

Higher Ground

VOLUME I, ISSUE VI

SPECIAL FALL EDITION

REACHING FOR THE ZENITH



As the sun climbed to reach it's highest point in the sky, marking the beginning of summer with the solstice, the UMKC Upward Bound Summer Academy also embarked on its course to make distinguishing marks by illuminating the lives and minds of its forty high school participants. And just as the convener writes "for every matter there is an appointed time, even a time for every pursuit under the heavens," this harvest of students dedicated their summer to self discovery in their pursuit of higher education.

In preparation for the Summer Academy, Ms. El-Scari and Mr. Long extensively covered the rules, regulations and expectations for the forty designated students, of which thirty-one were new participants in Upward Bound. The Summer Academy Orientation was also an opportunity for students and their parents to not only meet the instructors, the residential and administrative staffs, but to also ask

any pressing questions.

The UB Summer Academy has undergone many programmatic changes. Besides the new faces of the student participants, this summer brought with it new staff members, both core curriculum and enrichment instructors, as well as a new residential staff. The administrative staff was extremely excited about the promise and the hopeful longevity of the core curriculum staff which consisted of English instructor **Ms. Stacey Jacks**, a recent UMKC graduate; Math and Science instructor **Mr. Brewel Currie**, also a recent UMKC graduate; Social Science instructor **Mr. Joe Plese**, a KU graduate who has taught in the Shawnee Mission School District; Computer Science instructor **Mr. Christopher Fitzcharles**, a retired Navy Officer and Columbia (Mo.) University graduate; Foreign Language instructor **Dr. Emmanuel Sowemimo**, a former Political Science professor

for UMKC and now CEO of the *David Wright Institute for African Studies*; and the Bridge group's Western Civilization Visual Supplemental Instruction instructor **Mr. Tony O'Bryan**, a UMKC graduate who has taught in the *Center for Academic Development's Supplemental Instruction* program. All of the instructors committed their time and efforts to bringing out the inner greatness of each student.

Also, to offer the students a holistic perspective to education, **Ms. Karen Schuyler**, founder and CEO of *Creative Balance Yoga Center* in Mission, Kansas, instructed the UBers in both Yoga and Aerobics, and 10th degree black belt **Grand Master "Seiko" Charles Carter** taught self-defense and Martial Arts for the six week program. Overall, the Summer Academy offered the student many challenges, enlightening them to the ways of higher education and preparing them to make strides towards the zenith.

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Have To Give Them Credit

Resulting from a concerted but laborious effort by the Upward Bound *Parent Advisory Council*, spearheaded by **Ms. Brenda Wofford** (parent of 2004 UB graduate **Isaac Brooks**) and the Upward Bound Administrative staff, directed by **Ms. Natasha Ria El-Scari**, the Upward Bound program entered into a contractual agreement with the *Kansas City Missouri School District* (KCMSD) in order to provide the Summer Academy participants with an academic credit.

For the first time in UMKC Upward Bound history, students from this year forward will obtain the same opportunity to acquire the incentives that students who attend summer school with the KCMSD receive. In addition to the elective credit, Upward Bounders will also earn the summer school incentive sponsored by the state which gives students up to \$160 for achieving academic success and maintaining perfect attendance.

Collaborating with the KCMSD has provided the UMKC Upward Bound Summer Academy participants with many advantages, which the students will directly benefit from on many levels. Thanks to the efforts of **Ms. Sugar Lee Lewis** and her wonderful staff, our students will receive tangible rewards from attending the Summer Academy as well as the intangibles that they have been receiving prior to this landmark collaboration. Keep moving forward Upward Bound!

Stimulate the Mind

There was an on-going joke amongst the students this summer that “Mr. Long uses too many big words when he speaks with us!” But when he hosted a Poetry/Creative Writing workshop during this year’s MO-KAN-NE Student Leadership Conference, hosted by Avila University, the students had an opportunity to witness Mr. Long at his finest. The name of the workshop that Mr. Long hosted was called *So You Want To Be A Poet?* During the session, Mr. Long, who is a founding member of the spoken word organization *Urban Literation*, detailed the writing process, the different genres of poetry, what spoken word poetry is, and shared a couple of

his works with the students. After sharing one of his poems, which is entitled *Cultivation*, the UB students coined a phrase from a line in the poem that says “I hibernate to medicate & cultivate the mind, then meditate to elevate & reveal divine designs of the sublime to recognize the signs of time then generate the living light to radiate & heal the blind eye...” As a result of the poem, every time Mr. Long was about to address the students during the Academy, they made reference to the poem stating, “come on you all, we need to stimulate the mind...” The workshop was also an opportunity for the students to write creatively as well as to hear

the poetry of others as the students had an opportunity to share their work with one another. Students were given a specific topic of which the participants had the creativity to write about anything that related to the topic that was given, which at the end of the workshop, students volunteered to read their writings. Overall, the workshop was a success as the students who participated in the workshop stated that they gained a new, in-depth look into poetry and how it can be used to not only express one’s self, but also to affect change. So UB, keep reading, keep writing and keep stimulating the mind!

