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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT  
1995-1996

FOR

THE NATIONAL URBAN COALITION  
SAY YES TO A YOUNGSTER'S FUTURE™

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA  
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR ENERGY AWARENESS  
FAMILY LEARNING CENTERS

Submitted To  
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MASTER

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**SAY YES TO A YOUNGSTER'S FUTURE™**

**FINAL QUARTERLY TECHNICAL REPORT  
NOVEMBER 1995 TO AUGUST 1996**

**FROM  
THE NATIONAL URBAN COALITION  
TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

**PREFACE**

**BY  
Belhia V. Martin-Ross, J.D.  
Project Director  
Say YES To A Youngster's Future™**

**"Survival and Beyond"**

Those persons more greatly affected negatively by social violence have often survived circumstances which seemed insurmountable to others in society, who are better isolated economically and socially from social ills. Such is the case of the young students and their families in the West Las Vegas, Nevada community. This year's Say YES Family Learning Center began in the midst of drive-by shootings, fear and apprehension on the part of both Say YES staff members and their clients.

Meetings were held with community leaders and parents. Not much was done to resolve the core problems that caused the shootings, but just the communal gathering and sharing was enough to move on, to keep working, trying to make a difference for the younger generation.

Though the NUC and Department of Energy administrators and support staff did their best at trying to reconcile the many differences and conflicts, tension continued to characterize the work at the Las Vegas Family Learning Centers. The staff appeared distrustful of any delays or inaction due to the "frozen" finances of the United States government, and of the resulting cutbacks. Inclement weather in the nation's capital did not help an already strained program.

Still children and their parents and/or adult assistants learned Hands-On Family Math, Science, and Technology the Say YES way. The veteran Family Learning Center staff worked diligently despite human and bureaucratic shortcomings. Teachers in the Clark County School District were once again trained and made ready to share their knowledge daily in the classroom. There is a survival ripple in West Las Vegas.

What has been learned can never be taken away—"frozen" or "cut-back". As the Say YES founders, Carl Holman, Dr. Ramona H. Edelin, Ph.D. and Rhett Rattley-Lewis knew and what its early pioneers, Joan Grant, Louise Lindblom and Dr. Jo Anne M. Favors have always known and still know is that beyond survival are success, accomplishment, and dreams made real. We still Say YES To A Youngster's Future™!

# SAY YES: A TRIBUTE TO CARL HOLMAN: A MAN OF VISION

by RAMONA EDELIN, PRESIDENT, NUC

*A fire bell is ringing in the night.  
Many beleaguered Black Americans may  
not hear it amid the din of other  
urgent problems clamoring for immediate  
attention. But hear and respond they  
must, because it is warning that time  
is running out for marshaling the energy  
and ingenuity required to meet head on  
the unprecedented threat to their future  
posed by the under-education and miseducation  
of Black children..... Carl Holman*

Ten years ago in the October 1985 issue of Ebony Magazine, Carl Holman, a man of great vision, predicted that the youth in our communities were in real peril. Many called him a naysayer and misunderstood his warning. But today as we stand on the verge of the 21st century, the pedagogy of Say YES born out of Carl Holman's vision is unleashing the ingenuity of teachers of color, and marshaling the required involvement of families and the support of the business community. We have fashioned an antidote to the under-education and miseducation of not just Black children, but children of color and all of America's children.

For those of you who did not know our beloved late president of the National Urban Coalition, Carl Holman, Say YES To A Youngster's Future was Mr. Holman's dream. Mr. Holman was a prize-winning poet and playwright who became a very wise leader of leaders. This very sage and wonderful man, highly intelligent and well

educated started off as a poor boy in St. Louis, Missouri. His daddy worked in the steel mills in a job that is not even available anymore to a high school drop-out or those with a high school diploma. Our nation is moving away from having a manufacturing and industrial economy.

In 1980, Mr. Holman heard for the first time the demographic projections that by 1995, at least 40 percent of all college aged young people in the United States would be Black or Brown. At the time that we heard the demographic projections people interpreted what it meant in a lot of different ways. Some people said, "All right, we're finally going to move away from that minuscule 10 or 12 percent. They will no longer be able to regard us as an insignificant minority," and were visibly happy, slapping five and so forth. But Mr. Holman was palpably upset. He sat down, visibly shaken and I immediately noticed that he didn't look well. I asked him what was wrong, and offered to get him a glass of water. He was advancing in age at that time. But he asked me, "Do you know what this means?" I said, "Well, yes, I know what it means." But then I thought again and asked, "What does it mean?" He clearly could see that I did not have any idea of how he viewed the implications of the demographic report. I of course, actually thought I knew.

Carol Holman said, "It means that half of the work force of this nation will not be prepared for the high technology jobs of the future. It means that the United States will not be a competitive, leading world power by the turn of the century. And, moreover, it means that nearly all of our young people in just 15 years from now will be warehoused in prisons because they will not be prepared to take their place." I miss Mr. Holman everyday, but I'm almost glad that he's not here to see just how true his prophecy was.

