

AAAAC Newsletter

African American Advisory Council • Fall 2008

AAAAC Convention 2008



Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence •
AAAC Conference Photo Highlights • **Looking**
Outside and Increasing Scope • Flipping the
Deck • **Reclaiming Sexual Integrity •** After-
care Planning • **Gangs: Past and Present •**
Youth In College • **History-Maker Delivers Call**
to Service • AAAC Conference Award Winners



From The Chairman

Difficult Times May Be Ahead

As I am writing this article FY08 has just concluded, there is anxiety about what lies ahead for FY09 with the state's budget dilemma and how many social service programs are at risk of being eliminated or drastically reduced in funding.

During my tenure with the Department, I have witnessed many cycles where the state has experienced financial problems. One main concern for the current situation is that during difficult economical times, there is a risk of children becoming more at risk of abuse or neglect. Some families lack the ability to cope with financial problems and other contributors of stress in their lives.

As the cliché goes "this too shall pass" and hopefully those things that Director McEwen has began to put in place to support families will be sustained or at least restored in the very near future. While the future is unclear, we are very pleased that AAAC goals and involved activities for the last six months of FY08 were successfully accomplished. I would like to take this opportunity to provide a summary of those accomplishments.

We participated on a planning committee for the first Cook County Regions Black History Month celebration that took place at the Montford Point in Chicago on February 15th. The committee consisted of volunteer staff from each of the three Cook Regions and was chaired by Kathy Cook of Cook North and Rochelle Crump, Chief of African American Services.

The planning committee did a great job as evidenced by many staff calling for this to become an annual event. It was an enjoyable evening of good food,

many free raffle prizes and entertainment highlighted by a presentation from Cook South's case manager, James Bracey.

We were able to meet former employee Marilyn Arnold's two successful young men as

she introduced them while sharing information about the dual role of raising children and being a professional child welfare caseworker. Marilyn recently resigned from her position as Associate Deputy Director of Administrative Case Review for a position with another state agency. We appreciate Marilyn's willingness to share her experiences and we hope that young parents in attendance were inspired as they deal with child rearing and caseload responsibilities.

On March 20, 21 we held our Sixteenth Annual African American Advisory Council's Conference. Based on the enthusiasm expressed by those in attendance along with great responses from the evaluations, we can safely say that it was a great and successful event. We are extremely appreciative of the wonderful support we have received from Training, the Director's office and staff from throughout the state for this conference. I would be remiss if I did not recognize Assistant Director, Velma Williams for her assistance and desire to assure that



Michael Burns

AAAC Newsletter

African American Advisory Council • Fall 2008

Table of Contents

First Impressions of AAAC Conference are 'Excellent'	4
Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence	5
AAAC Conference Photo Highlights	7-10
Looking Outside and Increasing Scope	11
Flipping the Deck	12
Reclaiming Sexual Integrity	12
Aftercare Planning	12
Gangs: Past and Present	13
Youth In College	13
History-Maker Delivers Call to Service	15
AAAC Conference Award Winners	Back Page

AAAC Conference Workshops First Impressions of AAAC Conference are 'Excellent'

By Rochelle Crump, Chief
Office of African-American Services

My mother taught me years ago that the first impression that someone has of you will probably be a lasting one. So I am applying that saying to my first participation at the African-American Advisory Council's Conference on March 20 - 21, 2008 at the Pheasant Run Resort.

The Opening Plenary Session with keynote speaker Darryl L. Armstrong, Director of the new Jersey Department of Children and Family Services Division of Prevention and Community Partnership was outstanding. Mr. Armstrong shared his personal story and how he soared from those experiences. His passion



The Friday morning session with Antwan Turpeau, Michael Simelton and Eddie Dordies was truly inspirational.

for children in care was genuine and inspiring. The overall presentation of the speaker was (E) xcellent.

I attended the Aftercare planning Workshop with Angela Foster and Johnny Banks, two dynamic presenters. It is clear that our youths are in good hands when they are under the guidance of these two. They make it plain that youths can succeed if given the right tools and coach. I give this workshop an (E) xcellent.

