

THE NORTHEND AGENT'S PRESENTS

THE REAL

Real Talk and Real Teens



The Premier Issue

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With Police Chief Darryl Roberts



Editor-in-Chief
Yolanda Allen

Co-Editor
Sasha Allen

**Art Director &
Graphic Design**
Christopher Wright

Web Design
Marvin Bowe

Photography
Robert Thiesfield

Contributing Writers
Celeste Allen
Endera Allen
Pastor Charles Turner
Ashlee Ferris
Chief Darryl Roberts
Roxanne Armstrong /
Armstrong Empowerment Group

Media Interns
Terrance Allen
Quinton Bagby
Lydia Brown
Jayquan Brown
Isaiaha Brown
Chris Irizzary
Courtney Mitchell
Nelton Tilo

Northend Agent's
P.O. Box 2308
Hartford, CT 06146-2308
860-522-1888
advertise@northendagents.com

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Letter from the Editor



Let's Keep Talking!
Look for our E-mail blasts, and visit our website often for new and exciting things.

We'd like to say we appreciate Mr. Greg Covington who showed up for work every day and competed for the lead internship role, participated in our brainstorming sessions and accompanied us on our outings.

A Special Thank You to Mrs. Connie Wilson for recognizing and rewarding the hard work and effort of our Media Interns by surprising them with a catered lunch.



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It's a great joy to present you with this premiere edition of *The REAL Real Talk and Real Teens*. The work you see here is due to the hard work and commitment of young people who may not have formally seen themselves as journalists, or the voice of their peer group and yet here they are making history. During the 37 years that *Northend Agent's* has been in publication we have concentrated solely on producing our newspaper. We are going to keep the newspaper coming, truthfully we plan to make it better. We are doing something entirely new by launching this publication – we are recognizing and seeking out the voice of our urban youth.

I am the birth mother of 3 beautiful daughters – Sasha, Celeste and Endera; and the adopted mother of 1 more amazing girl – Galyssa, and 2 phenomenal boys – Giovanni and Donnie. I am constantly hearing young opinions and ideas. Having the interns from *Our Piece of the Pie* seemed to me like turning up the volume on what I normally hear and who our youth are. They have valid contributions to make, statements and ideas that need to be heard, their presence is well worth recognizing.

The Northend Agent's is the legacy, my husband John Allen, founder and Publisher leaves to our children. It has been our habit to make the girls touch their legacy at least twice a week. They have to make a tangible contribution which could be as simple as answering the telephones or delivering the paper. We have been trying to keep them connected to the business and the future of it by always making them conscious of what they will be responsible for and who they are responsible to. I'll be honest for the

We have been blessed with a prosperous and innovative year of business. These new business opportunities have lead us to print the publication you are presently reading. It is our great pleasure to be launching the premier issue of *The Real Real Talk and Real Teens*. The *REAL* provides an opportunity to showcase and share the work of talented young writers. We are so very excited with the work and level of dedication that our interns have put into this edition. They have spent the summer

most part, they are not overly enthusiastic about that. Having the interns come in and work on creating something new and ultimately more relative to the girls has been amazing. They want to come in and touch the work, they are eager to contribute. They see the mission through new eyes thanks to our amazing interns.

Here is what the mission is:

Real Talk, Real Issues, Real Solutions, Real Teen Experiences. The *REAL* provides an opportunity to showcase and share the work of talented young writers. The *Northend Agent's* is Your Voice.

I'd like to extend a special thank you to our interns, Lydia Brown, Jayquan Brown, Isaisha Brown, Nelson Tilo, Terrance Allen, Quinton Bagby, Chris Irizzary, and Courtney Mitchell.

This publication also gave me the unique opportunity to Co-Edit with our daughter, Sasha Allen. When I stray to what I think is acceptable she's great at reminding me that it's the voice of our youth and they don't see or think the way I do. I can respect that and hope that you will too.

We are already working on the next edition, so we want to hear from you. Please email satyallen@northendagents.com, sallen@northendagents.com or interns@northendagents.com. Tell us what you want in the next edition, and submit your own writing and photos for inclusion. Friend requests us on Facebook and Twitter and subscribe at www.northendagents.com.

Yolanda Allen,
Co-Editor of The REAL

working closely with our staff developing the content and layout for this publication. As a team we are striving to reach their generation with topics that genuinely interest them and with solutions to the problems that they may be facing. We hope that as you read this edition you are overcome with beaming pride of the work and talent that our community is producing.

Sasha Allen,
Co-Editor of The REAL

At The Bottom Uniforms Pollinate The Streets

By Quinton Bagby

Urban civilization cannot be defined by the provocative games of the police force that has claimed to protect us. In the First amendment it clearly states that there should be Freedom of Speech. In Hartford, Connecticut the youth community and I have been instigated by the uniforms.

An example would be when one of my friends was walking and eating a Popsicle, he dropped his Popsicle wrapper by accident, and was just about to pick it up, when an officer said "pick that up!" angrily. My friend picked it up, and the officer then said "don't I know you, this is going to be a long summer for you" in an intimidating voice. After this my friend spat on the sidewalk and the officer said "I should make you pick that up too," following that outrageous comment my friends sister came outside and asked the officer "Is there a problem?" the officer replied "Control this guy before I lock his ass up!" mind you, no words ever left my friends lips during this time. It takes two to tango but this seems like the officer wanted conflict.

If I try to speak to an officer with reason, I don't feel my questioning words should be accompanied by the aggression of a "Shut the f... up!" or "I've dealt with people like you before." In reality the uniform and thirty + thousand dollar yearly expression of power does not intimidate us; sadly it makes us hate and distrust authority. The city will beat regardless of the hazard signs, and the young minds will peak regardless of the pastured lies.

From what I've heard and seen up to my current age of eighteen H.P.D. thinks that the minority youth are uneducated and good for nothing, if that's the case why would they waste their time in this city?

"The very reason for the First Amendment is to make the people of this country free to think, speak, write and worship as they wish, not as the Government commands."

— Justice Hugo L. Black

While having a conversation with some of my friends, an anonymous young Hartford local expressed to me that a certain officer took twenty dollars from him, now when I first heard this I thought to myself what can twenty dollars do? Not much for someone who makes thirty + thousand a year, including the so called right to say and do whatever they please at anytime, such as blasting the white noise of hazard lights, just to blow past a stop sign, or talking on the phone in a cruiser right before a ticket is received by a civilian

who was committing the same crime, that the Men and Woman of the law occupy so frequently. It seems like officers try to break pride by putting handcuffs on my young counterparts who hold the key to the future, and before they read our Miranda Rights telling us we have the right to remain silent. When in reality we couldn't even fully abuse the right to speak in the first place. All of these things and more add to the high levels of distrust of police in urban communities. It's amazing and also obvious how many youth, adults, tax payers, non taxpayers, home owners, and the home less, would rather handle "Police affiliated situations" by themselves before 911 is even a question, including myself.

USING SCHOLARSHIPS TO HELP PAY FOR COLLEGE

By Rosanne Armstrong

Applying to college can be a scary and daunting process for students and parents. Pursuing higher education is a rewarding and big investment. With the cost of college steadily increasing it is understandable that parents are intimidated and overwhelmed by the process. Despite all the talk about the high prices of education, college can still be an affordable option for many families with the help of financial aid, grants and scholarships.

After your child completes his/her college applications, start looking for private scholarships. Scholarships are a form of financial aid that does not have to be paid back, and it can be a big help when paying for college. Below are tips to help you research scholarships:

- If you need more information about scholarships and other types of financial aid, The SmartStudent(TM) Guide to Financial Aid is a good place to start. Visit their website is www.finaid.org.
- To find national scholarships, you can check out Fastweb, Xap, ScholarshipExperts.com, CollegeAnswer.com, Collegeboard.com and CollegeNet.com.
- Applying for any scholarship is helpful, but you will have a better chance of being awarded