I thank God that we started back then with no resources from anyone. We began building our research and development base, looking at the best of the research, and the best teaching practices. It has been my job to catch a glimpse of Mr. Holman's great vision, and build this program brick by brick. I feel enormously grateful to the creator and to our ancestors, foremost among them, Mr. Holman, that we were able to do it. Today everyone is realizing how important mathematics and science are to our communities. We stand ready with a model for imparting that knowledge and those skills. It is important that it was the Urban Coalition that undertook this important work because Carl Holman stated in that Ebony magazine article 10 years ago:

*'much of the work to be done will have to be done by Blacks themselves. Despite the clear evidence of demographics which show how short-sighted any national*

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Dr. Ramona Edelin is President of the National Urban Coalition and is credited with guiding the development, implementation and replication of NUC's award winning Say YES To A Youngster's Future program.

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*blueprint for the future will prove to be which ignores the critical need to build on the essential human capital bases which minorities and females represent, the signs are not terribly encouraging...with all due respect to all the valuable allies we have had and now have. ”*

Say YES understood the importance of the cultural offensive, and has had the leading forces of this program be people of color; African American, Hispanic and Native American. We must be the leaders we are waiting for. Carl Holman described the bitter outcome if we fail to act:

*“the harsh fact is that today hundreds of thousands of low-income Black youngsters, particularly at the elementary level, will find themselves in school rooms where very few young faces will be of a color different from their own. Most of these classrooms will be in publicly-supported schools - at a time when public support is not very freely given. ”*

He knew the flags of hope would be a new breed of urban school superintendents and teachers, many of them Black and Hispanic who would establish beachheads of improved achievement and a renewed commitment to the education of the inner cities' youth. Say YES teachers, parents, community advocates and supporters have proven Carl Holman right. You have proven we can create beachheads of hope and high achievement on the ground, and this is tremendously uplifting.

Every time I see our children perform I sit there with tears streaming down my face, because we're training them, not just in math and science but to be the leaders of the modern age. They are strong: they can stand on their own feet; they can stand before TV cameras; they can stand before adults and other children alike; and they can become role models for their peers. Say YES children, as role models of their own peer groups, is crucial at this point in time because the children are listening more to each other than anyone else. The graduates and current students of the Say YES programs can tell their peers the importance of mathematics and science; help their peers understand why they need to take the higher level math and science courses; the meaning of protecting the environment; and other careers that are available to them.

Carl Holman ended the Ebony article with a warning:

*“It is not a matter of starting a war. The war is already underway. And our children are losing. ”*

And indeed, our children are in a war for survival and for an environment in which they can thrive, not just survive. Through a recent experience of my son, I was confronted with just how real the war is that Carl Holman warned us about.

My son, when he finished Morehouse college in 1990, knew that he wanted to go to graduate school or professional school. But he was not quite sure what he wanted to do. The whole world is open to them. It's not doctor, lawyer, Indian chief, school teacher, or nurse, there are a whole new range of careers and options. Very often, especially for boys, determining exactly what they want to do after they finish college seems difficult. My son decided to come back home to Washington and work.

He started at the ground floor and worked his way up to manager of a group home for pre-adjudicated boys in Washington. These boys range from 13 to 21 years old technically, but almost all of these boys were 15 and 16 years old. Everything that we have heard described here as problems facing young males he dealt with as “the man” in that group home. After he left, one of his boys named Kenny was involved in a drive-by shooting. He witnessed the problems of troubled children first-hand. After three years representing the boys in court, in school, and even with their own parents in some cases, he made a decision that he needed to become a judge. He saw judges as the key missing link. He said, “Most of the judges neither knew nor cared what was really best for the boys, and they almost always placed the boys into the wrong program.” Now he is a second-year law student at Howard University School of Law.

But my point is this: his experience has sensitized me very deeply to implications of the Crime Bill; what the Congress has passed; and pending legislation; all will make it even more difficult to save the troubled child. Current and pending legislation will advocate that 13, 14, and 15 year-old boys be tried as adults. Three strikes and you are out and in some states it will be two strikes and youngsters will be sentenced without the possibility of parole. These youngsters will be incarcerated for life. There are 60 new crimes which are punishable by the death penalty, which we know historically has always disproportionately affected African American boys and men. Saving the African American and Hispanic young male is the war we must wage. We have to succeed on this front as parents and teachers in preventing these children from being in those situations which give rise to misdirected rage and low self-esteem.

What is looming ahead of us now, we have never seen before. We are not simply facing budget cuts, this struggle we are facing is about the schism between the haves and the have nots growing greater and greater. This division of the haves and have nots is the biggest national security threat that we could possibly face. We are the ones on the front line who must act. This is a matter of life and death. The work of Say YES is now more urgent and pressing than it has ever been before. Without an education, our young men will be in jeopardy of not only being warehoused in prisons, but of being executed every day.

