

'Outreach' Group Help Send Thirty to College

By Rick Taylor

Thirty high school graduates went off to college in September, 1970. Not impressive, many critics would say. But it is. Why?

They were 30 black high school graduates who probably would not have entered College at all because they couldn't afford the ever-expanding costs. For the most part, they received full financial aid and scholarships.

This was the achievement of the Outreach College Guidance program in its first year of activity.

William E. (Bill) Gary, Plainfield High School social worker and chairman of the Outreach program, is only one of many persons who played major but unsung roles in this success story.

This week Gary stressed the significance of the Scholarship Raffle to be held Dec. 17 from 9 a. m. to 2 p. m. Donation is one dollar.



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of their experiences, the role of scholastic aptitude and achievement tests and the value of a college degree in lively seminars.

Who can benefit from membership in the Outreach program?

Gary explained the guidelines the group diligently follows to insure participating students an understanding of what is happening. The guidelines are:

--Each student is assigned to an adult advisor for individual, personalized attention. The volunteer advisors have experience in social work, guidance, business, industry and managerial skills.

--Seniors are encouraged to take the SAT, a prerequisite exam for most colleges, given in November or December. Juniors are urged to take a preliminary SAT in October and regular SAT in March of their junior year.

--Students are assisted by advisors in the preparation, writing to various colleges for admission and financial aid applications.

--After students have taken SAT's and return the applications to the colleges to await acceptance of admission, Outreach swings into full gear to seek financial assistance and tap available scholarship sources.

"Each year the number of available scholarships increases for minority students. Grants and loans are available through state and federal governments," Gary pointed out. "Scholarships are accessible through foundations and community groups of all sizes and purposes. Many black students are eligible but they don't take advantage of these funding sources because of a lack of knowledge of these funding sources."

According to Gary, the program is considered a success and overall objectives are being met. The objectives of the Outreach program are:

--Provide a vehicle for minority student awareness of higher learning and related benefits.

--Provide minority students with an opportunity to develop native abilities.

--Increase the number of minority Plainfield students attending institutions of higher learning.

--Provide each student individualized attention needed to attain his goals of quality education.

In a short span of time, the Outreach program has made a visible impact on many black students seeking some knowledge about universities and college requirements. Spearheaded by Gary, the city's black youth can look to Outreach for information, assistance and help.

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Gary suggested that local community groups could make sizeable contributions to the college guidance project by offering some 52 juniors and seniors the opportunity to attend college.

"Originating as part of the Neighborhood House library program in September, 1969, our purpose is to motivate and encourage more minority students to attend college," the youthful chairman said. "We feel that many minority students will not pursue a college education without intense counseling and motivation. These students must be able to envision going to college. Efforts to secure financial aid and scholarships to pay for expenses must become a reality to them."

Gary says that volunteers have worked "vigorously to instill confidence in the participating students and help them formulate goals that will hopefully eliminate a possible life of mediocrity for them."

Results of last year's program produced a tremendous impact on the current participants, Gary believes. Emphasizing why many Blacks don't attend college, Gary

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reasons that "lack of confidence" in their abilities cripples their chances to function at a college level.

The confidence should have been built up by a teacher, guidance counselor or anybody else who could reach a youngster of this caliber and give him or her a sense of direction," Gary adds.

The Outreach College Guidance program has a speaker series, trips to colleges and discussions centering around the academic life of a black student in college. Highlights of the program were weekend trips to Morgan State College, Baltimore, Md. and North Carolina Central University in Durham, N.C. Several day trips to Livingston College, Newark State College and Rutgers University exposed the students to what the Garden State has to offer.

Miss Juanita Hyde, N. J. Director of Educational Opportunity Fund, gave in-person information about financial aid for the disadvantaged during a session recently. College deans along with university students have spoken