The Life of an Upward Bound Student

For high school aged students the typical summer might include getting a job, a session or two of summer school, kicking it with friends and heavy doses of television, which is nothing like the case for the forty students who attended the UMKC Upward Bound residential Summer Academy! Imagine being on your own, away from home, sharing a dorm room with no television, no phone, mandatory study hours, regular classes and (according to them) five resident assistants “breathing down your neck!”



Sounds hectic right? Well guess what, **it is!** Because that’s exactly what the life of an Upward Bound student entails, college preparation, which is nothing to take lightly. The administrative and summer residential staff take very seriously the life of an Upward Bound student during the five week session of the Summer Academy. Intent on building students, scholars, intelligentsia and the leaders of tomorrow, the structure and rigor of the

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Sacred Circle: Native American Pow Wow

Drumming; dancing; singing; contests; culture; fun!!! Those are just a few words to describe Haskell University’s Upward Bound Annual Native American Pow Wow. It was one of those experiences that the students of UMKC UB wished that they could do again and again. It was a day filled with activities that involved everyone who attended the event. Upward Bound Programs from all over the



Missouri & Kansas region came out to witness what takes place at a Pow Wow. A dance contest was held according to age groups, as well as an open dance contest which our own **Dominique Bailey** placed second. There were also traditional Native American meals served there. All in all, the UBers of UMKC enjoyed themselves & look forward to another one next year.

Words from Resident Director: Kelley Kimple

My experience in the Upward Bound Summer Academy this year was, in one word, busy. It's not an easy task to watch out for 40 high school students for an extended period of time, while taking summer classes, but it is rewarding in a meaningful way. The various personalities and attitudes amongst the staff and students made the summer challenging, but also a highly learning experience.

There were definitely highs and lows throughout the summer, but one of the best things about the students were their hidden talents. I was amazed at all the poets, singers, dancers, hair stylists, nail technicians, musicians, and athletes that were a part of this program.



2004 Upward Bound
Summer Academy
Resident Director **Kelley Kimple**

I was happy to see that Ms. El-Scari and Mr. Long were able to provide opportunities for the students to immerse themselves in rich cultural experiences that they, more than likely, wouldn't normally have access to.

I hope that through and after it all, the students were able to gain a realistic outlook of what college life can be like. By being a resource to the students, the staff wanted to give them advice on what they needed to do, while also informing them of the mistakes that we have made so that they could avoid repeating them. If given the opportunity to be the Resident Director again for the Upward Bound Summer Academy, I most definitely would!

Discussion with the Drive Time Diva

Drive Time Diva **Ms. Deloris Jones** of KMJK 107.3 returned to the Upward Bound Summer Academy this year to let the students know what *keeping it real* is all about. On June 17, the nationally known radio personality gave of her time and energy to have a heart to heart with the participants of the Summer Academy. Last year, Ms. Jones spoke to the students about the concept of a healthy body image which was a workshop set up by UMKC graduate student **Heather Davidson**. Because Ms. Jones was so well received

by the students last year, she was asked to come back and break some more stuff down for the students. This summer, Ms. Jones' message was much the same; encouraging students to always maintain an optimistic outlook on life despite the situations and issues that may be present. Using her personal story as an example of how to overcome adversity, she spoke to the students of disappointment, heartache, frustration and obstacles that attempt to distract people from achieving their goals. When asked

what her motivating force was in the midst of her trials, she stated that her faith, first in God, then in her self, has allowed for her to overcome any struggle that has come her way. She told the students that if they were to remember anything during this time that they shared together, they should remember that "nothing is impossible as long as you set your mind to the task." The Upward Bound students then presented Ms. Jones with a signed UB T-Shirt and thanked her for time and words. Thank you diva Jones!

