

OUR CAUSE



Mentoring



SCEI Sigma Community Enrichment Initiative

Blueprint For Mentoring Success

NORTHERN NJ – The Sigma Beta Club (SBC) was founded in 1950 under the direction of Dr. Parlett L. Moore. Brother Moore was concerned with the changing needs in the community and believed Sigma men could have an impact on the lives of our youth. The SBC has four principle areas of focus: culture, athletics, social and educational. SBC programs are geared to meet the needs of its members, but at the same time provide them with a well-rounded outlook needed to cope with today’s society. Phi Beta Sigma strongly believes investing in our youth today will produce responsible and productive members of society tomorrow.

Over the years Chi Sigma Chapter has continued to raise the bar for all other chapters with their Sigma Beta Club programming. Under the direction of Dr. Kevin West, the Chapter has expanded their activities to include a number of schools in the Greater Newark, New Jersey area. Through the establishment of the Sigma Community Enrichment Initiative (SCEI) in

1997, Chi Sigma has recently applied for and received grant funding from the MCJ and Provident Bank Foundation to further expand on their highly regarded Sigma Beta Club program. SCEI is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that is run by members of Chi Sigma Chapter. The grant funds were provided to create a new Sigma Beta Club at South 17th Street School which is located in one of the toughest sections of Newark. The rationale for starting this club was to begin working with younger men (4th and 5th graders) and begin mentoring them through middle school and high school. Chi Sigma Chapter has a very active SBC Program at several high schools in Newark and Plainfield New Jersey. The funding provided will allow the Brothers to start mentoring 20 young men at South 17th Street School. The Brothers will be able to discuss their interests, aspirations, and concerns for the future. The members will also have an opportunity to interact with positive male role models on a regular basis; through their interaction with college and professional

men. This male mentoring program is designed to be a positive alternative to gangs, violence, school drop outs, and incarceration. It also has a proven track record of assisting students with improving their grades and deterring negative behavior.

The mentoring project began on May 5, 2010 with the introduction of the Sigma Beta Mentor Club to thirty 4th and 5th grade students and their parents. These students were selected by the school's administrative staff based on their mediocre performance over the years. These grades were selected for the program based on recent studies by Juwanza Kunjufu which indicates that this is the time when minority boys become disengaged from school and become involved with gang activity. Twenty young men were then selected and began the Rites of Passage process to become full members of the Sigma Beta Club.

The Baby Beta's (new club members) diligently met twice a week with male mentors and older Sigma Beta Club members from West Side High School. During the month of May they learned the history of the Sigma Beta Club and completed fifteen hours of community service. On May 23, 2010; in front of an audience filled with family, friends, West Side High School Sigma Beta Club members, Sigma men and the school's administrative staff, twenty young men were inducted into the South 17th Street Sigma Beta Club.

To insure we meet the goals established in our grant narrative, a pre-evaluation parent survey was administered to assist in establishing a program base line and to insure the program was tailored to meet the specific needs of the group. After gathering the data from the survey, and several conversations with the school administration, we designed a plan for the new SBC. The activities would include meetings, workshops, community service, tutoring, social activities and more. It was important to develop a well-rounded program for these young men, which would address all areas of need. Monthly workshops were as follows:

Club Meetings:

May: During this month we met with the club members seven times and went on a Leadership Retreat in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Our two hour workshops

were focused on academic enrichment, community involvement and group dynamic skills. The club members also learned and demonstrated a tolerance for one another while embracing each other's differences. "Different does not mean deficient", was our theme for the month. The primary goal of the Leadership Retreat was to remove the students from their environment and give them an opportunity to apply the skills learned during the month in a new and exciting area. The club members also participated in four workshops. The workshop topics were hygiene, conflict resolution, career planning, and the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens. Seven West Side High School club members and fifteen South 17th Street members attended the retreat along with two female parents and four male mentors.

June: The theme for the month of June was Conflict Resolution and Anti-Bullying. We met four times during this month and our culminating activity was having Reverend Lawrence Williams, Associate Pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church in Newark, speak to the club members about tolerance and being raised in Newark.

