

DePaul News 5: Black Student Union Shadow Day

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By: Jakita Walker

It began just like any other Friday on DePaul's Lincoln Park campus. Silence everywhere with the exception of the construction workers pounding away on the new academic building, the few students and faculty walking around campus, and the occasional sound of a professor lecturing in the few classes being conducted. However, there was something different about this Friday.

At 9:15am on Friday, October 15, 2010, the Lincoln Park campus was invaded by 130 young African American men dressed in suits and ties. The question on the minds of those walking around campus, "Who are these young men and where did they come from?" These young men were the freshman class of Urban Prep Academy for Young Men- East Garfield Park Campus. They were visiting our campus as a part of Shadow Day at DePaul, a staple event of the DePaul Black Student Union. From their suits and ties to their loud cheers and applauses for the volunteers as well as one another, these young men made their presence known on campus.

Shadow Day at DePaul is a community service event that brings students from the Chicago Public School system to campus to spend the day with DePaul students. At each Shadow Day, students are given an admissions presentation from the Office of Admission, participate in a panel discussion with current students, and also take a guided tour of the Lincoln Park Campus.

Several current members of the Black Student Union volunteered as panelists as well as tour guides. Since this Shadow Day at DePaul was for an extraordinary group of young men, the Black Student Union arranged a special treat just for them. Darryl Arrington, President of the DePaul University Black Leadership Coalition (DPUBLIC), and Howard Lindsey, Ph.D., Professor of History, both gave inspirational talks about the issues facing African American men in higher education. They shared stories from their various experiences and talked with these young men, who have dreams of becoming architects, doctors, lawyers, and even zoologists. It was very easy to forget these young men were only freshmen in high school. They were most definitely wise beyond their years and kept everyone on their toes throughout the day.

The young men of Urban Prep were not the only ones inspired during Shadow Day. The students who volunteered were inspired by their experience as well. When asked about Shadow Day and her interactions with the students from Urban Prep, Anitra Matthews, a senior, stated, "Shadow Day was good. It seemed like all of the boys liked it and all of their questions were answered." Jaymee Lewis, a junior and the President of the Black Student Union, shared her insights about the program as well, "I am proud of the growth in the program overall. The Director of Community Service, Jakita Walter,

has worked especially hard to increase the number of annual programs and has been dedicated to overseeing the program's execution. However, my most proud moment Friday was seeing the dedication of all those DePaul students who volunteered."

Another student volunteer, Nya Brooks, a first-year student and new-comer to Shadow Day at DePaul, shared her take on the event and stated, "Shadow Day made me realize that it is my job to help the youth find their way, because there are too many people who complain that children are the problem, but they will not help find the solution", which is exactly what Shadow Day at DePaul is all about, promoting civic engagement amongst the student body and empowering the youth of today/ the leaders of tomorrow.

The Black Student Union hosts several Shadow Days at DePaul throughout the academic year. The next one will be on November 12, 2010 with students from John Hope College Prep High School. If you are interested in being a part of this empowering experience, please contact the Black Student Union's Director of Community Service, Jakita Walter, at bsupsc.dpu@gmail.com.