The evening Cultural Reception was more than just a reception with good food. It

was a full concert with Teresa Griffin who poured out her soul and talents to those in attendance. It was simply fantastic as we went down memory lane. (Somehow I missed the Memo on the Karaoke after party.) The Reception was (E) xcellent!

The Friday morning session with Antwan Turpeau, Michael Simelton and Eddie Dordies was truly inspirational. I was moved in an indescribable way with their stories. They were truly focused on how they plan to succeed in life and were confident and articulate in their presentation. All of them were (E) xcellent.

I attended the Preparation for Independence Workshop with Michael Simelton, who speaks from experience on what youths need in preparation for independence. I think the outcome of that workshop was plain. "What would you do for your children to prepare them for independence?" He was (E) xcellent.

Cobb County, Georgia State Representative Alisha Thomas Morgan the luncheon keynote speaker was very motivational; she shared her success story of becoming a State Representative and the work that she does on

Continued on page 14

AAAC Conference Workshops

Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence

By Gregory Smith
DCFS AAAC Member

**Presenter: Margaret Eubanks,
"My Sister's Keeper"**

The workshop began with one courageous mother, a domestic violence (DV) survivor sharing her story, her experiences..

She spoke of her journey, and battle against falling into the trappings of domestic violence. In addition, she spoke of DV, as her other addiction, in that, she also used drugs as a means to shelter her from pain, from the pain she experienced as a child witnessing abusive behaviors on a daily basis.

Furthermore, she spoke as to how her addiction harmed her children emotionally. She also spoke as to how anyone suffering from addictions has to be ready to receive help, and that no matter how well intended services are as it relates to helping a person become addiction free, the services will not have the desired impact, unless, the person with the addiction is ready for change; in other words, "one has to be sick and tired of being sick and tired".

The Presenters both wanted to emphasize that in most instances, the perpetrator uses some form of leverage to control the victim of DV; oftentimes it's economic, whereas, the victim feels that they don't have the financial means to leave their unhealthy situation.

However, both presenters encouraged workers to set realistic goals when working with victims of domestic violence, and to help them establish healthy support networks, i.e. treatment and counseling, for them and for their family members, i.e. children that

are victims of D). The program, "My Sister's Keeper" was very helpful in reclaiming one's self-esteem, said one mother, and a former program graduate.

Lastly, both presenters noted that DV doesn't have to be a life sentence, and that in fact, it's only one part of life's journey, and that the individual has the power to change not only the direction of their journey, but also has the power to create a new and a healthier legacy.

Many of the workers and the two presenters appeared to agree that the problem of domestic violence is greater than what the statistics tend to indicate....

Attendees' Reactions/Responses

Overall, the workshop attendees appeared to have gained additional insight as it relates to the widespread problems of domestic violence, as it relates to the impact it has on the unintended or unidentified victims.

Many of the workers and the two presenters appeared to agree that the problem of domestic violence is greater than what the statistics tend to indicate, in that, domestic violence is probably greatly under reported, in part, due to the fear of being further abused, and another concern is that neither the police nor a court order can realistically protect the victims of



domestic violence.

There were a number of workers who stated that domestic violence is not only limited to the identified victims, but oftentimes, DV has unaddressed collateral damages suffered by children, and these damages tend to be manifested in a number of acting out behaviors, i.e. joining gangs, fighting, displaying abusive language, and in some instances, children may demonstrate inappropriate sexual behaviors, such behaviors present great challenges for our foster parents and case worker, said one worker. Many of the attendees were visibly affected by the personal stories of survival told by one of the presenters.

In addition, there were a number of attendees who suggested that the Department of Children and Family Services make this workshop part of Core Training, or at least have a similar workshop offered to staff throughout the year.