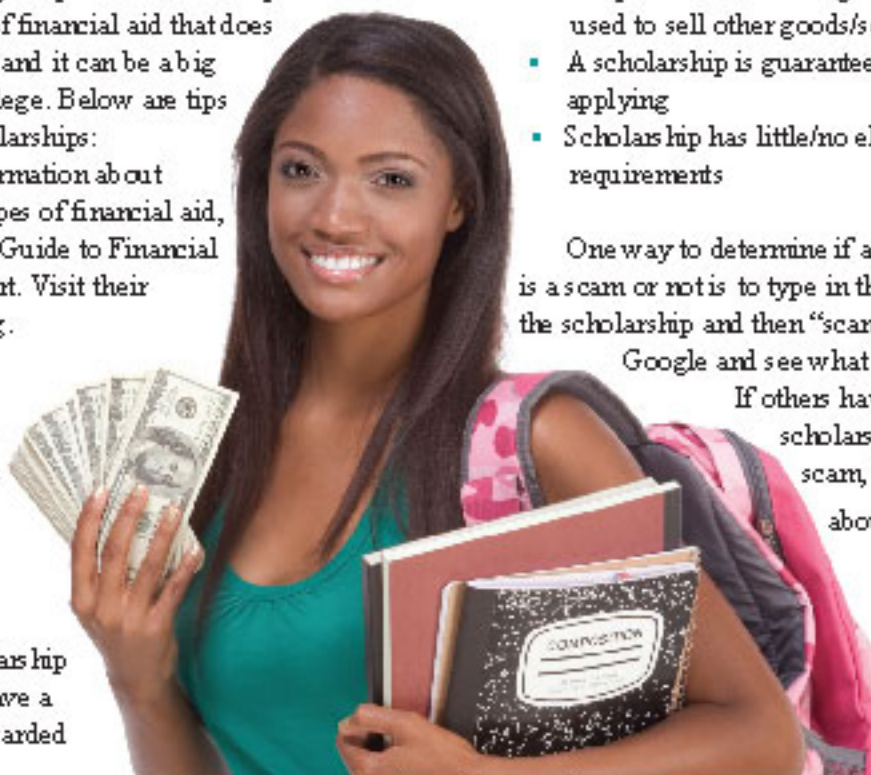
local scholarships that have a smaller applicant pool. Check with your high school guidance counselor regularly to learn more about these opportunities.

Also, be aware that there are some potential scholarship scams. Sometimes opportunities are too good to be true and scholarships are no exception to this rule. When you apply for scholarships, there are a few ways to spot a potential scam:

- A fee is required to process the application
- The potential of winning a scholarship is used to sell other goods/services
- A scholarship is guaranteed before applying
- Scholarship has little/no eligibility requirements

One way to determine if a scholarship is a scam or not is to type in the name of the scholarship and then "scam" after it into Google and see what comes up.

If others have found the scholarship to be a scam, they may talk about it online.



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THE REAL IS ON THE RISE

By Rev. Charles Turner, Pastor
Shiloh Baptist Church, Hartford, CT

First I want to acknowledge the Allen's and Northend Agent's for allowing this platform for real talk from teens to take place. Young people have a voice that needs to be heard. If the business world listens to the voice of teens in helping decide what products to produce then our community needs to enter into dialogue with teens as well. One issue that prevents real talk from taking place is that we do not take the time to talk across generations. I am thankful that through The Real our youth will speak and we can listen not in judgment but in order to work towards an understanding.

Having a voice is great but as the old saying goes, "talk is cheap". What we need is real talk about real issues that lead to real change. As teens deal with issues of self image, sex, violence, education, etc... which reflect the crumbling culture we live in, this world needs to hear the fresh voice of the youth on solving many of the ills that plague us. During one of the last major movements led by Blacks in this country, The Civil Rights Movement many of the unsung heroes that paved the way were teens. Yes Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed but so was 14 year old Emmett Till. His body was so mangled that his mother insisted that his casket be opened at the funeral so that the world could see how terrible the act of racism committed against her son was. His senseless death touched the senses of people around the world and helped push the movement forward.

Many people know about Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white person on a city bus in Montgomery, AL and how that led to the desegregation of the public transportation there. On the other hand many people do not know that nine months before Rosa Parks was arrested, 15 year old Claudette Colvin, was also arrested for doing the same thing on a Montgomery Bus. Let me also mention 16 year old Barbara Johns in Farmville, VA who organized her classmates in protest of "separate

and unequal" schools in her town. Her work with her peers led to their case being added to the historic Brown vs. Board of Education case that ended segregation in public schools.

The list could go on so young people, what problems do you see? What issues are bringing your generation down? Use real talk to raise up a new generation of young leaders to think creatively and critically about how to solve these problems.

Finally, let me suggest a willing partner as you move from real talk to real change and that is the real God! Much of what is hurting our community across generations is disobeying the first of the Ten Commandments that tell us not to have any other gods before the real God (Exodus 20:3). The idol gods of sex, money, corrupt culture have grabbed our attention and devotion which is our worship and caused us to lose sight of our real purpose. Let me recommend that you turn to the true and living God. For now, we celebrate the positive headlines of our youth engaging in real talk for real change. Finally, in a world of falsehood the REAL is on the rise!

If you need help identifying the true God or have questions let me invite you to contact me (cetumer78@aol.com 860-247-3767) or stop in and see me at Shiloh Baptist Church 350 Albany Ave. I also personally invite everyone out to the grounds of Shiloh Baptist Church as we are hosting "Community Day" on August 20, 2011 from 11:00a.m. until 3:00p.m. Free food, games, entertainment and school supplies will be given away.



Brought To The Edge:

Testament From A Student Worshiper

BY ASHLEE BURRIS



I always try to find personal meaning in my pastor's sermons, as it brings me comfort. It helps me realize that God has something planned for me even if it comes at an unexpected time.

After shadowing in the emergency department last week, I realized how blessed I am. I witness patients suffer through excruciating pain and fear the outcome of their medical dilemmas. A 21-year-old woman with sickle cell disease caught my attention. She was suffering through a major pain crisis, yet she maintained hope and determination. I listened as she explained her plan to finish college on time and become a social worker in order to help underprivileged children. What stood out the most was her devout faith in God and her use of faith to surpass her pain. This patient demonstrated great willpower against her sickle cell pain. I now take notes from that patient's use of faith to overcome her struggles. Whenever I'm on the edge or going through tribulations, I think of all the agony other people face. Life is too short to waste time wallowing in my own sorrow and misery. Instead, I turn to God and praise him for my many blessings.

I have all the reason to be faithful and to express my appreciation for what the Lord has done for me. I believe God may bring people to the edge in order to remind them that they can go to him in times of need. Yes, there are times when I feel like complaining and giving up; but I know that when I'm at the edge, there is a divine purpose for my suffering. I truly believe everything happens for a reason. We all are distracted with work, school, family, and drama, so we tend to put off prayer and worship for when we really feel like we need it. I am learning not to be an ungrateful Christian. I am learning to praise everything God has done for me - even the little things. So, I would characterize myself as a student worshiper. My teacher is God; my lessons are life experiences; and my tests are to praise Him and be thankful for everything.

The Ways I Worship

By Lydia Brown

Writing, cooking, and doing hair is my worship. When people hear the word "worship", they automatically think of church, but worship doesn't always have to do with attending church services. Worship is not always talking about what or who you're worshipping, but how you worship as well. We're going to be talking about worship in the sense of what puts us at ease, what gives us peace. Above I listed four ways I worship. My ways might not be the fanciest, but they work for me.

I worship by writing. When I write, I get everything that's on my mind written down on paper. I take all the cluttered thoughts and put it on paper. It makes me feel like I'm just letting it go or saying what I want to say on paper. When you write, you can let everything go and say whatever you want without getting in trouble.

People might say cooking isn't a way you worship..it just makes you get hot and sweaty. That's not true either. Cooking is way to show you're creativity. You can put any and everything you want in a pot or pan and cook it. It's my worship because it's something I'm very good at, it's

something I love to do, and it soothes me. When you're cooking, all the great smells flow throughout the air and it makes you stop and say ummm.... that smells so good, what is it? Whatever was on your mind just fades away because you want to taste what smells so good.

Another worship is doing hair. For



me that is a great way to worship because I'm good at it, I love doing it, and it makes me feel good. We all get down sometimes and end up feeling like we're not needed, we're not wanted, we're not good at anything, and we all want to know our purpose, but when I do hair, I get so many compliments that I remember, hey, I am good at something, I do have a purpose, and I am needed. Even when I don't get those thoughts, when people compliment my work, they're

complimenting me...who wouldn't like getting compliments?

These are the ways worship. Writing, cooking, and doing hair might not be a good way for you to worship, but it's a great way for me to worship. I also sing for worship too. I did not want to do it at first because I'm insecure about my voice right now, but I would like to get better at it so I can start worshipping that way too.

See, I just gave you a fourth way that I worship. Like I said...I love worshipping these ways because I'm great at these talents that God has blessed me with and they soothe me. The good and frequent use of my talents is a way that I like to worship God. I encourage you all to find a way to worship and exercise your talents. All of these ways might not be for you, but if I have four ways that I really worship, and I'm working on my fifth way, then I know there's a way out there for you. Believe me it works.

The Real Deal PUNISHMENT

By Endera Allen



Last year I left my seminar class without asking the teacher for permission. He asked me where have I been like he was actually looking for me (he wasn't). So I say I was working on my zoo project with another student in enrichment. So he gets angry at me. I told him the truth, that's better than lying (I think that grown-ups want us to tell the truth but not head on but slowly so you give them time to comprehend). So then he goes and tells my course br on me and I get in trouble for so called having an attitude, just because I told the truth. So then my course br tells me let's run stairs, I shrug and follow her. We walk down and who finds us, Dr. Perry who says, "Send her home. If she's not going to class she doesn't want to be here." So I am saved from the stairs but not the punishments.