We are on a mission. We have a purpose and whatever the obstacles; be they bureaucratic; be they policy; be they from the federal, state, or local level; be they internal to our own group such as interpersonal problems; we must not fail to reach our children with Say YES. We must strengthen our pedagogy and our ability to train new Say YES teachers. We must expand the Say YES model within school systems who are already partners and with new school systems that want to adopt our work.

Our goal now must be to lay the groundwork for the expansion of the Say YES program. I hope that in a very short time we will be reaching not just 50,000, but 50 million young people, not only in this nation, but in other nations of

color around the world. In order for us to meet this new level of challenge, we must marshall new resources, create the documents, and institutes to train and monitor our programs as we expand.

We have made a tremendous start, but now we must think bigger and more systematically about how we train new Say YES trainers to teach at our Institutes. Our master trainer, Rhett Rattley-Lewis, has and is changing teachers' lives. We have reams and reams of evaluations and journal entries from teachers who attest to this fact. But he alone cannot move Say YES to the next level of program expansion. Rhett works all around the country doing trainings that are even shorter than the ones that teachers in our school-based programs enjoy. Our trainings are exemplary and they reverse teacher burnout. But we must do a better job of not simply inspiring Say YES teachers but providing "training for trainers" so our experienced teachers can become master trainers of the Say YES model.

We are going to make every effort to complete a training video. The training video with accompanying materials for teachers, will be one way to share the knowledge that Rhett has developed over many years. The video will include the startling facts which underscore people of color's as creators of the foundations of modern math and science and refutes the assumptions and attitudes that have undermined students of color's belief that they were capable of doing advanced math and science. The cultural offensive

is absolutely essential to our Say YES program because it begins to reverse centuries of myths and lies about our cultural past. All of our people have contributed to the development of math, science and technological advances. This scientific and technological march of humankind is not the special province of Europeans. With our work we strike a mighty blow against racism and internalized oppression within our communities. The video can be used in every one of your sites for in-service trainings, with teachers and with parents.

As we plan our forward movement, we must thoroughly examine how we make Say YES belong to all of us who are committed to its future. We must make a thorough assessment of what resources, trainings, materials, evaluations and monitoring is necessary to expand without compromising quality. As it was my task to catch a glimpse of Carl Holman's vision of Say YES and build the program brick by brick; it is now my task to work together with you to identify the work, resources and infra-structures needed to ensure that SAY YES will have the capacity to cause a firestorm of reform within the American educational system. We may be a mom and pop operation today but our vision must be the mastery of the technology and resources to be a formidable institution and to be a leader of the educational reform movement tomorrow.

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS YEAR

Last year we were pleased to report the details of the start-up of the Las Vegas **Say YES** Hands-On Family Math and Science program with a Cultural Connection. Initial contacts by the National Urban Coalition were made to the officials of African Americans For Energy Awareness and the Clark County School District. A great deal of time was spent synchronizing the philosophy of the school system and that of a community based organization, which stood as an advocate for the heretofore silent and distant parents of the students in West Las Vegas. **Say YES** proved to be a wonderful catalyst to encourage discussion about creative ways to better educate youngsters and their primary caretakers, their parents and significant adults in their lives. It also empowered Math and Science teachers in ways that in some instances seemed charismatic. Teachers who were formerly insecure about their teaching methodology and skills, began to refer to themselves as scientists and mathematicians. Gone were the days of rote learning and teaching methods for them and their students.

By the end of the year everyone was geared up and ready to expand **Say YES**. People from other cultural communities, whose children were also historically left out of exposure to innovative Science and Math teaching methods, were calling and asking if they could start a Family Learning Center. Our hope was to expand our Centers to include all children who needed us. Children and adults had been changed for the better. We learned so much from each other and from inquiring more, thinking critically about our daily tasks.

The Clark County School District was consistent in its follow-up procedures. Administrators, site directors, and teachers, numbering over thirty staff members from seven elementary schools were diligent in their work. The two Family Learning Centers, housed initially at A.D. Guy Boys and Girls Club and Fitzgerald Elementary School (later at Matt Kelly Elementary School and Fitzgerald), proved to be viable academic components in the community. Over 50 families benefited within the year through weekly sessions, Saturday monthly sessions and field trips at exciting places such as MGM Theme Park and Denney Pickett's Black Rodeo. In addition, significant community outreach activities were held to ensure ownership of **Say YES** by the community.

The Department of Energy served a major role in all of this. Its staff exemplified patience par excellence. The hands-on approach to implementation by the Department was much needed and appreciated. Things were in place for a successful year in 1995-1996

## **SAY YES ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

### **The National Urban Coalition (NUC)**

The **Say YES** management staff includes National Project Director, Regional Projector (now Project Director), Administrative Assistant, Assistant for Regional Project Director, Executive Director for Training and Resource Center, and the Media Relations Director. Further descriptions of the roles of the Executive Director of Training and Resources Center and for the Media Relations Director are given in each Director's Overview.