Difficult Times May Be Ahead

Continued from page 2

the conference is a success. As usual, co-chairs Frances Elbert and Jackie Bright and the planning committee developed some very knowledgeable workshops with two outstanding keynote presenters around the theme "Its Their Life: Empowering our Youth for the Future". All I can say, if you were not there, you missed a great opportunity to hear some valuable information on services and issues pertaining to African American youth. But don't worry; you will have another opportunity next year on April 23rd and 24th at the same venue, Pheasant Run in St. Charles, Illinois. Remember to save those dates.

AAAC hosted the annual May joint meeting with the Latino Advisory Committee (LAC)

AAAC hosted the annual May joint meeting with the Latino Advisory Committee (LAC) where most of the discussion centered around providing support to the newly formed Asian American Advisory Council.

where most of the discussion centered around providing support to the newly formed Asian American Advisory Council. May was Asian American month and following the joint meeting, AAAC and LAC hosted a meet and greet reception with the Asian Council. Information was provided on how our two organizations are structured to fulfill our missions, goals and objectives.

After a period of questions and answers, it was determined that we could best assist the Asian Council in furthering their development by assigning 3 members from both LAC and AAAC to assist with any request that they may have on an ongoing basis. We wish much success for the Asian Council as they seek to advocate on behalf of Asian American children and families,

I have been involved with planning of the Regional Permanency Enhancement Symposiums for the past two years and I am proud to say that the final two Symposiums were successfully completed. Northern Region's Symposium took place

on March 14th that was preceded by eleven Community Forums on March 8th throughout the Region.

On June 16th and 17th, Community Forums were held in each of the three Cook County Regions prior to the Permanency Enhancement Symposium for the three combined Regions that occurred on June 18th. Staff in each of the four Regions should be commended for their efforts in working with the African American Family Commission to ensure that the Community Forums and Symposiums were successful.

Since Symposiums have been completed statewide, there are now Action Teams throughout the state that are developing action plans around permanency outcomes in relation to preventing children from coming into care, reunification or adoption in a shorter period of time, and to address the over representation of African American children in substitute care. We encourage you to learn about the Action Team in your local service area.

The fiscal year was closed out with a one day event at Olive Harvey College in Chicago that focused on African American male youth. The AAAC participated in planning for "Real Men Moving Forward" with Metropolitan Family Services, Olive Harvey College, Management Planning Institute, Salem Baptist Church, Roseland Hospital, Community of African American Mental Health Professionals and many other organizations to bring together approximately 500 male youth and 100 male mentors for an exciting day of activities.

There were some dynamic workshops with all male presenters, many speakers during the general session, Greek step show and an outstanding skit by several youth from Howard University on how youth should always be a support for each other. We appreciate the staff that aided in registering and assisting their youth in attending the affair. We thank Director McEwen for taking time to attend and address the youth. We will be meeting with the planning partners and male mentors to determine the next steps as we continue to look at the many challenges facing African American male youth during their adolescent years.

As you can see, the AAAC has been quite active over the past six months and again we want to thank everyone that assisted or participated in these activities. I hope everyone is having a great summer.

Peace

Highlights from the 2008 African American Advisory Council Convention



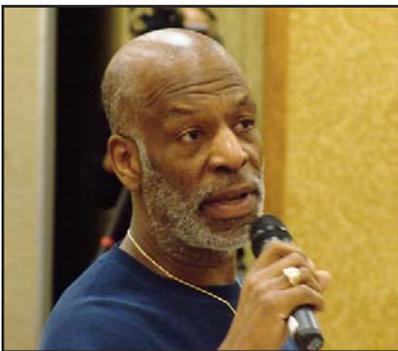
Arthur Bishop, DCFS Deputy Director of Field Operations, speaks at the conference as AAAC board member Frances Elbert listens.



Andre Jimenez of Chestnut Health System



Merchandise bazaar



Larry Phillips, Metropolitan Family Services



An AAAC conference attendee



An AAAC conference attendee



AAAC member Diane Cottrell



AAAC members stand in unison



Dr. Terry Solomon, Director, African American Family Commission



Annette Stafford and Gregory Smith



Jackie Bright



Anti-Gang workshop



Videographer Keith McDonald



"DCFS Dialogue" host Bridgette Glickman and panel discussion member Antwan Turpeau.