So my mom is called. I'm yelled at on the phone and sent to the office to wait on her there. She comes in and signs me out of the school and I get the lecture of a lifetime about it in the car. I should tell you she called the police on me for skipping school. I'm thinking REALLY! They couldn't arrest me because I didn't leave the building. You think that's the end of it, not if you knew my Mom - she made a new connection - she'll keep it. Now she has the numbers of 2 detectives at the Hartford Police Department who deal with youth - No I am not giving out their contacts. Stay with me here. She says that she is going to ask her interns about a good punishment. So I feel good about that, thinking the interns are going to have my back. It turns out there is one person who gave out an idea as a joke - DUCK SAUCE!!!! and my mom loved it.

So guess what my punishment was Community service. 24 hours! She said, "If I wasn't able to appreciate and focus on my academic opportunities then I should explore my blue collar future." I was happy at first, then I saw the work that I had to

do and I was disgusted. I had to clean up the park near my school, the one with the Keney Clock Tower and the whole block of Main Street my school sits on and the schoolyard. She wanted me to explore the green options for all of my community service. She bought me green garbage bags. The plan was that she would go with me to my community service, she didn't want me to feel like she had just left me out there - Really! We had to take photos of my experience and then I had to journal after each community service act. This was so that I would really reflect about what it was to have to do unskilled labor. She even hugged me and reminded me she loves me after each time. I thought it was overkill.

So anyway, the morning I had to clean the park she woke me at 5:45, I went back to sleep. When she came back she had a fit and made me get back up. She also said I had exercised my options and decided we were not stopping for breakfast. We went to the park and I started cleaning. When it was time to do Main Street - The busses started coming. I wanted to stop but she said, no way, if I had gotten up like I was supposed to I wouldn't have had an audience. When I told her I was embarrassed, she welcomed me to her club. She found it embarrassing to come up to the school for stupid crap like skipping a class/seminar. She was teaching me a hard lesson so we wouldn't have to go through it again. Now my friends are watching me pick up trash and asking me about it. They were even saying hi to my Mom and having conversations. It was not the least bit funny to me but I was laughed at for it. My feelings were hurt for a bit but I got over it.

My sister posted it on Facebook (SASHA!!!!) and put the word out that anyone with a job to do that would add to my learning experience should contact us. Then I started getting calls from family and friends asking for help with lots of things. Like cleaning out basements and garages and things like that. My mom chose a good one and that was cleaning out bird and dog cages for a family friend who breeds exotic birds and Russell terriers. This was not a pretty story. The birds pooped on paper and there were little bugs crawling on it and I screamed and got a get out of jail free card on that one. Then I mistaked a doodoo statue for a bird be-

cause it had feathers and everything so I petted it and my hands came away with doodoo on them. I started screaming and ran to wash my hands vigorously with soap. Not a good experience, but it was actually a cool experience once you got past the poop and such. We turned on some music and the birds started to dance and I started singing it was really fun (The dancing I mean). It took us eight hours to finish the cleaning process then we had to clean the bowls and the food trays without getting bitten. This was hard for me because some birds bite a lot.

There was this one bird that I liked out of all of them, I think it was a Blue Macaw or something like that. I remembered him because he liked my favorite song, "Look at Me Now." And when it came on I was cleaning its cage and I was singing Chris Brown's part and then it started dancing. That bird and me were in the corner dancing and singing and he would caw in tune with the song it was kind of fun. Just when I thought it liked me it got angry and ripped my too small gloves off my hands. I was mad because those gloves were way too hard to get on. By the time we were done I was frustrated and tired from working with so many animals. So we went upstairs and chilled for a while and had a snack. Then we called up my mom to let her know we were done then we got washed up and started doing the laundry.

I had other experiences to complete those 24 hours. My sister, Celeste watched and she says she is not skipping class. Truth is I'm not going to either. The work I did wasn't horrible and I actually enjoyed a lot of it - by the way my Mom was ok with that (she didn't want me miserable). Now don't get me wrong, I made the best of it but I am not cut out for that kind of work. I'd rather have other opportunities that will stem from accomplishing academic goals. At home and at Capital Prep I am being groomed for success. For me that success lies elsewhere. I'm definitely going to get in trouble again, that's realistic, but I'm clear about the difference between my academic success and blue collar opportunities, thanks to my Mom. Let me put her on blast - Yolanda Allen. Email her and tell her to be gentle with me I'm a creative genius in the making.

Who I Feel Responsible To...

By Lydia Brown

Most people have many responsibilities. Many teens' responsibilities vary from cleaning house, to their education, to taking care of their younger siblings, and to paying their own bills. All of these responsibilities listed above are on my list of overall responsibilities, except taking care of younger siblings, but my biggest responsibility I say would have to be taking care of my mom.

My Mother's name is Annie L. Brown and she is 57 years old. I want every reader to understand that my mom is able to do for herself, but she is definitely a busy body and that tends to tire her out. She's always running around. My Mom loves to help people out, give ideas, and participate in anything she can as long as it's positive. She's a Minister at United Pentecostal Church of the Redeemer on 165 Capen Street in Hartford, CT. She loves the Lord and her family.

It's clear that she has a lot on her plate and will do any and everything

that she can for them. I know that she understands that she needs her rest, but that can't stop fact that she loves being a part of and helping out in the church and with her family. She also really loves to help people out, and that always has her busy. That isn't always good for her health and she ends up forgetting to make herself the number 1 priority, and when she doesn't put herself first, she sometimes ends up catching a cold and/or having chest pairs, which makes it hard for her to catch her breath.

Though my mom can do for herself, she is tired a lot. Sometimes she accidentally falls asleep without taking her medicines. One night my mom's sugar dropped really low when she was sleeping. It dropped so low that her friend and her doctor

said usually people go into a coma and could end up dying. She has taken care of me and still is, but it's my turn to do something to help take care of her. So when I found out I took it upon myself to make it an even bigger responsibility in my book. I had to gain knowledge and understanding of her health concerns and basically learn the ropes, which I did, so my mom can get better as well as healthier. When people upset her or hurt her feelings, I get mad because that's my mother and she does all she can for others. I was also very horrified when I found out. It scares me because I love my mother and I want her to live a long life. If it was up to me, I wouldn't even want her to die, but that's a part of life and I can't stop that.

I'm just doing all that I can and the best that I can. I'm seventeen years old and will be a graduate from the Journalism and Media Academy, which is located in the Weaver High School building, in June of 2012. I plan on going to college for radio, business administration (major), finance or accounting (minor), cosmetology, and culinary. I plan on having a lot of businesses and working in one or two. I also plan on getting married and having kids. I'm praying to God that my mother lives to see all the successful things I accomplish as well as her grandchildren and maybe even great grandchildren. I want her to not only know, but see that she was and still is a great mom and that she raised me right. I want her to know that even though I made mistakes and I will make mistakes in the future, they were on me, and not on her. The same way she has given, gave, and is going to give me the things she never got, I want to be successful to do the same for her as well as my father, Albert Brown.

So, I'm not knocking anyone else's responsibility and I'm not saying that mine are better, but this is my biggest responsibility.

I Love You Mom!!!

Love Makes Me Responsible To You Danajha

By Jayquan Brown

Responsibilities are a big part of everyone's lives including us teenagers. When we start accepting our responsibilities, that's one of the first steps to becoming an adult. Responsibility can mean two different things depending on your situation. Responsibility can mean a person or thing which one is responsible for, and it can also mean the ability or authority to act or decide on one's own, without supervision.

I have a huge responsibility in my life, which is my younger sister. My sister's name is Danajha and she is 11 years old. I can't count all the ways I feel responsible to and for her. My Mother, never put this on me, I took it on myself. For example, protecting her, leading her down the right path, making sure I'm always there when she needs me, and beat up every boy that comes around, lol. She is the most important person in the world to me. I look at it this way, people jump from job to job all their lives, but I have a permanent job, and that's to be a big brother and steer my little sister down the right path to being a successful young lady. This is not an easy job. I have to show my sister that I care by doing the little things that an 11 year old would enjoy. Such as, taking her to the park, buying her ice cream, fixing her bike, all sorts of things. Those are some of the simpler things I do with her. They may seem like little things but my sister enjoys them, and when we're done and she says, "Thank You Jay-Jay, I Love You" it gives me an indescribable feeling of love.

Where my family and I come from, there are not so many great influences to look up to. With my knowledge and love for her I will try to the best of my ability to help her be a unique female in society. There is nothing more important in this world to me than seeing my sister prosper and be above the average girl without a father from the quote on quote "HOOD".