#### **National Project Director, Jo Anne M. Favors, Ph.D.**

The National Project Director, Jo Anne M. Favors, Ph.D. served as a resource person and consultant for the many components of the program. She worked diligently to create training modules to assist **Say YES** staffs nationally. Dr. Favors also served as Chair for the All Sites Team Meeting in Washington, D.C. The Las Vegas Family Learning Center Director was able to attend the All Sites Team Meeting.

#### **Project Director, Belhia Martin-Ross, J.D.**

The Project Director, Belhia Martin-Ross, J.D. worked weekly on all segments of the program. Extra effort was made to assist the new Family Learning Center Director in her tasks as well as keeping the management of the programs as smooth as possible despite the delays and cutbacks. Ms. Martin-Ross was also required to assist the new Director of Academic Services for the Clark County School District in her capacity as liaison person for the District and the **Say YES** school-based program. Other activities of Ms. Martin-Ross are cited in the **Say YES Project Director Leadership Activities**.

#### **Administrative Assistant, Jacquette Frazier**

Ms. Frazier serves as Administrative Assistant to the National Project Director. Ms. Frazier is required to work closely with **Say YES** sites directors. She also served as Administrative Assistant to the National Urban Coalition's program sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

#### **Administrative Assistant, Ms. Bettye Massenburg**

Ms. Massenburg served as the Administrative Assistant to the Project Director. Ms. Massenburg did an outstanding job in her capacity as administrative assistant. Her keen sense of organization and team cooperation proved invaluable in her work with the Las Vegas program and at the All Sites Team meeting.

## **Clark County School District (CCSD)**

The Clark County School District management team this year included Director of Academic Services (formerly called Director of Curriculum & Planning, Division of Curriculum & Instruction), and one Site Coordinator.

### **Director of Academic Services, Ms. Martha Title**

At the beginning of the year Mr. Harry Hendrickson served in this capacity under the heading of Director of Elementary Curriculum and Planning. Mr. Hendrickson was the primary person to plan the financial budget for the school year in an effort to serve as many clients as possible, given the limited resources available for the second year of the program.

Later in the year Ms. Martha Title was named as Director of Academic Services in place of Mr. Hendrickson. The Director of Academic Services was director of the **Say YES** program. As such she provided leadership and direction for the program, served as CCSD's liaison with the public, handled financial matters, collected and organized all required data, and worked with NUC to plan and execute public relations activities. The Academic Director also represented the superintendent in activities related to the **Say YES** program. She was not able to implement many of her ideas because of the budget cut.

### **Say YES Coordinator, Wendy Roselinsky**

Ms. Wendy Roselinsky served as coordinator for this year. In this capacity she coordinated the summer institute and did preliminary planning for the Saturday sessions, field trips, and teacher workshops. Ms. Roselinsky also assisted in adjustment to budgets and staff personnel because of financial restraints for the new academic year.

### **Master Teacher, Vita Holdeman**

Ms. Holdeman is a Math and Science specialist. She returned this academic year to present the content and pedagogical sessions during the summer institute.

### **Say YES Teachers**

The **Say YES** teachers attended a three week summer institute in order to further enhance those skills gained from last year's training and implementation. Because of this training they were able to maintain a productive classroom with students and to carry out the classroom responsibilities of **Say YES** teachers.

### **Say YES Principals**

Though only initial follow-up was made by the site coordinator with school principals, because of the break in funding, the principals were still called to be supportive of classroom teachers during the academic year.

## **Say YES CCSD School Roster 1995-1996**

The following schools remained **Say YES** schools for the 1995-1996 year. However, only two teachers from each Team Member group were to be chosen for Saturday sessions and teacher workshops. All teachers were expected to implement the **Say YES** pedagogy learned at the Summer Institutes, in their classrooms during the school year.

Kermit Booker Prime 6 School  
**Sharon Griener, Principal**  
2277 M.L. King Blvd.  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 799-4720

Kit Carson Prime 6 School  
**Linda Gipson, Principal**  
1735 N. D St.  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 799-7113

H.P. Fitzgerald Prime 6 School  
**Shirley Barber, Principal**  
2651 N. Revere St.  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 799-0600

Matt Kelly Prime 6 School  
**Jeremy Hauser, Principal**  
1900 N. J St.  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 799-4750

Madison Prime 6 School  
**Garrett Kerksten, Principal**  
1030 N. J St.  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 799-4760

Quannah McCall Prime 6 School  
**Mary Manchego, Principal**  
800 Carey Ave.  
Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 799-7149

**Team Members**  
Sherrie Antonelli  
Nicole Dederer  
Michele Haldemar  
Ina Mogenser

**Team Members**  
Vita Hammond  
Larry Lienau  
Willie Walker

**Team Members**  
Freida Blink  
Debora Cooper  
Judith Ingham  
Michael Maxwell

**Team Members**  
Margaret Collins  
David Kunnel  
Margaret Landry

**Team Members**  
Sonia Zacharius  
Jeff Skouson  
Saundrel Preston  
Lisa Hanger  
Lafretta Barnes

**Team Members**  
Georgia Smith  
Tanya Shelton  
Darien Silmaker  
Thelma Lopez

## African Americans For Energy Awareness (AAEA)

The AAEA Management Team for two centers consists of one Family Learning Center Director for both centers, and two Program Assistants, (one for each center).

