Annual "Building Winners" Breakfast

By A. DODGE DODDS

"One of the things that I am really proud about in our organization is that because of you last year, 100 percent of our kids in our college prep program graduated from high school," said Boys & Girls Club of Dane County President and CEO Michael Johnson at the annual Building Winners "Rise & Shine" Breakfast April 27 at the Allied Family Center. About 120 people from all around Dane County came together that morning to listen to education initiatives and accomplishments highlighted by the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County (BGCCD).

Mike Rettenmeier, president and CEO of M4 Insurance, was the emcee for the event which featured numerous presentations and performances by Boys & Girls Club of Dane County (BGCCD) members.

Denzel Ibby, the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County Youth of the Year was the keynote speaker at the event. "When I had an opportunity to give back to a program that has given me so much to me, I jumped at the opportunity," Ibby told the crowd.

Denzel said that he moved to Madison when he was in fifth grade where he lived in a few weeks from the Boys & Girls Club. "At first, I was afraid to go to the Boys & Girls Club, and I'm on a short amount of time. I figured out that that was the best decision I made in my life," he concluded.

Annual "Building Winners" Breakfast (L-R): Ronald Gcao, BGCCD Youth of the Year Derick Ebbs, BGCCD CEO Michael Johnson, George Velez and James Bilbao.

Mehdi Buls sings Justin Bieber's hit song "Baby."

UW Odyssey Program graduation set for May 11

The graduation ceremony for students of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Odyssey Project Class of 2011 will take place Wednesday, May 11, 8-10pm in the Union Memorial Union, 600 Langdon St. Project Director Emily Auschoff and Program Coordinator Marshall J. Cowles will present certificates of achievement to students' successful completion of six introductory U.W. credits in English, Wisconsin's former first lady Justice Doyle will offer congratulatory remarks.

From September to May, students in this rigorous humanities course have discussed great works of literature, American history, philosophy, and art history while developing skills in critical thinking and persuasive writing. The evening will include a brief reception or commemorative presentation by each graduating student, recognition of supplement donors, former badminton, and Craig Peterson acknowledgment of Odyssey Project donors and supporters, and music and refreshments.

Habitat for Humanity CEO Perry Beto and Jen Voichik, director of the Habitat ReStore

HABITAT RESTORE

Ten years of helping families and making Madison greener

By A. DAVID EHRMIRE

Working in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Dane County, the Habitat Restore staff assisted building materials in the general public for up to 75 percent off the retail price and uses these sales to provide enough income to build two or three Habitat for Humanity homes in Dane County a year.

That is the best that can be described as a win-win situation. I've always wanted to have a place like this. I thought it would be nice to be able to keep this stuff.
Obama aims to reconnect with loyal Black voters

BY STEVEN MUHAMMAD
SPECIAL TO THE NNPA FROM THE FINAL CALL

CHICAGO - In 2008, Barack Hussein Obama was elected with overwhelming support from Black voters. More than 99 percent of Blacks voted for him in the presidential election and his victory was a source of pride.

However, while the president's approval ratings are still high, recent polls show a decline in popularity. Announcing his plans for re-election, April, mentioning support among Black voters is a key. Employment among Blacks is still high at 15.5 percent despite overall unemployment rate decreasing.

Critics say President Obama may be taking the Black vote for granted as members of the Democratic Party have been accused of being less than supportive for years. Where previous Democratic administrations have treated Black communities with neglect, Obama's policy is described as depredation, inequity, and harassment.

Grayson, executive director of the African Agenda Report, said:

"I'm actually 1 out of 35 Blacks in the online posting. With little perception, the Obama administration recently launched a series of town hall meetings targeting Black communities across the U.S. America's most significant and vocal, the White House launched http://www.whitehouse.gov/africanamericans, a website for Blacks to get information on policies, programs, and initiatives. The administration says it helps the Black community.

The town hall meetings: "Winning the future," open forums that allow the public to ask questions directly to White House personnel. Michael Blake, director of African American and Minority Business Outreach from the White House Office of Public Engagement was in Chicago, in mid-April for a town hall meeting on the city's South Side.

Along with Mr. Blake, the event featured Congressman Danny Davis Jr., D-Ill., and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, and was moderated by radio hostMatt McGill of WNVN 1690 AM. Hundreds packed a standing room only over lunch at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church to voice opinions about the White House agenda for the Black community.

One area of consensus shared Mr. Blake, was the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), through the U.S. Commerce Department was averaging $7 billion in grants to advance the growth of minority-owned businesses. However, this includes Blacks, Latinos, and women-owned enterprises. What remains unclear is what dollar amount was received by Black-owned businesses.

Questions remain as to why information has been so slow reaching the Black community. One problem could be that the Obama administration has not announced enough resources to small world of their accomplishments, which directly impact Black people. Even Ms. Blake admitted that the "Office of African-American Affairs" is comprised of few members and staff. Additionally, Ms. Blake said, she only sees President Obama "every few weeks."

Congressman Davis reminded the audience President Obama took office when the country was about to go "off a cliff," and, Mrs. Davis told the audience he was not present to be an apologia for the White House or President Obama but sold and won it for the peace talks by the administration. She is not sure whether the banking system would have survived.

"If we didn't do the health care approach, people are trying to whites and non-whites, just in my congressional district alone the health reform bill improves healthcare for 1.5 million people," said Rep. Davis to applause.

Blake said though there is a lot more to go, progress has been made that has benefitted the Black community. "People are still hunting for right now and we're one where we need to be and we're trying to get to where we need to be," he said.

Congresswoman Davis said: "We're hard at work now working with some folks that don't want to work with each other." A clear reference to the Republicans. He told the audience:

"So we're going to try to make sure we get it right."

The Honorable Mayor Louis F. Farrakhan warned President Obama prior to his decision about the forces that govern domestic and international politics. He has also encouraged President Obama to use his prominent position to speak for the weak and speak for the poor who supported him overwhelmingly. In a previous interview with WNVN's CHF Kelley, Farrakhan said that as a Black man, President Obama does not wish to address the concerns that God wants the American government to address, such as the lack of justice for the weak, poor, and Brown, Black and poor Whites.

A vocal group attempted to pose questions to Blake regarding President Obama's decision to go with the North African nation of Libya, however, the meeting ended abruptly before they could receive answers. Before ending the meeting, Blake urged audience members to contact his office at 202-456-6772 or email him at afrovoices@whoc.com to share their concerns.

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come to the Boys & Girls Club to get help with homework and to find information about getting a job," Delatorre said.

Nearsone, also added: he will be attending DePaul University, the largest Catholic university in the United States, the largest Catholic university in the United States.

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