Some Statistics

- 63% of teen suicides come from fatherless homes.
SOURCE: U.S. Dept of Health
- 90% of all runaways and homeless children are from fatherless homes.
SOURCE: Justice and Behavior
- 71% of all high school dropouts come from not having any influences.
SOURCE: National Principals Association Report

I refuse to let my sister be one of these statistics. I'm not my sister's father and her and I both know that, but I can be the next best thing. I'm that big brother that she can come to when she wants to laugh, talk, and cry with. So basically my responsibility is to be there for my sister and make sure she knows she can depend on me whenever she needs me.

Rising Athletic Star in Greater Hartford

By Jayquan Brown

I love sports and I wanted to make a contribution to our new publication, The REAL, about something I enjoy and have a lot of interest in I love sports. They are beneficial in a lot of ways. Sports are fun, healthy, and teach all sorts of life skills. A few of them are to: teamwork, accepting responsibilities, and hard work. My favorite sport is basketball, and I owe that to my uncle William Brown. My uncle taught me the meaning of hard work, he influence came from a little boy to be the best and try my best at everything I do in life.

There are so many benefits in playing sports. For some people sports can be a career goal, for others sports can just be a free ticket to college. In my case sports is a getaway. Normally when people feel they need to get away they go on vacation, I go to a basketball court and play. You can call basketball, my "utopia".

To be a Rising Athletic Star in the Greater Hartford Area, you have to be one of the best at your particular sport and take every opportunity that's been made available for you. There are so many opportunities available to network your athletic ability in the Greater Hartford Area. Hartford offers a traditional exposure league in all sports every year, which gives these athletes the exposure they need to be rising stars.

In order to be a Rising Star in Hartford you have to commit yourself. Some of these commitments require a lot of hard work. Such as, discipline, regular independent practice routines, training, social habits, and teamwork. It's statistically impossible to be the best at a sport without being committed to it.

As a Rising Athletic Star you need a supporting cast. Parents, coaches, mentors, teammates, and friends are a "must". Parents, coaches, mentors, teammates, and friends play a big role in a Rising Stars life by providing support, training, etc... They are the people who are there to help and motivate you when times get hard.

Accomplished Athletes residing in Hartford:

Marcus Camby (*Hartford*)-Basketball
Johnny Egan (*Hartford*)-Basketball
Terrance Knighton (*Hartford*)-Football
Rebecca Lobo (*Hartford*)-Basketball
Rick Mahorn (*Hartford*)-Basketball
Jeff Simmons (*Hartford*)-Track
Ron Wotus (*Hartford*)-Baseball

High School Athletes Exhibiting Above Average Potential:

Jayquan Brown (*Weaver High*)-Basketball
Shaquille Ricketts (*Bukeley High*)-Basketball
Kahlil Dukes (*Capital Prep*)-Basketball
John Haugabook (*Weaver High*)-Football
Kenya Stewart (*Weaver High*)-Girls Basketball
Shantel Gayle (*Weaver High*)-Girls Track
Charles Davis (*Weaver High*)-Basketball
Jeff Atkins (*Weaver High*)-Soccer
Eric Dampier (*Hartford High*)-Baseball

Things that make you go, hmmm...

By Lydia Brown

We can all agree that we have seen, heard, and read about crazy and weird things that people do in public. Just the other day, I read on google.com that a guy in Canada watched his friend eat a lit cigarette because he wanted a piece of gum. I also read on google.com that a guy in Texas was sitting in public clipping his toenails, and could care less that they were flying everywhere. Here's another weird thing, I read about a woman who was holding her cat and began to chew its tail because she wanted something to chew on. My niece, Tatyana Randolph, was telling me that some people in New York dressed up and posed as statues on the streets. All of these things happened in states other than Connecticut. Lets talk about our state.

Here in Connecticut, I have seen some of the craziest and weirdest things. I have seen a woman bring her four children outside in 95% degree weather wearing thick, cotton pajamas that are supposed to be worn during the winter. What?!!!, was exactly what I was thinking. Another thing that was crazy that happened was that a good friend of mine – who shall remain nameless, had just bought a new pair of Converse and was on his way to his school, when he saw the bus that he had to take ride by him, he refused to wait for another bus to come, he decided to take off his socks and shoes and run downtown barefoot to catch that bus. Why did he

take off his socks and shoes you ask? He told me that he didn't want to crease his sneakers.

As us teens would write...lolz, which stands for Laugh Out Loud. If you think that's crazy or weird, I know you're going to go laugh very hard about this. I'm in Stop and Shop in Bloomfield, and my sister, friend, and I are shopping for snacks. So, my sister told me and my friend to go grab something to drink. When we turned and began to walk up the beverage aisle, we saw a guy pretending to be a police officer, but he had shaped his hand to look like a gun and he was pretending to arrest water jugs. Now you might think I'm just making this up, but this is a true story, which I happened to see with my own eyes.

After reading this, I'm sure that we all can agree that crazy, weird, and outrageous things happen not just in Connecticut, but everywhere. The only thing I have to say about this is to us these things might be weird, crazy, or outrageous, but to the people that do them, its just apart of thier life.

We'd love to hear from you about the crazy and weird things you've seen. Email us at interns@northendagents.com with the subject line: Funny, Weird & Crazy!



THE INTERVIEW:

WITH POLICE CHIEF DARRYL ROBERTS

During my opportunity to speak with the Chief of Police about the struggle that comes between the department and youth, he was actively engaged and completely open to all of my questions and group comments as a whole. Now at first this was kind of shocking but then I realized that the Chief and I had some things in common. The thing that we had in common is that we both grew up in Hartford and were accustomed to Police racial profiling. When I first started working on my article about how the police mistreat the youth I wanted to just rip the department apart which would have come with ease considering the fact that I have a plethora of voices, youth, and adults who would back me up.

Not including the examples and statements from the Hartford community that wouldn't be a problem to accumulate. But then you have brothers like Chief Darryl Roberts who is not trying to be a part of the problem but a part of the solution. I can't remember the Chiefs' exact words but they were something like, he joined the force so that he could make change from the inside, which is not just respectable, and thought provoking it's amazing, and I do respect it.

The chief also leveled with us and talked about his struggle and childhood after my article was read, and all of the groups' questions were answered. He talked about his relationship with his young mother and how she had to play the mom and dad role in a household of eight kids and how she worked diligently. Now I could also relate to having a single mother, who plays both roles, works to no end, and still manages to let her love rain on her children and others around her, and I'm sure more than enough youth can too. I respect how open he was to talking about this and how

respect played an important role in his childhood.

He also explained that maybe certain police officers may become disrespectful with youth because nowadays we need an answer for everything, and I'm not saying he is wrong, but change comes with time. We are the change and this is our time, and regardless of what age someone may be, or where they may have come from, disrespect is still disrespect, and shouldn't be taken lightly by anyone, even the youth. So I encourage my young counterparts to remain respectful with police, but to also voice what they have to say, and not under any circumstances let them mistreat us. This means voicing our concerns in respectful and effective ways. We need to put our concerns in writing and share them with our parents, community. We cannot forget to bring our issues to the attention of the public servants and officials including the Chief himself, who are there largely due to our voting power - through our parents and adults in our community.

In conclusion Police Chief Darryl Roberts, from what I've seen and heard is a strong yet reachable individual. He is responsible for all of his officers and if they slip up, he takes the fall as he expressed, so I strongly hope that the problem ceases somewhat, and I understand fully that it will take time. There is a saying, "Rome wasn't built in a day," therefore, I know the rebuilding of the police department relationships of trust in my city and community, won't happen in one day.

To all the young minds keep your head up, and if negative or positive authority is encountered look them in the eye and express yourself in an intelligent manner, know your rights and never settle for less.

"Eagles don't fly with pigeons."

This was a quote from the Hartford Police Department, Chief Darryl Roberts and the phrase truly spoke for itself. Whenever the police are involved, we just automatically assume that they're targeting us but that's not always the case. The interview with Chief Roberts has changed my perspective of law enforcement and their concern with youth relations. He explained to us that he's like us in so many ways. He has come from Hartford just as well as we have and has struggled to get to the top. Chief Roberts told us that nothing is given to us. Everything that we want in life has to be earned, including respect. The way we carry ourselves to the people we hang with may have a big effect on how not only police look at us, but people in general. So if you're hanging with people that get into trouble, then everyone else is going to assume that you're just like them.

The way to fix relationships with police officers is to first evaluate ourselves. Everybody wants to be cool or even fit in. Don't be the one to follow behind the negative group of people, be the positive person that your friends look up to. Instead of getting into trouble with your friends because they're the only people you know, find new friends. Speak up and stop hanging with people that aren't on your level because as Chief Roberts said, "*Eagles don't fly with pigeons.*"

~ Courtney Mitchell

~ Quinton Bagby

Building Relationships of Trust Between Law Enforcement and Community

By Celeste Allen

Today in the world all we hear about is the bad things that police do in our communities. They take too long to come when we call, they target us for harassment and unfair treatment, they are working against us, etc... We never hear about the good things. I wanted this story opportunity. I wanted to tell the flip side of what Quinton's been able to write about. I'd like our readers to look at both sides and appreciate and be able to respond to all of what we've been able to cover.