**Family Learning Center Director, Ms. Caroline Allen** was responsible for the administration of the Family Learning Center(s) activities. She also helped to develop and administer the training plan for the **Say YES** program volunteers, who served a major part in the program for this particular year. In addition, Ms. Allen was required to review classroom management instruction and compliance with the Family Learning Centers' goals and objectives. Ms Allen also supervised the work of the assistants and teachers and collaborated with the National Urban Coalition with respect to all components of the program. She joined the **Say YES** team initially on a temporary basis, but after she proved to be a great asset to the program she was offered the full time position. The All Sites Team meeting enabled Ms. Allen to better apply the national goals and objectives for urban schools to the Las Vegas **Say YES** program.

### **Family Learning Center Program Assistants, Mr. Earl White and Mrs. Shirley Towers**

Mr. White's and Mrs. Towers' return as assistants for the centers proved beneficial. Mr. White was assigned to Matt Kelly school. Mrs. Towers was assigned to H.P. Fitzgerald school. There duties as part-time assistants included clerical work, handling registration and filing intake data on students, developing volunteer scheduling, and following up with parents concerning monthly Saturday sessions and field trips. Mr. White did outstanding work in support of the program. He actively solicited students and parents in nearby housing projects by going from door to door with information on **Say YES**. In addition, he often served as spokesperson and technical assistant for AAEA concerning financial matters and reports for the **Say YES** program. The Family Learning Center assistants reported directly to the Director of the Centers.

### **Family Learning Centers Teachers and Staff Members**

The duties of the Family Learning Center teachers and staff members included: development, implementation, and documentation of the hands-on activities which occur after school, including a written curriculum and activities supplement; purchase of required materials for each session; development, implementation, and documentation of parent workshops; work with NUC to publicize the program in the area community. The staff members this year were as follows:

Mrs. Zandra Oshinski  
Ms. Sharon Martin  
Ms. Camille Kelly

Ms. Linda Price  
Computer Trainer

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### Curriculum

#### CCSD

Mr. Rhett Rattley-Lewis, Director of Training and Resources, conducted the **Say YES** Math and Science training for the Clark County School District teachers and coordinators on August 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16, 1995. The teachers were trained in the **Say YES** philosophy and methodology, to develop program objectives and address the integration of this program into their schools curricula and content for the 1995-1996 school year. We were fortunate that, despite the decrease in funds, the teachers were able to incorporate the **Say YES** work activities into their classroom lessons.

Ms. Martha Title quickly grasped the **Say YES** philosophy and was ready to move with a full program once she had acclimated herself to her new position. She envisioned implementation of 3 Saturday sessions, at 6 schools, using 12 teachers (2 at each school). Four workshops for teachers were scheduled. Field trips were planned with one to the Hot Air Balloon Show. These plans were confirmed, but not executed because of the notice from the Department that funds were not available for continuation of the program.

#### **AAEA Family Learning Center**

Because of governmental delays and a change of the program director for the Family Learning Centers, the Centers began Monday, March 4, 1996. The teachers and other staff members began one week prior to this for preparation for the school year. The afternoon program at H.P. Fitzgerald was held on Monday and Wednesday from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. At Matt Kelly school the program was on Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Teachers and assistants were required to work one Thursday evening per month from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. and one Saturday per month from 10:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. for Family Saturday sessions. On the fourth Thursday of each month Parent workshops were held. Teachers were also required to attend a teacher's meeting every fourth Friday of every month at 4:30 p.m.

During the summer months the Centers operated four days per week in the two Elementary Schools. Both Centers operated from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. H.P. Fitzgerald was opened on Monday and Wednesday, and Matt Kelly on Tuesday and Thursday. Computer classes were held on Fridays from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m., and on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. The summer program was conducted from June 17, 1996 to August 8, 1996

The students were taught the historical background of scientists and mathematicians. They participated in Hands-On Science and Math projects in the afternoons and with their parents at the Saturday sessions. The students were also brought on field trips to such exciting places like Denny Pickett's Black Rodeo. The Black Firefighters taught fireworks safety during the week of the Fourth of July.

**Communications**

Most of the communications campaign for AAEA this year centered around direct solicitation of students and their parents in order to increase the number of families serviced. In this effort, support was given to such organizations as the Nevada Special Olympics, Payless Shoes for Children, and the Clark County Library, whose facilities were used during the year.

# Say YES Gazette



## 1996 All-Sites Meeting

Washington, DC, was the venue of the 4th Annual Say YES To A Youngster's Future™ All-Sites Team Meeting on February 28–March 1, 1996. With *Systemic School Reform: National Goals and Standards for Urban Schools* the theme, it was quickly noted that Say YES has been in the forefront of this reform movement and continues to meet and exceed standards.

