

Education Conference Tackles Parenting

The Black Parent Initiative held its second annual Breaking the Cycle conference about education, parenting and supporting the next generation to be successful academically and in life.

The conference was held at Concordia College in North Portland and included workshops by local and national experts: Phillip Jackson of The Black Star project in Chicago; Dr. Andrae Brown of Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling; author and counselor Dr. Johnny Parker; Dr. Joy

Dr. Parker presented his five building blocks for a healthy relationship: Integrity, Nurture, Honor, Humility, and Commitment.

The building blocks apply to all kinds of relationships, parent-child relationships as well as life partners, for example. All relationships need that foundation of integrity and honesty, because without integrity you can't build trust.

He quoted H. Jackson Browne, saying, "Live so that when your children think of fairness and

"You have to know how people want to be nurtured because people are different."

He pointed out the classic sex difference, that may not apply to everyone, but fits for many: men usually don't like to talk for the sake of talking unless there is a goal or reason, whereas women are more likely to want to talk about daily ups and downs.

"We talk more when we are doing something with you," he told the women present.

The brick of honor involves appreciation and respect for one another and also keeping trust alive by demonstrating trustworthiness. The brick of humility means recognizing your own weaknesses as well as your strengths, and respecting that your partner, children and colleagues have strengths that exceed yours in some areas.

"I think we all have a sweet spot," he said. "God has wired us all differently so we all have different strengths."

The brick of commitment means continuing to look for ways to enrich your relationships. "What are your challenges? How can you improve?"

Open and warm, Dr. Parker and his wife Lezlyn, who also contributed to the workshop, talked about the benefits of living in a



LaRonn Arnold with Dr. Andrae Brown

supportive community and the strength they draw from their church. He mentioned the 300 project, where 300 people commit to a positive activity for a month. One month, 300 men in their church made a commitment to appreciate women. A simple idea, yet the results were powerful, he said.

At the final wrap up session, Dr.

Jawanza Kunjufu, expanded on his earlier address by answering audience questions. Focusing on the experience of Black boys in education he said the most important grades are kindergarten, 4th grade and 9th grade. "Our boys are still academically competitive in the early years," he said. "For some reason the long longer that our children are in the school sys-

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'You have to know how people want to be nurtured because people are different'

-- Dr. Johnny Parker

DeGruy of Portland State University; Dr. Stephanie Irby-Coard; Christopher James of the Black Fatherhood project; and Tinal Marie Glover. The keynote speaker was Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu.

The Skanner News dropped in on two sessions: Dr Johnny Parker's session on Healthy Relationships and co-parenting; and Dr Kunjufu's wrap-up sess

integrity they think of you."

In an interactive discussion with audience members, Dr. Parker explained that any relationship needs attention and time. And he emphasized the different ways people feel nurtured in a relationship.

"You have to understand how your kids are different and how they like to be nurtured," he said.



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