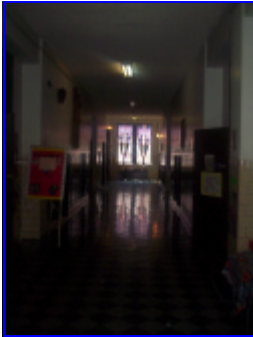
The Bridge Over the Waters

With the instruction of **Mr. Tony O'Bryan**, UBers **Elyse Davis**, **Sycil Proffit**, **Kyrstal Purnell**, **Frances Ross**, and **Samuel Thompson** received an opportunity to earn their first dual credit Summer Academy course. The students had an opportunity to get an in-depth look into the civilizations and cultures that have influenced contemporary civilization. For the first time this past summer, the Bridge component of

the Summer Academy included rising seniors, as well as the recent graduates. The course, which had five student participants, offered the students a challenge and lessons in history. Also for the first time, the students who completed the class received not only the college credits that were available, but also a high school credit which counted towards an Advanced History unit. Enduring the fires of the Center for Academic

Developments Visual Supplemental Instruction Western Civilization and Critical and Analytical Thinking course was indeed a mission, and of the five, only two, **Krystal and Sycil**, received the maximum dual college and high school credit. Though the students who took part in the course faced different challenges, the fact that the students finished the course is truly a great achievement. Congratulations students!!!

Reward Trip in Pictures



Closing Ceremony In Pictures



Tales from the Windy City

Once upon a time ten UMKC Upward Bound students were selected and taken to Chicago, Illinois for the 2004 Summer Academy annual *Reward Trip* for their exceptional behavior and successful academic accomplishments over the six week course. While in the Windy City, **Cordell Anderson, Elyse Davis, Ashley Johnson, Ryan Lee, Shelonta McAfee, Brittney Nave, Clinique Outland, Sycil Proffitt, Krystal Purnell and Frances Ross** were exposed to educational, cultural and recreational activities and sites. Accompanied by Ms. El-Scari and Mr. Long, the trip began with an eight hour bus ride from Kansas City to the City of Wind. Along the way, they met a wonderful bus driver who took good care of each and every passenger aboard for the trip. His name was **Joe Turner**.

Upon arriving in Chicago, the first day entailed two college tours to *Chicago State University* and *Northeastern Illinois University*. Interestingly, the schools share a historical and educational connection in that they were both founded with an emphasis in producing Educators; CSU serving as the city's southern campus, and NIU as the city's northern campus. Being that the schools are strong in Education as

Majors, the two main features that the schools offer are the *Gwendolyn Brooks Writing Center* at CSU and the *Center for Inner City Studies* at NIU. Both centers have received acclaim and have been instrumental to both Universities appeal to students of color and those interested in making a difference somehow, someday.

Later on that day, students also had the opportunity to see Chicago from a bird's eye view; traveling to one of the world's highest structures, the *Sears Tower*. With a breathtaking view of four states from above, the Sears Tower is an attraction that tourists from the world over come to visit. Truly a magnificent piece of architecture, the Upward Bounders received a historical perspective of the tower from a film that was played before actually traveling up the elevator to the top of the tower.

To conclude that day, the Ubers ate dinner at Joe's Be-Bop Café on the famous Navy Pier and had the chance to hear a live three piece band play on stage for a brief moment. Rising sophomore **Ryan Lee** was completely fascinated by the drummer that was on stage and held a brief conversation with him.

The next day, which held for the students the major cultural activities, as well as the recreational component, was filled with wonder and information. Beginning the day at Third World Press Publishing Company (TWP), the largest Black owned publishing press in the nation, the Ubers got a tour of the facility as well as the opportunity to meet **Haki Madhabuti**, founder and CEO of TWP. Encouraging the students to continue their education and remember all that their ancestors had sacrificed and experienced for the future generations, Mr. Madhabuti challenged the students to always seek excellence. He also signed books for all of the students and staff. Following the tour of TWP, the students then went to the **Jean Baptiste du Sable Museum of African American History** where they received a short seminar on the founder and first settler of Chicago, **Jean Baptiste du Sable**, a Haitian man who was an explorers explorer. With information coming at the students left and right throughout the course of the summer, the museum provided an excellent opportunity for the students to let it all marinate as they witnessed an incredible array of artifacts that showed the

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Life continued

program is a definite adjustment for the students. But it is this type of preparation that will allow each student who participates in the Summer Academy to make an easier passage and conversion from high school to college. A regular day in the life of an Upward Bounder consists of core curriculum classes from Monday to Thursday, 8:00 am to 2:30 pm which included

Math, English, Science, Social Science, Computer Science and Foreign Language. In addition to the core curriculum courses, Ubers were also involved in Yoga and Martial Arts on Friday's. The philosophy of the administration was to expose the students to many different disciplines with hopes of instilling a stable structure and solid system for their personal lives. This methodology that the

Administrative Staff has implemented within the program was with hopes of student adaptation and integration of the structure which will carry over in to their personal and academic lives. The overall structure of the Summer Academy is to provide the students with a simulated college experience so that when the students transition from high school to college, it will be a smooth progression for them.