Merchandise at the AAAC bazaar



AAAC Conference attendees



The African American Advisory Council Board

Highlights from the 2008 African American Advisory Council Convention



DCFS Director Erwin McEwen address the AAAC conference via video.



AAAC Chairman Michael Burns interviewed by "DCFS Dialogue" host Bridgette Glickman.



DCFS Coordinator of Special Projects/Events Andy Martinez



Rep. Alisha Thomas Morgan



LAN Liaisons Kay Teel and Ron Wynne



James Jackson and Annette Stafford



Chief of African American Services Rochelle Crump

Highlights from the 2008 African American Advisory Council Convention



DCFS Assistant Director Velma Williams



AAAC member Oscar Gipson



Bridgette Glickman, host of "DCFS Dialogue" on CAN-TV, interviews Carole Herman-Armstrong, AAAC member.



Dr. George Smith



Rep. Alisha Thomas Morgan



Speaker Eddie Dordies



Linda Swan-McClendon



AAAC Conference Board



Jimmie Whitelaw

How to Identify and Connect Youth with Community Resources

Director McEwen strongly recommended a person that he knew would be an outstanding keynote speaker for the African American Advisory Council's Sixteen Annual Conference. We really appreciate the Director's suggestion as the Rev. Darrell Armstrong helped to get things

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Darrell Armstrong

started with a dynamic and extremely motivational opening ceremony address. You can see from the following credentials that it was indeed an honor to have such a distinguish speaker at this event.

Rev. Armstrong is a native of Los Angeles, California. He is a graduate of Stanford University (BA-Public Policy), Princeton Theological Seminary (Masters in Divinity), and The Col-

lege of New Jersey (Post-Masters Ed.S degree in Marriage & Family Therapy). He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Couple and Family Therapy at Drexel University in Philadelphia, PA.

The Rev. Armstrong is in his ninth year as the Pastor of the 1,900+ member (500+ families), Shiloh Baptist Church of Trenton, NJ, where he is only the third pastor in the last 105 years! In March of 2006, he joined New Jersey's Governor Corzine Administration as the Director of the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships in the newly created Department of Children and Families.

Director Armstrong stated that he and Director McEwen met at the



Rev. Darrell Armstrong

Center for Study of Social Policy. He took a quote from Director McEwen that can be found posted in many of his administrators' offices. "Don't let keeping the job keep you from doing the job." He found Director McEwen to be very passionate about strengthening

Continued on page 14

Looking Outside and Increasing the Scope

How to Identify and Connect Youth with Community Resources

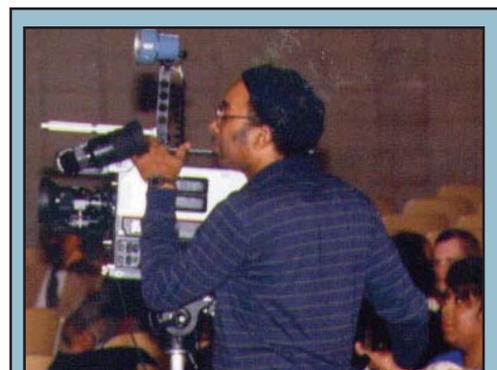
Presenters: Kay Tell, LAN Liaison - DCFS Southern Region
Ron Wynn, LAN Liaison - DCFS Cook South Region
Oscar Gipson - DCFS Retiree

The participants were provided with an definition of LANS, the referral process and how the process may vary in different communities.

They were given vital resource information as a means to minimize barriers adolescents may face in their

communities and how they can overcome obstacles by participating in monthly LANS meetings. The meetings were identified as a vehicle for informing the community and specifically youth of needed resources located in their communities.

The Department's Statewide Provider Database was also introduced as a technical resources tool for staff to utilize in locating crucial resources for clients without assistance from other sources. It was emphasized that the Statewide Provider Database enabled the staff to locate community based services quicker, and focus on the needs of the client.