The truth is I don't know much about the police or any of the negative things I have heard about them from any firsthand experience and I hope to never have any. My parents have kept me and my siblings insulated from some of the negative experiences that are so common for most of my community. As I was preparing to participate in this new publication I began to learn a little more about what other people had experienced and how different my own experience has been. I don't feel threatened by power in most forms, I am always aware that there is a safety net of people around me, knowledge and resources that are available to me, it doesn't always occur to me that I need to be wary of police, truthfully in my neighborhood when we call they show up quick. I don't think to say they are there in 2 minutes is an exaggeration and my Mom will call if she hears or sees anything out of the ordinary. I've even called. I remember calling because I saw a strange man in our yard. They showed up quickly, it was the gas man trying to read the meter before they converted them to the new electronic ones. I recall my Mom laughing at the irony of the situation, I had only said I saw a strange man in the yard - to me he was strange because he was white and we were not entertaining or hosting a meeting at the time. A neighbor called once when we first moved in and said he saw a stranger on the hiking trail after dusk. There were at least 3 cruisers,

a SWAT team and a fire truck - I'm really not exaggerating. What I now know is that tax brackets make a difference. It's not fair but it is true. I'm glad I understand and am gaining these experiences as part of my growth and maturity process. Eventually, I am going to be one of the siblings that takes over the future of the Northend Agent's and The REAL and will be responsible for representing the community we serve. Part of the future of this service is to understand and know the issues that we experience so that I will be able to advocate in appropriate and effective ways.



I recently had the opportunity to interview Police Chief Darryl Roberts at his office in Police Headquarters on Weston Street. I was accompanied by my Mom, Yolanda Allen and sister, Ehdara Allen. Ehdara was there to take pictures during my interview. I was struck by the lobby. It wasn't filthy but it wasn't a place I'd like to have to wait at. Nobody waiting looked happy. Sorrow has a very real presence, it was there. The waiting area and check in made me slightly nervous. I was directed to the administrative offices of the Police Department. This area was better than the waiting area but it definitely had not had an HGTV designer in at any time. The way space is designed, colored, furnished, laid out can have a real impact on emotion. I was still nervous and uncomfortable. The Chief's office was a much better space for me. There were books and photos, a desk where it's clear real and significant work takes place.

Chief Darryl Roberts was there and he made it clear that I was welcome. He wasn't intimidating me. I believe he was aware of my discomfort and he

graciously helped ease my entrance into his environment. He let me know he was looking forward to doing this interview and would answer any questions I had. He wanted me to feel free to say and ask anything. I really appreciated that. His assistant Ms. Nancy Milroy was in attendance as well and she was also willing to participate as needed.

Chief Roberts started by explaining the role of police. Their work is service oriented, they are peacekeepers charged with enforcing the laws. He was clear they don't make the laws. That is the responsibility of legislative representatives. They don't get much attention for the good work they do. The truth is it's not pretty work. Although, I think the good they do is worth recognizing. Anybody who meets Chief Roberts and gets to talk with him, if you're not in trouble, will see he has a true heart for the work and community he serves. He is clear about that as well, he's here to serve. He wants our community to be safe. He works every day towards making the positive difference.

We spent a great deal of time talking about the large number of programs that the police sponsor in the community for youth to participate in. It's not just Officer Friendly programs. They have sports programs for girls and boys of every age group, they have a forensic science program, CSI for young people. They mentor and have celebrations and outings with young people from our urban community. They recognize and reward hard work and effort for academic achievement, and program participation by hosting these celebrations.

I was curious about his youth and upbringing. His personal story is profound and inspiring. He grew up in the Bellevue Square projects (that's where my Dad, John Allen grew up. Bellevue Square produced good stock). His mother was 14 when she had him and he's the oldest. He had two pair of pants, one for school and the other to play. When she served dinner if you were not at the table you didn't eat. She surrounded him and his siblings in structure in spite of her young age. When he was graduating she was getting her GED and later Nursing degree - I don't even know her and I admire and respect her ability to rise and bring her children

with her. He remembers spending time with other guys who dreamed of making better lives for themselves. They would regularly spend time talking about what they were going to do. The three of them have managed to do what they said they would and remain good friends.

He feels kids these days need more structure and guidance. He thinks we have a sense of entitlement that is not earned. By not earning respect and opportunity we have missed out on very important lessons of the value of hard work and maturity. Chief Robert's has a quote he likes to use, as far as I am concerned it's a mantra and I've been using it since I met him, he said, "Eagles don't fly with pigeons." Think about it. Pigeons can't fly that high, they are the prey; eagles soar. That really stood out to me because if you hang around the wrong group of people their negativity can be contagious. By the same token, positive ideas and values are contagious too.

He offered some additional advice,
"Know Your Rights."

The 5 First Amendment Freedoms Speech

- *The First Amendment says* that people have the right to speak freely without government interference. Press
- *The First Amendment gives* the press the right to publish news, information and opinions without government interference. This also means people have the right to publish their own newspapers, newsletters, magazines, etc. Religion
- *The First Amendment prohibits* government from establishing a religion and protects each person's right to practice (or not practice) any faith without government interference. Petition
- *The First Amendment says* that people have the right to appeal to government in favor of or against policies that affect them or that they feel strongly about. This freedom includes the right to gather signatures in support of a cause and to lobby legislative bodies for or against legislation. Assembly
- *The First Amendment says* that people have the right to gather in public to march, protest, demonstrate, carry signs and otherwise express their views in a nonviolent way. It also means people can join and associate with groups and organizations without interference.

To learn more about the Hartford Police Department's Programs for Youth visit www.hartford.gov/police/.

I also want to tell you I'd like to hear from you. Which story would you like me to cover next? Email me at interns@northendagents.com.



Hartford Police Chief Daryl K. Roberts

CHIEF'S MESSAGE

"We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort."

Four time Olympic Gold Medal Champion *Jesse Owens*

These inspirational words from one of the greatest athletes the world has ever known have resonated with me since the first time I read them. "Determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort;" these are qualities hard to come by, but once nurtured within you, essential to your life achievement, fulfillment and success.

There are no free lunches. There are no shortcuts. There is no easy path. The true and only path to success and ultimate fulfillment of your dreams is through hard work, discipline, and effort. And, as you strive to achieve your dreams, you must always remember to do your best because success is never final. Throughout your life your dreams evolve and you must evolve with them; seeking to better yourself and those around you, as you become our future leaders, mothers and fathers, and role models for future generations. I encourage our future leaders to step out and blaze a trail that represents the three MC's: moral conscious, moral character, and a moral compass.

I challenge you to dream. I challenge you to embrace your dreams. I challenge you to embark on a path to success that draws on your determination; employs dedication, self-discipline and effort to not only achieve your dreams, but to surpass them beyond your wildest dreams! And, never forget that success is never final.

I am proud to have worked with the young journalist you who this publication together. I applaud their success. I applaud the determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort they put into bringing you this special youth edition of the Northend Agents. Congratulations to the future leaders in our community.

Family Piece Jazz Fest

Written by Quinton Bagby

Music is a known source for bringing people together. Families don't always necessarily get along, but at the 2011 Jazzfest in the Bushnell Park everyone was on one accord. The music played, the vendors sold, and I'm sure that certain hearts were stole. It was amazing I saw fathers hugging their sons, I saw distant relatives who loved to tag along, and I saw young minds that actively used the ir time. The environment was cool while I was there, I didn't see any heated conflict. I guess food and music just makes people happy, there were plenty of live Jazz tunes being played by local bands, and for food, you could get your fried dough, pizza, funnel cakes, burgers, fries, soft drinks, cotton candy, etc... I had the opportunity to also meet two young vendors from Brooklyn and they were cousins. They sold handbag, earrings, shirts, and a plethora of other clothing articles or accessories. Attending the jazz concerts in the park showed how music brings families and people from different areas together, they seemed to make themselves right at home. New York families and Hartford families were actively engaged with peace. When I was downtown Saturday the 16th I felt lifted by the music and positively overwhelmed with the sense of family tranquility.

Responsibility For Education

Written by Quinton Bagby

Responsibility is a crucial key in the world, if you are not responsible you are not prepared for the world, everything comes with responsibility. I feel at this point in my life my education is one of my greatest responsibilities. If someone doesn't take responsibility for their education, the only person that is losing out is them. Therefore it is my duty to take full advantage of my education, too participate in all classes, and soak up as much knowledge as possible. My education plays a big role in my future, we are living in a time of a recession a lot of jobs are or have cut back, so they would like intelligent, educated people to work for them. I plan to attend Manchester community college in the fall to participate in the culinary program. I have heard so many positive things about it, such as someone from that college was featured on the food network and had their own show. When I go there I plan to keep my GPA above average and not settle for less at any point in time.