Senior Achievement: Got To Give It Up

For the 2003-2004 school year, the UMKC Upward Bound Program graduated seven seniors! Of those seven seniors, three of them, namely **Bulaine Alexis**, **Tameka Fulson** and **Joy Holliday** decided to attend the *University of Missouri-Kansas City*, which serves as the host institute for the Upward Bound program. Of the four other students, **Arthur Lewis** is attending the *University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff*; **Sycil Proffitt** and **Juaquan Herron** are attending *Southwest Missouri State University* and **Isaac Brooks** is attending *Penn Valley Community College* after spending a summer session with Juaquan Herron at SWMSU.

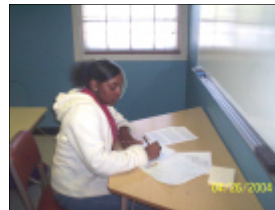
Of the classes that have graduated from Upward Bound, this class has produced the largest number of students to attend UMKC. However, as one of the smallest seniors classes that UMKC's Upward Bound has had in the past couple of years, this crop of students, however, was not short of talent and hard work. Taking advantage of Senior Seminar, which is spearheaded by Ms. El-Scari with the support of **Ms. Regina Lastiee**, the services offered the students throughout the course of the academic year are truly remarkable, allowing the students to see how the efforts that they made paid off in the end. Spending hours on



Bulaine Alexis



Joy Holliday



Tameka Fulson



Sycil Proffitt & Juaquan Herron



Arthur Lewis



Isaac Brooks

composing both their academic resume and personal essay, these students meticulously went through revision after revision to ensure that the final product was of Upward Bound caliber work. The lessons that these students learned throughout their years in the Upward Bound program, coupled with their experiences and insights gained in their everyday life, was hopefully the foundation needed for them to begin their first step to independence and self-sufficiency.

In the words of Harry Banks, "the secret of success is the consistency to pursue." This is exactly what the senior students experienced this past academic year, after being denied certain scholarships and acceptance into some schools of their choice. Though they experienced frustration and disappointment, they continued to persevere and eventually get the monies needed to attend the school that would fit their academic, professional and social pursuits. So be assured, college preparation is not for the faint of heart. Without a doubt, the most stressful of all the four years of high school is the senior year.; full of deadlines, decisions and dues. The life of a senior is one to truly reckon with and recognize with congratulatory appraisal once completed. Congratulations seniors!

Windy City Cont'd

students the rich heritage of African American people.

The final event for the trip was an evening spent at Six Flags over Chicago. The ten students had the chance to expend all of the energy that they had amassed over the course of the two days while at the world famous theme park.

Each night, after returning from the days events, the Ubers had

to give three reflections on the days events; covering interesting facts that they learned throughout the course of the day, events that stood out or interested them, something that they never experienced before, or something that they felt could have been just a little bit better. Overall, the trip was truly a memorable experience and one for the students that attended to cherish. The universities, as well as the cultural

events, provided the students with an excellent perspective into what to look for in a city and school when the time comes for them to make their decision to continue their education post-secondarily. With future reward trips, I'm sure that this one, despite the brevity of it, will be one that these ten students will recommend again and again in the City of Wind.



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Note:
The Upward Bound Student Application is now available on-line at:
www.umkc.edu/cad/ub.

ALSO VIEW THIS EDITION AND OTHERS
ON-LINE AT:
WWW.UMKC.EDU/CAD/UB

Director's Cut

by Natasha Ria El-Scari

Greetings from Upward Bound! I was so excited to spend my 5th summer with the UMKC UB Program as a member of the staff. As the Project Director, I have a personal passion to meet all the goals of the students and parents. Our accomplishments include the partnership with the Kansas City Missouri School District so that all the participants of the UMKC UB Program receive high school credit for attending Summer Academy. The course was entitled College Seminar and counts as one elective credit. Bridge students received dual credit and a weighted grade in Advanced Western Civilization.

All of this was the culmination of hard work from both the parents and students.

I am also extremely proud of all our 2004 graduates. While there was a small class, only seven this year, they have truly upheld the ideals of TRiO. Not to be outdone by the success of the students, Mr. Long has recently self-published his first book of poetry entitled, "Davar's Nu World Dictionary", please join me in celebrating his success. I have also returned to school to continue coursework towards my Master's degree at a slow but steady pace. Upward Bound is also happy and sad to see

Ms. Kim Sevedge, the Administrative Assistant resign from her duties. Kim has accepted a position at a marketing firm and is fulfilling her dream of building her career in her field. Although she will be missed, we are extremely excited for her. Replacing Ms. Kim is Ms. Shaunyel Brown of Kansas City, MO. Ms. Brown, a perfect fit in the setting of Upward Bound, actually graduated from Paseo Academy, one of our target schools. Parents, students and staff, please assist me in welcoming her. That's all for now, let's get started on a great academic year and prepare for Higher Ground!!