Great Work

The AAAC would like to thank videographer Jesse Farley, Howe Center of Department of Human Services (DHS). Jesse has recorded over 12 AAAC conferences.

AAAC Conference Workshops

Flipping The Deck: How to Change The Hand They've Been Dealt

**Presenter: Antwan Turpeau,
Chicago Area Project**

Facilitator: Carole Herman-Armstrong

This workshop focused on the importance of encouraging the youth in foster care to excel in life despite their familial struggles.

The presenter stressed how encouragement, mentoring and a little confidence from the adults in their

lives made all the difference in the success of a youth.

Instead of looking at the behavioral, educational problems, and family deficits, youth should be exhorted, 'built-up' and reaffirmed that they could 'make it', and entry into the foster care system is not an excuse to fail in life.

He used practical and life experiences to demonstrate how to engage a youth, even when the youth

was resistant to the adult's efforts. Eventually, through the consistency of several adults in this young man's life, he was able to glean the support needed to excel in life.

He is a college graduate, a student in the MSW program at Loyola University, Program Coordinator of DCFS initiatives, and a mentor. Yet his proudest accomplishment and success story is being a devoted, hands on father to his two year old daughter.

Reclaiming Sexual Integrity

By Veronica Gray, MSW

Dr. George E. Smith is an educational and motivational speaker as well as a successful businessman.

His educational training reflects extensive knowledge in the professional arenas of education, psychology, administration and human rights.

Dr. Smith along with Pleshette M. Hamb gave a roaring presentation on "Adolescent Sexual Development...Reclaiming Sexual Integrity". Mr. Smith and Mrs. Hamb gave interesting facts of STD'S, adolescent census, teen pregnancy and definitions of straight, metrosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning. They moved into the adolescent sexual development "What's Normal"? The developing sexual integrity of honesty, sincerity, and ethics. "How to Develop Sexual Integrity" through goal setting, appropriate therapies, and resources of DCFS. Dr. Smith gave several handouts that would assist with more understanding of maturation in girls and boys and new research on teens and older partners.

It was an outstanding presentation all the way around. The workshop was filled beyond capacities each day with people staying afterwards with more questions.



Michael Simelton speaks on preparing youth for a life of independence at the AAAC conference.

Aftercare Planning

**Presenters: Angela Foster,
Johnny Banks, Eddie Dordies**

The workshop was presented in a multi-faceted manner. It gave the audience an opportunity to be aware of the services that are available to youth who are transitioning out of DCFS care or planning to further their education. The presenters gave the audience tools that would allow them to assist the youth in obtaining monetary assistance in college or vocational training.

There are several programs offered through the Office of Education and Transition Services for youth in care or an adopted youth. The youth can apply for assistance in furthering their education through this office.

It also gave a youth's perspec-

tive that was in care and who had the opportunity to take advantage of the program. What was interesting, Eddie Dordies chose an out of state college and was not given the full financial assistance if he chosen a college in state. Eddie had a sister who chose an in-state college who took advantage of the programs and went to school with a full financial aid package.

The presenters also encouraged the audience to stay involved, monitor, and assist them at the high school level. This is an important time in a youth's life and this could be a determining factor in the youth going to college. It is necessary to provide services to youth while in high school to increase the graduation rate.

Youth In College

By Vendetta Davis

Michael Singleton was a former youth in foster care from the Southern Region. While in care, he was a part of the Youth in College program which enabled him to acquire his undergraduate degree and motivated him to recently earn a graduate degree.

He currently is employed as an engineer with a major car manufacturer and presented a workshop on being in foster care and what child

Participants left the workshop with a better understanding of what they can really do for youth in transition to adulthood...

welfare professionals can do to help youth successfully thrive and achieve independence. Mr. Singleton delivered a dynamic and inspiring account of his personal journey.