Nostalgic moments underscored this theme. Not only did former Say YES directors DeAnna Banks Beane and Diane Swann join the assembly, but former Carnegie Foundation program administrator Bernard Charles, the person responsible for helping Say YES receive its initial grant, attended. Currently with the McKenzie Group, he remembered his first meeting at the National Urban Coalition about an innovative math, science and technology initiative. It was 1985, and Say YES was about to be born.

"A fire bell is ringing in the night. Many beleaguered black Americans may not hear it amid the din of other urgent problems clamoring for immediate attention. But hear and respond they must, because it is warning that time is running out for marshaling the energy and ingenuity required to meet head on the unprecedented threat to their future posed by the under education and miseducation of our children in kindergarten and the earliest grades."

Thus began the presentation to Bernard Charles by the late NUC president M. Carl Holman in 1984, also quoted in *Ebony*, October 1985.

"I never dreamed when we had that first meeting," said Charles to the All-Sites gathering, "that Say YES would come this far. Carl Holman's ideas were well thought out, backed by solid data and imaginatively formulated; yet still the program has exceeded all expectations.... Congratulations to each of you for a job well done on behalf of our children's future and the future of this country."

Dr. Ramona Edelin, NUC president, praised Shell Oil Company for hosting the All-Sites opening dinner. "Shell was our first corporate sponsor and has staunchly supported the program for nine years. I applaud their farsightedness and dedication in creating this opportunity for participants in Say YES programs across the country to hear leaders in the field and share their experiences."



Pictured at the 1996 All-Sites Meeting are (L-R) Dr. JoAnne Favors, Say YES project director; Dr. Ramona Edelin, NUC president; keynote speaker Dr. Sharon P. Robinson, assistant secretary, U.S. Department of Education; and Paula T. Saizan, program manager, Shell Oil Company.

Washington's City Club was the setting for the opening reception and dinner hosted and organized by NUC Say YES national director Dr. JoAnne M. Favors. Dr. Sharon P. Robinson, assistant secretary, U.S. Department of Education, was the keynote speaker. Her message — expanding children's horizons to enable them to meet our expectations — undergirded that of all presenters that *all children can in fact learn and all must be included for systemic change to occur*. Providing the evening's entertainment was *A Litany in Praise of Women*, performed by seven young women from the Reader's Theater of DCPS McKinley/Penn High School, with all guests joining them enthusiastically in song.

On Thursday, the meeting moved to the National Education Association. Dr. Luther Williams, assistant director of the National Science Foundation, gave his plenary address on *Systemic Initiatives: Are We Reforming Yet?* Educational consultant E. Louis White facilitated the rest of the morning session on *How to go from Chaos to Order*. Panelists Blanche Brownley and Carolyn Kornegay of DCPS reviewed how they were implementing change locally and then critiqued workshops led by Say YES teachers Shirley Stewart of New Orleans and Lena McClain of Houston.

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## TRAINING DIRECTOR OVERVIEW

# Connecting Students Of Color To Their Cultural Inheritance Of Excellence In Math And Science

*By Rhett Rattley-Lewis  
Executive Director,  
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We in **Say YES** must ensure that our children understand the origins of the concepts of math and science. It is our responsibility for placing math and science in their correct cultural and historical context. This is one thing that we in **Say YES** are adamant about. When we teach a particular concept, we should not teach it in a vacuum.

First we try to make it relevant for the child by connecting the concepts to their everyday lives so they can see its relevance for themselves. Secondly, we talk about the origins of the concepts. It is important that our youth understand that science and math did not come from outer space. No super beings brought this information down. No one can osmose this information overnight and know how to manipulate the concepts. Conquering the conceptual framework for math and science problems takes hands-on work. We must also tell them that math, science and technology are not the province of a select group of people from Europe or Greece who contributed everything that we know about science and mathematics.

We must insist on them knowing their own cultural heritage which is a tradition of excellence in math, science and technology. We must do this important groundbreaking work because we know it affects our children's self-esteem and self-definition of what they are

capable of achieving. The reason we place such a heavy emphasis on the historical and cultural information is to ensure that the children understand that they are the descendants of nations of people who laid the basis for math and science as we know it today.

We must destroy the lie that we are mentally inferior, incapable of manipulating the advanced concepts of math and science. Instead we are talking about creating in our children the feeling that they are the inheritors of this wonderful legacy of math and science genius. It is theirs for the taking and urge them to take back that legacy and turn it into their future. Our expectations of our children must imbue them with the confidence to excel in math and science as opposed to our children simply being well-informed spectators watching white men and women continue create new technologies using math and science.

When we talk of effective curriculum we must develop a comprehensive guide to help us identify those elements that are essential for inclusion in the science, math, and technological training for our youth. We must be able to do this from preschool to high school.

**Say YES** has proven that knowing our own historical and cultural contributions to math and science is empowering. It is not only

empowering to students but to us as their teachers. We know it even affects the way teachers look at the capacity of their students to master, excel and become innovators in the fields of science, math and technology.

