



"Impacting Our Youth" Newsletter

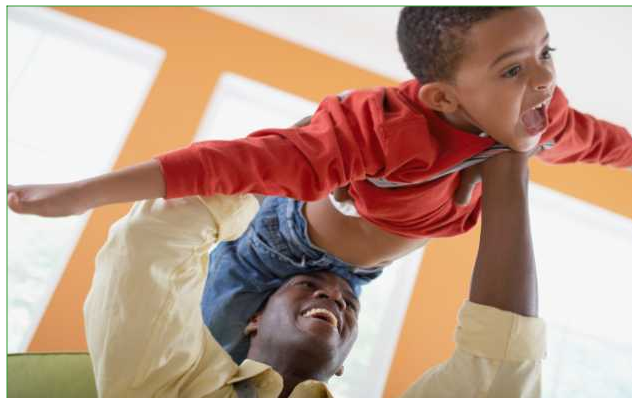
June 2008 Issue, Volume 1

Dedicated to our partners

Summertime

Can you here the birds chirping their sweet melodies? Can you feel the sun's warming touch on your skin? What about the gentle breeze through you hair? Well, if you are tucked away in your office, probably not, but if you are sitting outside under a big oak tree like I am, you are definitely in the right place at the right time. The sweet smells of honey-sucker, combined with the odors from nearby restaurants. Speaking of honey sucker, do you remember the first time for tasted one? Remember the effort it took to remove the little stem without breaking it then out popped that tiny little drop of sweetness that only comes from nature.

Today as I sit in the park, watching all the little children play, including my own. I listen to the sounds they make, like pretending to be the roaring engine of a car, or a train. Watching them with their arm stretched wide, pretending they can fly. I sit and I think about how simple life is to them. They just BELIEVE. How awesome to see such simplicity. Why do we as adults make life so complicated? Why haven't we taken the opportunity to stretch our arms out wide and believe we can fly. What a great inspiration for this story, sitting at the park watching my children and others as they play together, no malice motives or intentions, just FUN. Today, go out and play, take in some of the awesome views that God has so graciously provided for us. Today, Just Believe.





2008 "Impacting Our Youth" Fundraiser Banquet

On Thursday, April 10, 2008, A Better Tomorrow, Inc. held its third annual Fundraiser Banquet at the Brainerd United Methodist Church. This year we were so honored to have as the keynote speaker, Mrs. Jennifer Woods. Mrs. Woods is the leadership teacher at Washington Alternative School. She gave a riveting speech about the "Village Elders and the Village Idiots". Her speech challenged us all to search ourselves to see if we are being the elders we need to be to today's youth, or if we have fallen to sleep and let the Village Idiots (TV, gangs or other negative influences) raise our children. In the words of Emmer, we all need to "Kick it up a notch".

There were people from all walks of life, students, parents, teaches, administrators and officials. Special thanks to our special partners who traveled from the Knoxville area to be with us. We would also like to thank Mrs. Littlefield, the Mayor's wife for attending.

We were blessed by the musical anointing of 22Visionz. This group set the atmosphere of worship, oh yes, we gave praise unto God from whom ALL blessing flow. We acknowledge that we are not able to do anything without Him.

We definitely have to thank our caterers, "Cranberry Cupboard". If you were not there, you missed a treat: basil chicken, broccoli casserole, ok, ok I'll stop, but not before I mention the signature cranberry muffins. Great food and professional service, thanks Van and Susan Chambers, see you next year.

The special thanks of the day went to the students who wanted to share with everyone the impact ABT's "Life Skills Development & Mentoring Program" has had on their lives. We had students from Brainerd, Central, Washington and Chattanooga State. GREAT job Kevin, Moe, Dominique, and Alfred keep up the good work! Special thanks to Scenic City Management Co. for photography services.





Six Flags



We ended the school year with a fieldtrip to Six Flags Over Georgia. Many of our students had never been to Six Flags, so we thought that would be a great opportunity to impact them. Wide-eyed excitement as we made our way to Atlanta, we even heard an “are we there yet?” from the back seat.

ABT sponsored this trip with the help of our special donors and board members. Within miles of the park, we could see the sites of the “Superman” ride towering high in the sky. “Oh my God”, someone gasp, “I’m not riding that”! Yeah, it was one of the guys.

The students were all smiles as they received their admission tickets and entered through the gate. They were given instructions from Mr. Bennett, Executive Director of A Better Tomorrow, Inc., who went along for the ride (No pone intended). Time for group leaders to synchronize our watches, establish our meeting place and exchange cell phone numbers. Off they went like a “Flash” some to the left and others to the right. In the background we could here Mr. Bennett saying, be “back here at five O’clock, not coming here, BE HERE!”

At four forty-five, cell phones were ringing, “are you heading to the meeting spot?” “We’re already here, all except Ryan, he’s stuck in line”. After six hours of waiting in lines for the awesome five minute thrill, we are headed home, once Ryan finished that last ride of the day. All you could hear was chatter, about how much fun the rides were and how much the food cost. We decided it was time for a value menu, “Mickey D’s they yelled, can we stop there?” After eating, there was a still quite, this proves that even teenagers need a nap every once in a while.



State Capitol Here We Come!

A Better Tomorrow is on the "Road Again". This time we are headed to Nashville, the capitol of Tennessee. On March 14th, ABT staff, staff of Howard Middle School and their students of the "Lights On" After school Program boarded a chartered bus, headed to Tennessee State University for a campus tour. Middle school students on campus tours, what a concept. We want all students to know they can achieve anything. If we do not want them to be "Just" a product of their environments, then we must change what they see. Taking students on these campus tours has always yield excitement, not just because this is some place I have never been, and definitely we have student who have never left their neighborhoods, but also because they see the opportunity to change and be something

