates participant learning: 1) individual sessions, 2) panel sessions and 3) interactive/experiential/performance based sessions.

The symposium offers a total of 30-40 workshops presented concurrently during the morning and afternoon sessions. The various workshops are divided into the five distinct topic areas or Pathways as outlined above. A Middle School Institute (MIS) is offered with workshops that more closely meets the needs of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. These workshops are designed to inform attendees with best practices, programming and strategies that are physiological, psychological and cognitively appropriate for middle school students. Facilitators presenting to this target population have years of experience with this age group and provide workshops that are both informative and engaging for students, parents and practitioners.

The Middle School Institute Workshops offerings have been: Rising to the Occasion: Sports, Hip Hop, and Images of Black Youth, Historical Bling Bling vs Bling Bling 2007, Managing the Corner and the Classroom, Turning Hoop Dreams Into a Business Plan, Am I My Brother's Keeper, Black Identity in Hip-Hop, and The Black Male Teenager Survival Kit

Health Fair

The Symposium provides a Health Fair targeting the needs of African American Men and organizations provide blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol screenings and HIV rapid testing. Agencies have included Arcadia University's Student Health Services, Abington Memorial Hospital's Community Health Office, and St. Christopher's Hospital HIV Services.

Literary Pavilion

One of the major components of the symposium is the Author's Pavilion which has hosted authors who also present workshops. Local and national authors over the years have included: Hill Harper, Dr. Randall Pinkett, Patrick Oliver, Salome Thomas-El, Solomon Jones, Mister Mann Frisby, Dr. Carlton Payne, Valerie Harrison, Sheron Smith, Eric Grimes, Spark Bookhart, Eric Grimes, and Felicia Pride just to name a few. Each attendee receives, as part of their registration, a book in their packet from one of the Pavilion authors and is able to meet with them for book signings during the course of the symposium. Additionally, all books are on display and available for sale as well as books supplied by Third World Press, Say It Loud and Invision Publications.

Registration Cost

The symposium over the last six years has not increased the cost of its registration: Students (\$25) and Adults (\$45). The cost includes lunch, materials, a book from one of the featured authors, t-shirt and a one year membership to the Philadelphia African American Museum. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and Act 48 Hours are provided by Arcadia University's College of Graduate Studies.