Key factors that he highlighted were the use of consistency, dependability, honesty, trust, mentorship, perseverance, follow through, and spirituality. By using these "tools", he felt that his caseworker was able to help him in developing positive self esteem, self determination, goal setting and the desire to dream and aspire to greater heights.

He strongly recommended that if child welfare professionals employ these qualities and techniques that youth will be better served because of it. Participants left the workshop with a better understanding of what they can really do for youth in transition to adulthood, how important they actually are in the overall development of our youth, and how important connections and relationships are with and to our youth.



Vendors display their wares at the marketplace during the AAAC convention.

Gangs: Past and Present

By DCFS, AAAC Member Amie Joof

Presenter: Andre Jimenez, Chestnut Health Systems

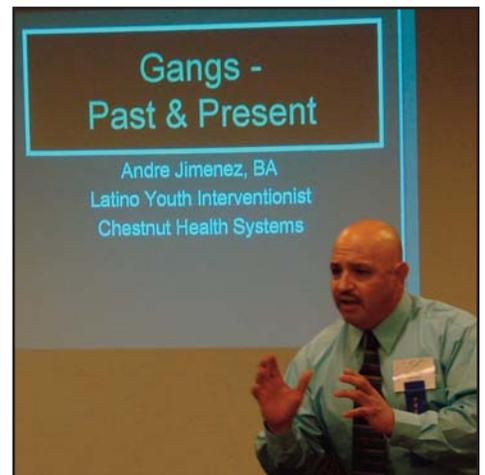
The presenter gave a chronology as to the evolution of today's modern street gangs, their origins and their socioeconomic impact on urban and rural neighborhoods. The Presenter focused primarily on the following issues:

- Gang clothing
- Graffiti (Tagging Property)
- Hand signs (Identify gang affiliations)
- Language
- Lifestyles

The presenter identified a number of Youth Gang Activities that occur daily in a number of communities, particularly, in those community that have been labeled as "high risk" communities.

Attendees Reactions/Responses

Overall, the workshop attendees appeared to have gained additional insight as it relates to the widespread problems of Gangs and their impact on our children and com-



Andre Jimenez of Chestnut Health Systems leads a panel discussion at the AAAC conference.

munities.

Many of the workshop participants appeared interested as it related to learning how to identify street gangs and their motivation in their involvement as it relates to the commitment of serious crimes.

Hand signs can also be seen as a put down

How to Connect Youth with Community Resources

Continued from page 11

families and they will work together around this issue as they plan for services to families in both New Jersey and Illinois. This was one of Director Armstrong's three areas of focus for his speech. The second area was some statistical information about African American children and the third topic was his personal story.

Director Armstrong mentioned that no matter what large urban area you travel to throughout the nation, the question being asked is "what is going



Rev. Darrell Armstrong

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Darrell Armstrong

on with our families?" There are six to seven hundred thousand children in foster care on any given day in the United States. Children should not linger and languish in foster care and we must become serious about engaging families as we move towards a strength-based, family centered and family-focused approach.

The audience was informed that New Jersey has 10,000 children in out of home placement and over a third of the children in out of home placement come from one county. Illinois and New Jersey are linked with this issue of the disproportionate number of African

American children in out of home placement.

As the case has been in some instances in Illinois, New Jersey has also had high profile cases that brought about changes in policy. One such case in New Jersey was a 7 year old boy by the name of Faheem Williams that was murdered in his home and kept in a plastic bin in the basement for 2 months. A realization occurred in New Jersey that one state agency could not be one thing to all families.

Consequently, there was an infusion of money in the child welfare system as a result of a law suit in the Williams case. They had to look across state government and integrate the work while collaborating with commu-

nity partners to improve services to children and families. Director Armstrong stated that far too often government work is done in silos and that this has to end.

Director Armstrong talked about his difficult childhood experiences and where he is today. When you listen to him speak, his personal story is one that really demonstrates his resiliency. He was

placed in foster care at the age of five and lived in out of home placement for most of his childhood years. His story is compelling and gets to the heart of why it is so important to do our best everyday in working with children and families.