The Way I Worship

Isaiah Brown

I am a unique individual and so is my method of worship. My method is thinking and that's betwe en me and God. There is nothing that I do more than think. I think I do it about 95% of the day. I consider it a form of worship because it calms me, it keeps me at peace. Thinking helps me to solve problems and prepare for the future. When I'm angry or mad I sit and think and who knows maybe a happy thought comes and makes me feel better. It may seem like an awkward method but it's what shapes me as a person. That's the way I worship.

Responsibility

Isaiah Brown

In my mind, I see myself as an individual whose basically alone and my responsibilities I have are only for me. That's not a statement about my family here - They have made all the difference in my survival - it's just based on my experience. My responsibilities to myself are to first, be the best person I can be. Despite the fact that there are a lot re gative people and influences in today's society, my duty to myself as my own person is to not get influenced by these things. I want to achieve great things in and of my life and it is my duty to myself, to stay on the right path.

My job as a Media Intern at Northend Agent's is my second most important responsibility. Having this job, I feel is real, and essential to my development as a person. It will prepare me for the future. I am always on deadline so it's my obligation to get the work done. It's my responsibility to represent and our newspaper - Northend Agent's in the best way I can because it has a strong and credible reputation that I am proud to be a part of.

Rich Dad, Poor Dad Financial Goals

Quinton Bagby

As a group, Media Interns at Northend Agent's are reading and doing the exercises to the book, Rich Dad, Poor Dad. We are learning and discussing a lot. I'd like to share my financial goals exercise with you. In this exercise we were just identifying some of the goals we have that will be tied to who we are financially.

My first financial goal is to have an apartment before I turn nineteen. Also to be able to support my gas tank inside of whatever car I drive when I get my license. I also want to be able to fund my own insurance for my vehicle. I want to never have a lack of groceries and be able to afford any clothing or accessory I want, whenever I want. I want to be able to buy my mom a house, and a candle apple red Jaguar that I know she wants. I also want to give back to everyone who has supported me along the way.

MDC Supports Local Youths

Intern program for high school students a success!!



The Metropolitan District (MDC) is your local water and sewer company. We provide the water you drink each day and handle the waste water and sewage that leaves your home down the drain and through the toilet. Sometimes it's not a pretty job...but somebody has to do it!!

This summer the MDC had seven high school interns from the Academy of Engineering and Green Technology at Hartford Public High spend one week at our facilities to learn more about the Hartford water system and the careers that could be a part of their future if they stick with their studies.

The students worked in a wide range of departments at the MDC including engineering, customer service and water treatment. They also toured the MDC reservoir out in Barkhamsted – 28 miles away from Hartford – where the clean water we all drink comes from.

The MDC is very proud of our high school interns and we hope to see them return to MDC as college interns and later as full-time employees!

Thanks to Our Partners

- Hartford Public High School
Academy of Engineering and Green Technology
- Connecticut Business and Industry Association - CBIA
- The Urban League
- Capital Workforce Partners



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SMART PEOPLE

“THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS”

In various religious texts, there can be found some interesting personal development gems.

One from the Bible is “The Parable of the Talents.”

The Parable of the Talents is one of the stories Jesus told to teach a moral lesson. Although the word “talents” in the story refers literally to money, you can obviously extend the meaning to other areas. It’s interesting to read it using the common definition of “talents.”

HERE’S THE STORY: THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.”

His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

The man with the two talents also came. “Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.”

His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

Then the man who had received the one talent came. “Master,” he said, “I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.”

His master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

This simple story makes some interesting points that are applicable to the pursuit of personal development.

First, we're all given a different starting position. Some of us are born into abundance (five talents). Others are born into scarcity (one talent). But what matters isn't what we're given — it's what we do with it that matters. So Jesus acknowledges the unfairness of life, but he also suggests that our starting conditions are irrelevant. One person earns five talents, another earns only two, but both are congratulated equally because both achieved a 100% gain. (I'd sure like to know where those servants invested their money!)

This is also a good lesson in how to deal with other human beings. Deal with other people based on their starting positions, and evaluate yourself by your own starting position. If you happen to be one of those who receives five talents, don't pat yourself on the back that you're already above average. If you have abundant talents, you should expect even more from yourself. Similarly, there may be times in your life where you only have one talent and do the best you can with it, and even though your gains appear small from an external standard, by Jesus' standard you've still made a notable accomplishment. I wrote about this previously in *Raise Your Standards*.

Another interesting aspect of the parable is that our talents are entrusted to us, like a master putting money into the care of his servants. We are stewards of our wealth, and I define wealth very loosely here, well beyond material possessions. For example, if I can write and speak fairly well, those are talents entrusted to me. I can bury them in the ground out of fear, or I can push out of my shell and strive to create increase for all.

One thing I wonder about the parable is this: What would have happened if one of the servants who invested the money realized a loss instead of a gain? There's a clue to how Jesus would have answered this because of how the master addressed the third servant: "You wicked,

lazy servant!" Later the master refers to that servant as "worthless" and has him physically thrown out. That's pretty harsh language considering the servant still gave the master all his money back. Is Jesus saying that inaction is wicked? Yes, I believe so. In other words, if you do nothing with your talents... if you hide them in the ground and hoard them, you are choosing to be wicked, lazy, and worthless. You are supposed to invest what you've been given. Don't be lazy.

Another clue is how the first two servants are praised. The master praises them for being "faithful." Very interesting. It would have been different if the master praised them for being shrewd or effective or profitable. But the praise is given for their faith, not for their results.

Given the language (and hopefully my points still work with non-English versions of this scripture), I conclude that if one of the servants had invested money and lost some or all of it, they would still have been praised for their faithfulness. However, given that Jesus doesn't directly address this condition in the parable, he may also be suggesting that faith itself is the path to success — a common theme in his other teachings. So perhaps if you use your talents faithfully, you aren't really going to lose.

Another notable quality of the parable is the lack of competition. The servants aren't competing with each other for their master's favor. It's not a zero-sum game. The first two servants both contribute something of value to their master's estate.

What's the ultimate reward for the faithful servants? Although Jesus doesn't explicitly say it, it seems obvious they don't get to keep the money. The two successful servants aren't even working for their own increase. It's not their money. They're working for the increase of their master, and they share in the increase to his estate. Their true reward is to share in their master's happiness. So happiness is the reward, and happiness comes from serving others.

I know from experience that if I undertake some action to create increase only for

myself, there's very little energy to it, and it doesn't usually increase my happiness. But if I focus on creating increase for others (such as by helping people grow), then I feel great joy in doing that, and it ultimately creates increase for me too.

But there's more to it than that. Happiness is a quality that I inject into my work, not something I derive from it. When I work only for myself, I'm looking for happiness outside myself. Trying to achieve happiness that way doesn't work. But when I work for others' benefit and turn off WIIFM for a while (What's In It For Me?), I tap into the deep wells of happiness that are already inside me. Instead of trying to achieve happiness, I happily achieve. Happiness flows outward from me and into the work I do, so I experience it as an outflow, not an inflow.

Happiness is something you exhale, not something you inhale. Are you one of those people who must say, "Yes, Senator, I had a supply of happiness in my gut, but I did not exhale?"

As Jesus implies in *The Parable of the Talents*, creating abundance requires you to move beyond fear. If you're too fearful or suspicious or distrustful, you're going to bury your talents. And this leads to "weeping and gnashing of teeth," i.e. sorrow and depression.

You might think that fear and suspicion will keep you out of trouble, but really they'll just cause you suffering and pain. You don't need fear to avoid being a gullible idiot; for that you just need common sense. To live a life of abundance, you must ultimately move beyond fear and work to create abundance for others. Otherwise you'll ultimately be cast out as worthless. Jesus doesn't pull any punches here, youse bums.

Serve to create increase for others, and happiness is your reward. Bury your talents, and you get "weeping and gnashing of teeth." The choice is yours. And that's my parable for the day.

The Way We Hustle

By Nelton Tilo

When I was young, if you heard the word hustler, everyone knew what that meant. It usually meant you were a money maker, someone that could be found working for a more money in their pocket. I was around eight years old when I first heard the word 'hustler', and figured out what it meant quickly. Hustlers are part of the culture of my community. They are those people picking up extra yard work, fixing cars on the side, doing home repair and plumbing, beauticians, barbers and braiders operating without a license or formal training, babysitting, selling dinners, etc....

I discovered early that I liked the idea of hustling. I noticed the hustlers and what they were doing. I wanted to have my own hustles and I did and do. I work on cars; do home maintenance and small repairs, I cut hair, etc.... I've got a real client base and a good reputation. I've got a job as a Media Intern at Northend Agent's. I believe

in working and I work hard. I believe that I learned the most about having work that makes you money on the side from my friends, family, and people, who I knew. They taught me to look for ideas on ways to make my own money. My own experiences with hustlers/hustling have never meant anything negative. The way I see it having your own hustle is a way of life. It means that I am hardworking, dedicated to my work, and making a little extra money on the side. It always feels good to have to have a little extra money in my pocket.

