

Eye News Quarterly

EBONI EYES
Education Foundation



“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world”

-Nelson Mandela

October 2014

Volume 1

Ebony Eyes Educational Foundation brings innovative reading programs to 3rd and 4th grade classrooms as well as scholarships to high school seniors mainly in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Ebony Eyes also seeks to bring awareness to education policy issues that may impact the community and advocate to policy makers creative solutions that are best for our children.

Ebony Eyes Reading Programs

Ebony Eyes is pleased to announce that it will bring its capstone reading programs to several classrooms at Peabody Elementary School in St. Louis, MO.

The reading programs will kick off during American Education Week, November 17-21st. If you are not familiar with American Education Week, it was first observed in 1921 as an effort to generate public support and spotlight the importance of education. Specifically at that time, World War I draftees returned from war with large illiteracy rates as well as physical disabilities, so the timing is appropriate and symbolic. Additionally, the theme of the reading programs this year is Civil Rights: Children Can Spark a Movement. This year, the country celebrated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as well as commemorated the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer which occurred in Mississippi; therefore, the theme is highly appropriate. Many children are not learning about the Civil Rights movement and other important milestones in American history that relates to this vital period in time. Children must learn that they have a voice and they are important instruments to advocate for change. The Mike Brown incident in St. Louis is one of many situations that highlight that we cannot be complacent. There is much work to be done in the area of civil rights and social advocacy. We must teach our children and condition America that our children are the solution, not the problem!

Ebony Eyes Scholarship Fund

An annual scholarship is provided to a high school senior that have encountered obstacles early in life but has managed to succeed in education and is looking to continue their academic career. In August 2014, Ebony Eyes awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to two exceptional high school students:



John F. Bentley II graduated from Cardinal Ritter College Prep School with a 3.7 GPA. He is attending Philander Smith College in Arkansas where he is majoring in Chemical Engineering.



Jasmine Thompson graduated from Hazelwood Central High School with a 4.2 GPA. She is attending Texas Christian University where she is majoring in Biology pre-med.

Ebony Eyes will award at least two \$1,000 scholarships in 2015. The deadline for applications this year is December 15, 2014. Applications are available via the website: www.ebonieyes.org or by request via email: csampa@ebonieyes.org.

Founder's Corner



Mid-term elections are scheduled for November 4, 2014. Do you know the candidates and issues that are on the ballot? If you do not, I encourage you to review the information at the following link: <http://vote-mo.org> and discuss with your family and friends so that you can be an informed voter.

One issue on the ballot of interest to Ebony Eyes is Amendment 3 - The Teacher Tenure Initiative. While you may not see wording that specifically refers to

Common Core Standards, this bill complements the Common Core by attempting to tie teacher performance to student performance on standardized tests. This will solidify the trend of centering classroom instruction around preparation for standardized tests placing further limits on teachers in the classroom.

If you are not familiar with recent actions regarding Common Core standards - in Jul 2014, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon signed legislation that will lead to the formation of a task force to write new education standards that will eventually replace the Common Core by 2016. Common Core standards, an output of former President George W. Bush's 'No Child Left Behind' initiative, resulted in a rigid educational curriculum dictated by the federal government with little flexibility for local teachers to implement dynamic and productive teaching methods or programs that may appeal more to the students in which they serve. The Common Core has led to results across the country that is in direct opposition to the original stated goals of this initiative and I applaud Missouri's initial steps repeal it. Keep the pressure on the Missouri legislature to keep this momentum going!

Charleese Malone-Sampa is a Commander in the United States Navy. She is a graduate of Gateway High School, a Saint Louis Public School, and St. Louis University.

Board members

Founder/CEO: Charleese Sampa, US Navy Officer

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Marketing Directors: Charmane Mu'min, St. Louis Dept of Health and Senior Services, Adult Community Worker; Eboni Sampa, Forest Park Community College

Serving the Community



In Sept, Eboni Eyes assisted a St. Louis area student, Kenila Webb, by providing \$700 toward her effort to raise money to attend a World Strides Educational trip to New York with her school, Cross Keys Middle in Florissant, MO, in January 2015.

Kenila wrote a bold and compelling essay that impressed the Eboni Eyes board. Her situation appealed to the ideals of Eboni Eyes which is to energize students to understand the value of education; expand the worldview and mindsets of students by exposing them to places around the world largely through reading and pen pal programs; expand reading, comprehension and communication skills and lastly encourage students to understand their history, value and worth. Best wishes to Kenila and it was an honor for Eboni Eyes to help!

On Oct 11-12, Eboni Eyes participated in Kids Expo 2014 at the North County Recreation Center. It was an opportunity to support the community, partner with other organizations whose goals are to provide education information and resources to area families, as well as to bring awareness to Eboni Eyes programs and scholarships.

Donations and Volunteers

Donations and volunteers are welcome! Reading programs average about \$500 per classroom. This pays for books and supplies for each student, projecting an average classroom size of 25 students. Additionally, scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 are provided each year. The number of scholarships awarded is dependent upon the generous support of donors like you! You can send donations to the address below:

Eboni Eyes Educational Opportunity Foundation
PO Box 78117
St. Louis, MO 64178

Additionally, volunteers are needed to read books, proctor classroom activities and to provide administrative support. For more information, visit the website: www.ebonieyes.org or email: csampa@ebonieyes.org

You can make a difference!