

Black Youngsters are Looking Forward and Aiming High in Birmingham

Posted on Tuesday 11th July 2006

High-flying achievers will this week help celebrate and promote African-Caribbean success at an event designed to help support black children in pursuing further and higher education opportunities in Birmingham.

Positive black role models, including author, poet and reggae/dance hall DJ, Dr William 'Lez' Henry, and broadcaster and academic, Dr Robert Beckford, will lead the fourth annual Looking Forward Aiming High: African-Caribbean Young Men of the Future conference. The event, which runs on Tuesday 11 July at the University of Birmingham, will be attended by more than 120 African-Caribbean young men aged 14 and 15 and parents.

African-Caribbean boys are among the lowest achievers despite starting school as academically able as any other pupils. The event is a partnership project between the University and Aimhigher, with support from four other local colleges of further and higher education, and the National Black Boys Can Association to showcase the opportunities available to these young men.

The conference, which will be hosted by Dr Robert Beckford, of the University's School of Historical Studies, forms part of the University's commitment to improving opportunities for Birmingham and Solihull's African Caribbean young men. During the day, students will enjoy a range of workshops on topics as diverse as history of art, engineering, business and media.

Conference organiser, Tina Wilkinson, from the University's Outreach Department, said: "African-Caribbean boys are one of the most underrepresented groups in higher education, and the main aim of the project is to raise aspirations to continuing education to help redress the balance. The sessions for parents are designed to empower them to support their boys through the critical period of GCSEs and beyond.

"The sessions emphasise the importance of achievement at GCSE, and following the conference, a smaller group of students will have the opportunity to attend monthly Saturday morning support sessions in English, Maths and Science, culminating in an Easter residential revision programme during the Easter break before their GCSE exams."

The conference is just one of many aspiration-raising activities organised by the University's Student Recruitment and Outreach team this year. Anyone interested in contributing to future events should contact Gail Rothnie, Head of Outreach, on 0121 415 8545, email g.h.rothnie@bham.ac.uk.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

The conference, entitled Looking Forward Aiming High: African Caribbean Young Men of the Future, takes place at the University of Birmingham from 10am to 3.30pm on Tuesday 11 July.

The event is made possible through a collaboration between:

University of Birmingham

Aimhigher

Black Boys Can

Newman College of Higher Education

Solihull Sixth Form College

Josiah Mason College

College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Aimhigher is a national Government initiative to increase the number of young people entering higher education and to attract individuals from groups in society who are currently under-represented in higher education.

Further information:

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