My reason for all the extra hard work is simple; it's one word we all know and love, FAMILY. It's the same reason every man and woman works as hard as they do. There are other reasons; I also do it to better myself. I feel by having the job

I have now as well as my hustle, I'm learning to be more responsible as well as disciplined. In a way I feel it also gives me a sense of financial independence.

Some teens never give themselves a chance to grow out of what they knew about being dependent as a kid.

As far as I am concerned, Hustlers who lack the will to work hard and who haven't allowed themselves the free-

dom of creativity turn to selling drugs as an option. This hustle doesn't work for me. I appreciate my choices and don't care for the effects of what I have seen of this on my community and the people who work this way. Honestly, I make less money than them; it takes me longer to save it or to reach my money goals. The difference is I really appreciate every dollar it took to reach any of my goals,

I understand my customers, I feel good about my work and I like it when people around me can appreciate my work.

The hardworking teen you see everyday finding jobs to help himself as well as his family will have the edge over the teen that chooses not to. Hustling legally can help a teen in the future. For example teens who hustle legally might grow up to be well established entrepreneurs and businessmen. The teens that hustle illegally will most likely end up in prison or dead. So as far as me, I'm always going to have a positive hustle. My favorite hustle is cutting hair. I feel good about what I do and I like the look my clients give me, and the mirror when they have a nice clean haircut. It feels good when you do something positive, and it feels even better when you get paid while you're doing it. I'm a hustler, but I hustle legally. I'm doing well for myself, my family and community and I enjoy what I do.



Discovering ConnectiCon

By Endera Allen

I got to have a really fun new experience with my mom - Yolanda, my sister - Celeste and one of our Media Interns - Chris. We went to ConnectiCon 2011. ConnectiCon is an anime festival where you dress up like your favorite cartoon or pop culture character and hang out with people who enjoy the freedom of that as much as you do, show your costumes off, play games, act out character parts, dance, shop, and have fun. I did not have a costume because it was my first time - I did have to buy a few things to put one together. Next year I will have one well planned in advance. As soon as we walked in we saw lots of people in extravagant costumes. It was weird at first but if you looked at it through without passing judgment you could see that being there was going to actually be fun.

When I saw the booths I fell was thrilled. There were cat ears, tails, contacts, cloaks, etc... When I saw the contacts I begged my mom to get me a pair but she told me to wait until I saw the rest of what the vendors had to offer. So we kept moving and then I saw cloaks and I had to have one. I begged my mom and she finally agreed and I got a black silk cloak that I wore everywhere. Celeste hates when I wear it in the Blue Black Square and Whole Foods, she's easily embarrassed. I should tell you she's not exactly a free spirit but we'll keep her, lol.

We walked around some more and came to a video game section. It had all the games. We walked through there and watched people play games. Until we came to the last section where two boys were playing Dance Fever and their feet

were flying. They were so fast and they got almost everything right, it was cool. So we stood there and watched them play until they were done.

After we left them we saw Bumblebee the Transformer and we took pictures with him. He was almost the exact replica of him. Then we went to another booth and I got some cat ears and Celeste and Chris got some contacts. Then we went upstairs and I got chain mail earrings to go with my costume. It was really fun. I hope to go there next year. And to make a tradition of going every year. If you want to make an outing and attend with writers from The REAL email us at interns@northendagents.com. You'll have to be prepared to write or contribute to the social media of The REAL if you go with us, but you are welcome to join us.



Understanding Planking

By Terrence Allen

To plank. To lay horizontally in a strange or unusual place. To plank you must lay horizontally straighten your body and point your fingers and toes down (towards your feet), then you must name your "plank" and post a picture of the creator (of the plank) performing the pose on Facebook. Planking is a great pastime for people who get bored easily and have friends willing to take pictures of them.

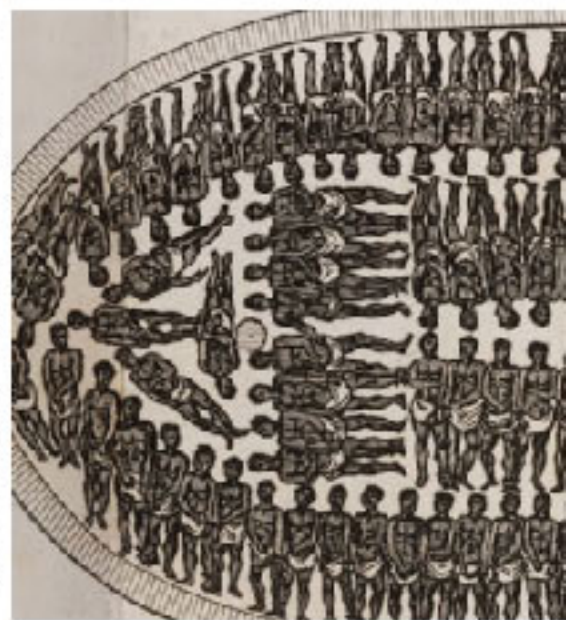


I know many people are wondering Why we plank.

It's a Fad that everyone is doing all over the world, Teens, young children, even adults. It's also known as the laying down game. The activity consisting of lying face down in an unusual location people have planked on items such as police cars, poles, buses, etc... A word of caution, choose a safe location - fun doesn't have to be dangerous or risky. There has reportedly been a recent death of an individual who tried to perform a plank on a high building. If

there are any chances it may not be safe then don't plank.

It's one of the internet's biggest crazes, famous rappers and actors like Big Sean and Chris Brown even post pics of themselves planking. Most people don't realize where planking originated from. It actually came from slavery during the middle passage it's a very cruel and horrible thing slave traders and owners used to make slaves lay on planks face down so they could crowd more into less space and so that they would not be able to sleep at night. Knowing its origins do we really want to participate in planking. Sometimes it's best to learn the truth and origins behind things before following the latest trend. Don't be a follower become an informed leader. Let people of the world know about what they are really doing so we can participate with knowledge and understanding.



My Experience at ConnectiCon

By Chris Irizzary



On July 9, 2011 I got a unique opportunity to cover a story that was happening at the CT Convention Center. We were given press passes to attend the ConnectiCon Weekend - A real first for me. When I arrived there I was exposed to a whole new world of Manga. There were people dressed as characters such as Ichigo Kurosake from the hit show Bleach, Riku from the game kingdom Hearts. Initially I was shy due to the fact that I have never been exposed to this culture before, I decided to observe everything that was going on around me.

There were different booths set up throughout the Convention Center with items for sell such as swords, Japanese candy, costumes, and exotic contact lenses. In addition to shopping there were gaming battles taking place. One of the things that really struck me is the fact that in spite of the fact that there

were so many people in this building there was no chaos or conflict. It was very peaceful and actually welcoming. The environment was so peaceful and although people were losing in the gaming contest they were still getting along. The experience that I was fortunate to have was like watching a new kind of society blossom.

On my way out I stopped and asked someone what attracts people to an event like this. She replied "This is a place where misfits can come have fun and just socialize with people." I'm looking forward to coming back to this in October with my friends. Hopefully they'll enjoy the experience just as much as I did.

It's almost hard to describe the experience. It was very visual. You can see the photos here and to see more of what our experience was like please visit northendagents.com.

Date Night at The Hartford Stage

By Courtney Mitchell

As my date and I walked through the theatre we were greeted by multiple smiles, not only from the employees but from the other theater goers as well. This was not my first time being at the Hartford Stage, but it was the first time I've truly paid attention to my surroundings while I was there. From the moment I walked through the door, I was embraced by this calm environment. The lights in the lobby were dimmed to perfection and the mood for the evening of great entertainment had been set. You don't often go to many public places that have great customer service and a positive atmosphere that's guaranteed. The entire building was clean. From the seats of the theatre to the seats of the bathroom, I could not find anything to complain about. Our tickets to the show were floor seats, row 5 to be exact. It was a really good view, but I can say the entire theatre has a good view no matter where you're sitting. A few years back I went to see a show with my Grandma and we sat in the upper seating section, but I still felt like I was close to the stage. What's better than that is that it doesn't matter where you sit, you'll get the same service from the employees that season pass members receive. The Hartford Stage had surely made me feel welcomed during my visit.

This was a night that the older couples had come out to see "I Wish You Love" by Dominic Taylor, directed by Lou Bellamy.