This uplifting of teacher expectations of their students capacities is really an aspect of why the concept of "wait time" is so important. That we give students adequate time to think out their response to a question rather than rush on to the next student. Otherwise we still are practicing a form of discrimination, because of our expectation that knowledge is reflected by an immediate response to a question. Teacher response to the student who pauses is generally negative because the belief is that he/she does not know the answer. Most often that student is passed over as the teacher solicits the response from the next child. The effect on the student who paused, is that even if he/she was about to answer the question, the self-doubt and often embarrassment of not having the answer on the tip of his or her tongue overwhelms them. Even if the teacher calls on the student again, he or she will lack the self-confidence to get the answer out.

Not only must we recognize the importance of placing the development of math and science concepts in cultural and historical context, but as we teach we must be gender sensitive. A case in point, a teacher in Washington, D.C. did a research project which was published in "Arithmetic Teacher." She was teaching first and second grade children the concept of subtraction. She was a good teacher and after she was sure the children understood and could manipulate the concept of subtraction she offered a quiz. One of the questions was stated this way: "Johnny was building a box. He had ten nails and in building the box he used six of them. How many nails did Johnny have left over?" She found that all of the boys got the answer right and all of the girls got the answer wrong.

Startled by this, the next day she decided to

try the quiz again. Only this time she restated the question this way: "Janey was giving a tea party and had ten tea sets. Six folks came to the party and had tea. How many tea sets went unused?" This time all of the girls got it right and the boys got it wrong. This research is very important as we develop the **Say YES** curriculum for we must ensure that we build gender sensitivity into our work. Even as we go back to reclaim our cultural heritage, we must not be guilty of focusing only on the achievements of men of color at the exclusion of, or simply by neglecting the importance of, the contributions of women.

One obstacle we face as we focus on developing culturally sensitive information about our contributions to math and science is that general textbooks are not keeping pace with the information that we have. Not only are they not keeping pace but too often we find that what we bring into the discussion will contradict what the textbook presents as fact. In mathematics, non-western mathematical systems receive very little mention in most educational textbooks and resource materials. Despite the fact that the foundations of all modern day mathematical principles were developed in ancient "First World" civilizations which today are referred to as Third World, underdeveloped nations. What is passed off as fact is an Euro-centric version of history that credits Greece, Rome and later Europe as responsible for all the world's technological advances.

Given this gross distortion it is no wonder that young African American, Latino or Hispanic and Native American students are convinced that mathematics is a field reserved for white men. As our students learn about their true heritage in mathematics they come to believe that they too can add to the rich legacy of the contributions of indigenous peoples in mathematics. As Hogben appropriately points out in, "Mathematics in the Making," the best therapy for the emotional blocks responsible for the defeatist

frame of mind in which many highly intelligent people face a mathematical formula is the realization that the human race has taken centuries or millennia to see through a mist of difficulties and paradoxes which instruction now invites us to solve in a few hours or minutes. But the therapeutic effect of the use of history can be lost, indeed totally defeated, if the first 3,000 years of written mathematics history and the continuing contributions of underrepresented ethnic groups are omitted.

It is not enough for **Say YES** to develop instructional materials which highlight corrected historical and cultural information. We must train teachers so we develop their own personal interest and knowledge of this information. Otherwise they will not feel confident enough to use it particularly when it may contradict the way the textbook credits the development of mathematical or scientific concepts. Even after we have given teachers the information and training, often the resistance remains of not knowing how to translate and integrate the information into their curriculum in the classroom or in extra curricular activities.

**Say YES** staff using our hands-on and free inquiry methods have found constant pathways to bringing this kind of information into their classrooms. The example of Ms. Carias, who while teaching a unit on health was discussing the four food groups by doing hands-on experiments with the foods and also trying to figure out their origins. Stimulated by the questions our students asked we discovered that strawberries came from the north Africa. Not knowing the origins of strawberries and making it a joint research project allowed her students to find a culturally relevant answer.

**Say YES** is working on a curriculum guide developed to provide the cultural and historical information, with hands-on activities and an extensive bibliography for teacher use. While there may be a lot of information of this type in the marketplace, it is fragmented. A

teacher would have to already have the cultural consciousness to know that it is crucial to be informed of and utilize this information to rebuild our children's self-esteem and self-confidence. But teachers must also be motivated to search out the data and then figure out how to integrate it into a curriculum that has not been very open to change. This is further complicated because much of cultural and historical data when used will give students a real education but this information will not be reflected on the types of standardized tests they will encounter. Therefore, teachers face a dilemma: do they place secondary importance on the information they know will lay the basis for increased self-esteem and self-confidence because of the pressure to prepare students for tests? If they do favor preparation for tests, the students come away inferring that the information about their ancestry is still less valued and less important. That is not what we want them to believe.