If you did not attend the conference, you should ask one of your colleagues that did attend to tell you about Director Armstrong's personal story. He urged us to never lose sight of how impactful our words can be when working with a child and his story illustrates this impact. He also stated that foster parents are doing the work of divine intervention with our children. He is a well educated man, but to him, his degrees would be meaningless if he did not use them for the betterment of children and families.

The Rev. Director Darrell Armstrong is giving back to the institution (the church) that was so vital in helping him to overcome the many obstacles and challenges that he faced during his childhood. We truly appreciated his willingness to share his personal story which left the audience speechless, even conference co-chair and M.C., Frances Elbert.

We apologize to the speakers that had to follow Director Armstrong on the program, but Deputy Director Arthur Bishop and Assistant Director Velma Williams held their own and did a fantastic job in their address to the audience.

AAAC Conference: 'Excellent'

Continued from page 4

behalf of children and families. State Rep Morgan was (E) xcellent.

The Resort was in an accessible location. The rooms were clean and comfortable; the hotel staff was friendly and helpful. The workshop rooms and banquet hall were perfect. There was however one workshop room adjacent to the pool that was extremely warm when the air condition went off. Overall the lodging was (E)xcellent.

The Vendors got all my money, but the dress and purse I bargained for was an (E) xcellent deal!

As for the African-American Advisory Council's planning of the event, it was what else??... (E) xcellent.

History-maker Delivers Call to Service

By Jimmie Whitelaw
AAAC Board Member

“Every person was born into this world to do something distinctive and something unique, and if he or she doesn’t do it, it

As the first African-American to serve in the Georgia legislature from Cobb County, the home of Newt Gingrich, she urged the participants to challenge the status quo because there is critical work to be done.

will never be done.” Expressing the sentiment of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, Representative Alisha Thomas Morgan of Cobb County, Georgia addressed the AAAC conference as its Keynote



Representative Alisha Thomas Morgan

Speaker. Born in Miami, Florida and matriculated at Spelman College it was there that her desire to serve began.

As the first African-American to serve in the Georgia legislature from Cobb County, the home of Newt Gin-

grich, she urged the participants to challenge the status quo because there is critical work to be done. If not us, then who? Accentuating her belief, she currently serves on the Education, Children and Youth and Information and Audits Committees. Framing her call to service by highlighting the challenges she faced during her historic run for office, Representative Morgan indicated the fight was not for her, but for the disadvantaged and underserved.

According to Representative Morgan, the Conference attendees are born to do this critical work, to restore and to reconnect. However, she also admonished that if you are suffering from the illnesses of complacency, heart failure (you no longer have the drive), amnesia, and lethargy or are no longer able to stand... you should take a rest! And allow those who have a heart to continue to fight.

Culture With A Beat



Chicago Vocalist Terisa Griffin and band performs at the AAAC evening Cultural Presentation of the 2008 conference. Griffin did an outstanding performance and received rave reviews from those in attendance. In inset photo below, band members and background singers join in with Griffin.



AAAC Conference Award Winners



Joining AAAC Board members (left) Michael Burns, DCFS Assistant Director Velma Williams and Deputy Director of Field Operations Arthur Bishop are (1) Cynthia Hodges, (2) Melanie Campbell, (3) Reginald Riddle, (4) Ella Brown, (5) Jean Woodhouse, (6) Carla Jackson, (7) Jacqueline Barnes-Johnson, (8) Garnadette Farr, (9) Susan Turner, (10) Veronica Gray and (11) Kenneth Green. Not shown, Claude Lawrence

Each year the African American Advisory Council recognizes outstanding employees for their exemplary work and community achievements. We feel that it is of utmost importance to recognize those individuals that are committed and dedicated to giving children and families the best possible attention and services to meet their needs. We encourage you to take the time to recognize DCFS staff within your teams, sites, county and region for the good work they do as well as for the challenges that we face on a daily basis. We salute the 2008 African American Advisory Council Achievement Awardees.