"I Wish You Love" was a story about Nat "King" Cole. Being so young, I walked into the play with no knowledge of who Mr. Cole was, but by the time I walked out that all had changed. Nat Cole was the first African American to host his own TV show which aired on NBC in 1956: The Nat King Cole Show. This play went into detail about Cole's life and how he had struggled with the challenges of racism and his career throughout the entire civil rights movement. Although I'm not a big fan of jazz music, I sat in comfort listening to the actors perform Mr. Cole's music. Not only did this play interest me, but it made me want to further my education on Nat "King's" Cole lifestyle. I'm now looking into the life of his daughter, singer Natalie Cole.

"I Wish You Love" is a show that is way before the youth of our generation's time. Many other teenagers may not find it as interesting as I did, but there are other shows that may catch their attention. The Hartford Stage has many upcoming shows such as The Crucible, Water by the Spoonful, The Whipping Man, etc... that youth may find very interesting. Hopefully I'll get to catch one of these shows on my next visit from college.

To find out more about Hartford Stage please visit
www.hartfordstage.org

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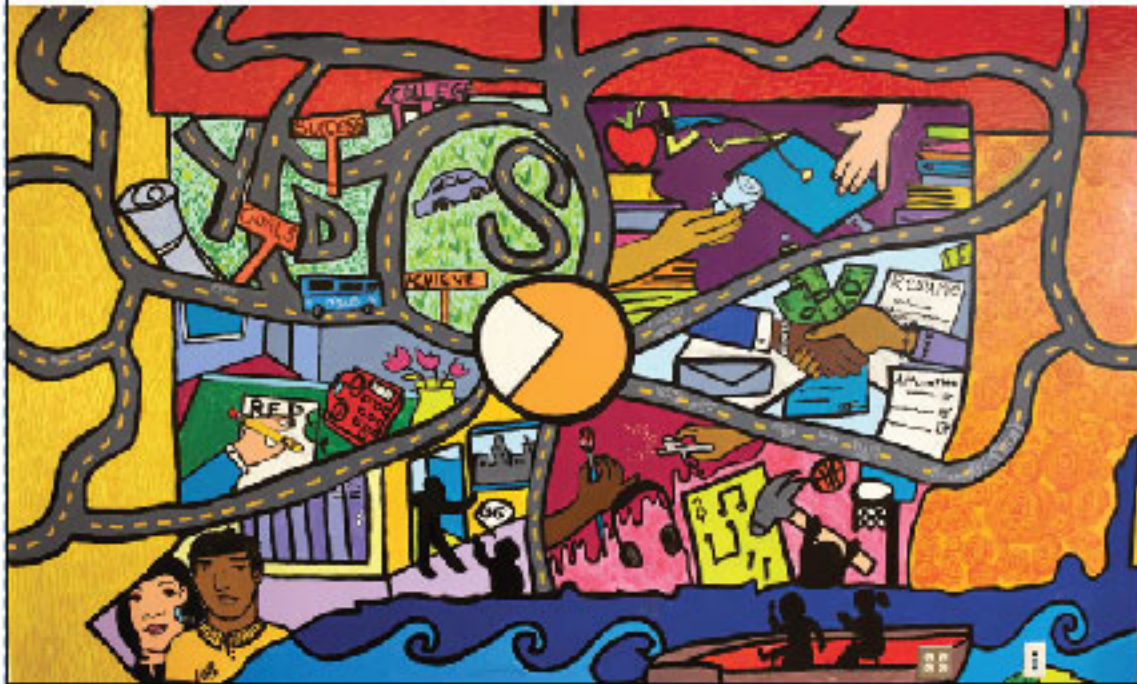
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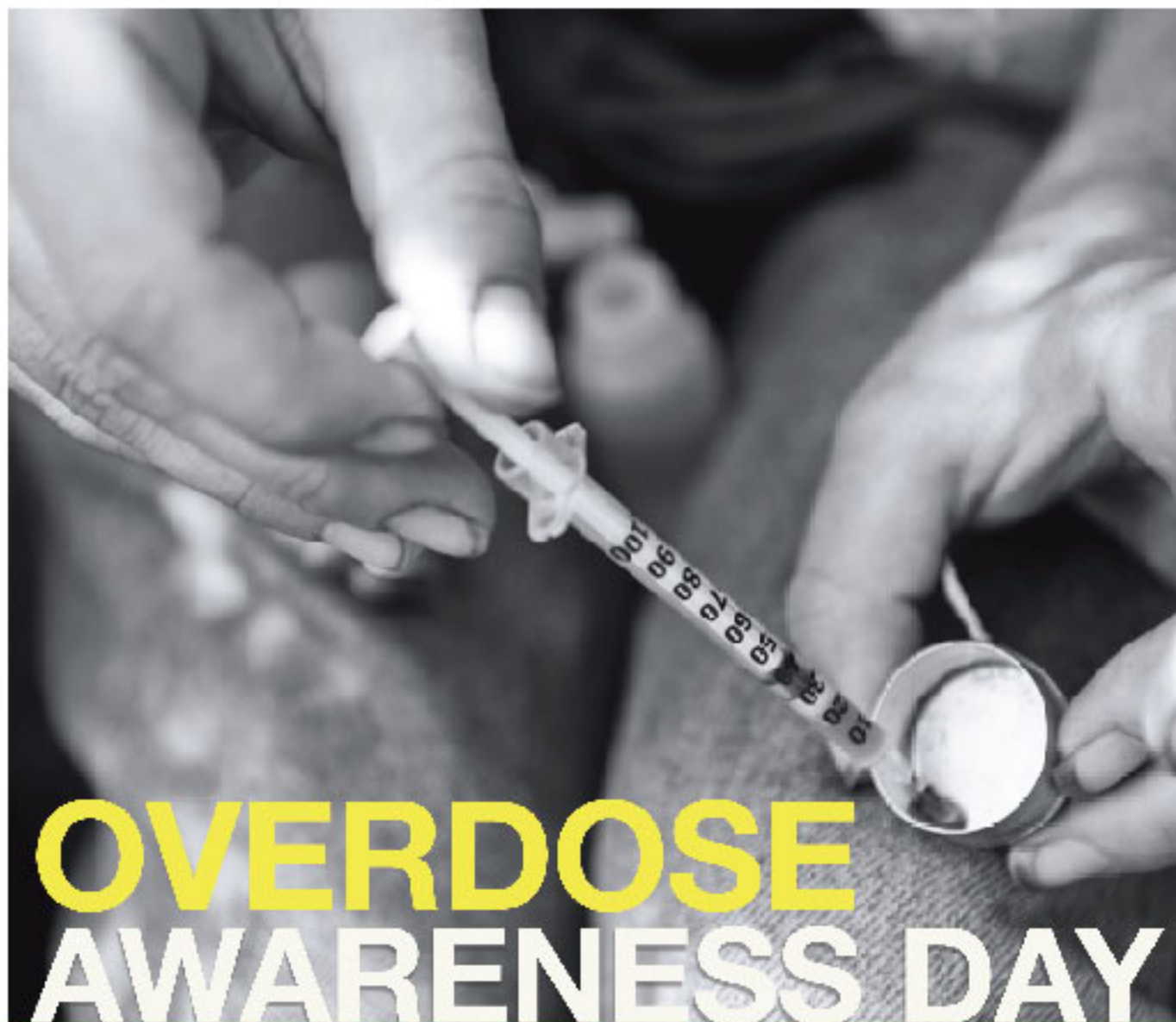
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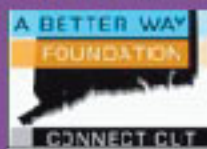
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Dr. Steve Perry
"America's most talked
about educator"

*Takes on a Fight for
Children's Education*

Hartford, Connecticut –

August 2, 2011 - Fighting to eliminate a broken school system that has plagued learning institutions throughout America, CNN education contributor Dr. Steve Perry delivers his fifth book, *Push Has Come To Shove: Getting Our Kids the Education They Deserve - Even if it Means Picking a Fight*, and challenges readers to take decisive action against substandard teachings prevalent in minority and suburban school rooms. The book is currently set to release on September 13, 2011, through the Crown Publishing Group.

As the saying goes, when "push comes to shove" a force of action must occur. Dr. Perry writes at his tipping point, organically revealing the tragic truths about America's derailed public school systems. He offers a comprehensive receipt of guidance for parents to be more involved in their children's education, passionate teachers to lecture outside standard classroom boundaries and principals looking to build a better core and foundation for their campus.

"Dr. Steve Perry's refreshing honesty and fierce work ethic have made him successful in turning very bad schools into very good schools. This book he's written about how to help others (including parents, teachers, and administrators) do the same is pure gold" - Dr. Bill Cosby

"I've long been a fan of Steve Perry's blunt, no-nonsense approach to improving American education. It's why Black in America 2 focused on his school and his leadership. This book boils down all his trade secrets and brilliant advice: it's a must-have, a must-read and a must-apply!" - Soledad O'Brien, CNN

To pre order Dr. Perry's *Push Has Come To Shove: Getting Our Kids the Education They Deserve - Even if it Means Picking a Fight*, please visit www.Dr-StevePerry.com

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