The club members and five parents also participated in the Chi Sigma Chapter 10th Annual Sigma Beta Club Scholarship Luncheon, which was held at Seton Hall University. This event is held yearly to honor the academic achievement of graduating male high school seniors who are attending college in the fall. The Fraternity awarded \$5,000 in scholarships to six males (three were Sigma Beta Club Members) from local high schools.

August: During this month we had the pleasure of attending a Newark Bears baseball game. The thirty luxury box tickets were donated by the MCJ Foundation. This activity gave the young men an opportunity to see a section of Newark they normally do not visit. It also helped to dispel the myth that the entire city of Newark is drug infested and filled with gang activity. Club members also attended the Chi Sigma Chapter Family Barbeque at Warinaco Park in Roselle, New Jersey. The older Brothers of the Fraternity, who normally do not get a chance to interact with the SBC members, were paired with a SBC member and served as a mentor for the day. Club members ended the day by all receiving back to school book bags filled with notebooks and school supplies.

September: The Club met once during the month. We discussed everyone's new schedule and conducted a workshop on effective study skills. Several of the club members also play Pop-Warner football and we discussed their team schedules in hopes of being able to support one another.

October: The club met three times during the month and each member completed five hours of community service. Our goal for the month was to begin providing homework assistance. Each member was required to bring their homework assignments to the meetings and undergraduate brothers from the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and Rutgers University assisted in the tutorial sessions.

Our positive behavior incentive activity for the month was a trip to Six Flags Great Adventures Fright Fest. In order for the members to participate in the trip they needed to have an Academic/Behavior Progress Report filled out by their school teacher(s) and parents. The members had to receive a minimal score of thirty to attend the trip.

Community Service:

Community service is a large component of the Newark Sigma Beta Clubs. We strongly believe it is crucial to first get them to feel better about themselves and the community they live in, and the behavioral improvements at home, in school and within the community will follow.

May: We participated in two community service programs during this month:

School Beautification Project: This program was organized by the students. On May 22, 2010 we agreed to pick up trash and sweep in front of South 17th Street School. The club members also decided to pick up trash inside the jungle gym located directly across from the school in West Side Park.

American Cancer Society/Relay for Life: We participated in the Relay for Life on May 27, 2010; on the campus of NJIT in Newark, NJ. The club members camped out along with the graduate and undergraduate brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. We also assisted by donating \$1,200 to the American Cancer Society in the name of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

October: We participated in one community service program during this month:

March of Dimes March for Babies: We marched 2.5 miles with other Newark Sigma Beta Club members, Sigma mentors, and over 3,000 participants. While every club member had been to downtown Newark before, they had never seen the streets blocked off and thousands of people waking in an effort to raise awareness for a cause. We all walked with pride!

The South 17th Street Sigma Beta Club has been a blessing for the young men, brothers of Sigma, and the community as a whole. The club members are extremely excited about the program and clearly have a greater respect for themselves and their community. Mr. Allen (School Principal) has partnered with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity and has truly been supportive of the program. He has willingly assisted us every step of the way. His administrative team and faculty have allowed Sigma brothers to come into the school on a weekly basis to check on the club members to ensure they are meeting the goals and expectations of their family and the Sigma Beta Club.

Chi Sigma Chapter is working hard to meet our club goals and to make sure that all of the 8 Sigma Beta Clubs under our direction are successful. When students are given the support and encouragement they need, their school attendance rate, classroom behavior, and overall chances of graduating and being successful increase dramatically. We look forward to continued success and support from Sigma Community Enrichment Initiative (SCEI) as we navigate through this school year. We wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to the MCJ and Provident Bank Foundation for helping us make a difference in the lives of young men.

For more information on Chi Sigma Chapter's Sigma Beta Club programming, please visit us on the web at www.ChiSigma.org.

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.” - Marianne Williamson

Brother Jenabu Williams, MPA
President Chi Sigma Chapter