Knowing the critical importance of the cultural context of the origins of math and science to children of color is not enough. We are still faced with the need to prepare our students to compete in a society that does not recognize much of what we will teach them as fact. They will not be tested on their improved self-esteem but on how they perform on tests which will not ask culturally relevant information. Therefore, we must be cautious about what needs motivate us as we develop curriculum and identify appropriate evaluation. Far too often it is evaluation or testing which drives curriculum development. It would be disastrous for **Say YES** to fall victim to that syndrome for we must represent the need for challenge and change. School administrators, school board members, and parents who worry primarily about test performance on currently used measurements get in an uproar when we speak of changing, reshaping and redefining what evaluation tools work best. We must remain committed to changing our evaluation

mechanisms in order to build support for changes in the curriculum which our work has proven must change to allow all students to feel valued and motivated. For we can no longer fall victim to the notion that math and science are value neutral, because crediting the achievements of people of color to Europe only fuels racist beliefs of the inferiority of people of color. While not relaxing the standards of producing students who can solve complex problems and handle scientific and mathematical concepts, we must find new ways to measure what children have learned to accommodate different learning styles. We must convince others of the need to reform our evaluation mechanisms by documenting our successes through **Say YES**.

We must continue to resist the temptation to allow our curriculum and methods of evaluation to be guided by the need to prove ourselves by utilizing assessment tools which do not reflect different learning styles and new methods of documenting what our students have learned. Faced with the

pressure to acquire funding is it easy to allow ourselves to be convinced of using only current evaluative tools, even though we know the shortcomings of the current testing methods. The pressure that our students will still be evaluated by standardized tests so we must teach the content of those tests in order to prepare them to do well must not sway us to abandon what **Say YES** has taught us.

We have critical work to do in this area of making our peoples' past and present contributions in the fields of math and science visible, credible and valued. We must lead the way in redefining how learning is measured and what information is valued and validated through assessment tools. The commitment of **Say YES** and the National Urban Coalition to diligently work to amass and disseminate the culturally based information in science, mathematics and technology is testimony to our belief that we have a unique historical role, that we have played and must continue to play into the 21st century.

NUC ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM REPORTS

**Say YES To A Youngster's Future™**  
**Project Director**  
**Leadership Activities For 1995-1996**

The Project Director was required to meet many challenges this year in her leadership position. In that capacity she capacity she met in Las Vegas from September 17 to 19, 1995. She held her first meeting with the Say YES Family Learning Center(s) Director, (at the time Ms. Danielle Traylor) and her assistant. This meeting was crucial because of the posture of strained finances with the Federal government. She discussed the Say YES program with Ms. Traylor, its key components and how the integrity of the program could be maintained through creative ways, despite less funds. She also discussed the things planned for the students and their parents for the upcoming year. It was determined that more emphasis would be placed on reaching parents and getting them more involved. There was further discussion about community outreach so that funds could be raised from other sources. Ms. Traylor stated that Department of Energy staff members had been very kind and offered to assist her and Mr. Watson, President of AAEA with raising funds. A review of the financial statement of the previous year and of the activities conducted was also done. It was determined by Ms. Traylor and Ms. Martin-Ross that solicitation to businesses would be done so that many of the materials could be obtained through donations.

Ms. Martin-Ross also met with Mr. Harry Hendrickson, Director of Elementary Curriculum and Planning of CCSD, and Ms. Wendy Roselinsky, Say YES site coordinator for CCSD. Details concerning the role of the school system and its commitment to the program was discussed. Mr. Hendrickson promised to inquire about the funding sources in the school system which could off-set some of the cost of the program which could not be funded by the Department of Energy. Discussion was held also concerning the retention of teachers. The school system teachers had remained excited. Only two teachers were lost for the year. Mr. Hendrickson stated that he would post the announcement early to fill the vacant positions.

Other leadership activities of Ms. Martin-Ross includes: preparation of action plan and spending plan for the Las Vegas Say YES program; preparation and submission of revised budget for 1995-1996 school year; preparation of Letters of Agreements for 1995-1996 year; assist in the preparation of and participation in the National Urban Coalition's All Sites Team meeting; participation in the Leothy Miller Owens Homeschool Conference at Medger Evers College, Brooklyn New York from April 12 and 13th, 1996.

The participation by Ms. Martin-Ross in the Leothy Miller Owens Homeschool Conference was indeed worthwhile. At this conference serious issues concerning the role of parents in the education of their children was discussed. One of the panelist included Eleanor V. Horne, Secretary To the Corporation, Educational Testing Service. Ms. Horne shared the national overview on testing and home schoolers. Parents were encouraged to continue their efforts and to continue their work in cooperation with the local school systems and schools. Participants learned a great deal about the political, legal and educational issues about homeshooling. There was also emphasis placed on incorporating the culture and history in all education.

## CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this Final Technical Report will serve as evidence of the commitment of the National Urban Coalition to the success of young people, their families, and their communities. We have for the most part enjoyed these last two years in our administration of the Say YES Las Vegas, Nevada program. Any pain which we have experienced has been worth it. It seems minuscule in comparison to the accomplishments.

We thank the Department of Energy for its hard work and tremendous effort. We look forward to more exciting work in the future.