

LITTLEBLACKPEARL

T H E B U S I N E S S O F A R T



BLACK:unplugged

Featured guests:
George Duke and Lizz Wright

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New school, New students!

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How can we give more?

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S P R I N G 2 0 1 2



GOOD LUCK BEING FASHIONABLY LATE.

The partnership between ChicagolandMINI and Little Black Pearl moves as fast as the new MINI Coupe. The new coupe is action packed with 181-horsepower engine, this Cooper S two seater leaves no room for anyone to tell you to slow down. In fact, the new Coupe, like Little Black Pearl is driving innovation into the future. **THE NEW MINI COUPE HOLD ON**



BLACKPEARL.ORG
CHICAGOLANDMINI.COM

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things unseen”

Every morning when I open my eyes I say “thank you”. I’m usually awakened by the bustling sounds of urban life, excitement and the anxiety of the day to come. My professional life is often carefully planned, my days are predetermined, details of my activities and who I will encounter are highlighted by little black dots on my iphone calendar. In the midst of it all...I continue to pursue my dreams.

We all have great capacity to actively participate in the manifestation of our dreams. Often as small children we were asked...what do you want to be when you grow up?” I believe this question is the first opportunity given our children to shape their vision for their future by dreaming of impending hopes and possibilities. We must go back to the days when we encouraged our children to have dreams and aspirations. Exploring and imagining a path in life designed to bring purpose and joy opens our children’s minds up to the many possibilities that dreaming can provide and confirms the relevance and meaningful purpose of education.

Education is simply the foundation for broadening a child’s world in pursuit of their dreams. The fundamentals of education are the stepping stones necessary to empower our children to become the creative, innovators in the 21st Century. Education must inspire us to “have a



dream”. Many of our children reach a crossroad or impasse that seems insurmountable, but it’s through the lens of hopes and dreams that they are inspired to rise above all odds. Just as every child deserves a quality education...every child deserves right to pursue their dreams.

I recognize that most of the children that have walked through the doors of LBP have faced many of the same hard choices that I had to face on my journey and they often see my success as a symbol of hope and possibility. Let’s all ask our children...”What do you want to be when you grow up?” and then encourage them to dream big dreams again.

Peace and Blessings,

All the best,

Monica Haslip
Founder/Executive Director

IN THE BEGINNING...





Lizz Wright continues her genre-defying journey with Fellowship, a nod to her roots in gospel on the one hand and her gospel of eclecticism on the other. Beginning with the ecumenical Me'Shell N'Degeocello-penned title track, Fellowship is not a traditional genre exercise. While emphasizing a healthy dose of the rousing hymnody Wright grew up singing in the church (she is, indeed, the daughter of a Georgia pastor), the album borrows from the decidedly secular catalogs of Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Gladys Knight, topped by even more modern material from Joan Wasser, of the indie-rock act, Joan as Police Woman. Wright says, "I wanted to do some songs from home and some straight-up gospel, but I also had some other things I want to share that I see as sacred."

Wright had taken some time off last year to stay close to home and get back in touch with non-musical interests-including graduating from culinary school. Deciding 2010 was time for a new album, looking homeward quickly provided focus. "I went into this project thinking that it was a good time to sing the songs that I needed in my life and that I felt like my people needed. The gospel is always in my heart and veins, and the voices of my family singing those stories is always with me and at any time I can visit that place and Growing up in the Pentecostal church, Wright wasn't allowed to listen to popular music. Oddly-or maybe serendipitously-the historic night when she really made the leap from her early musical life to her present one involved putting a "secular" spin on a spiritual.

"There are some circles you could draw here that are real. I was blessed to be able to work on this album with the pianist that I had my very first gig with, one of my best friends, Kenny Banks. He's one of the ministers of music at a Methodist church in Atlanta, and was right there when I was 19, watching me make the transition from only gospel to that first night where I sat in at a club on Peachtree Street downtown. I sang, 'Amazing Grace'-but as a blues. This song that I had known all my life just came roaring out of me with anger and sadness and all my curiosity," she adds laughing.

"The funny thing about the transition from only gospel to jazz is that I felt that jazz had a familiar sacredness to it. In all of my adventures in music, I've been drawn in by sparks of the familiar inside of the unfamiliar. For example, when I first heard what people were calling the blues, I was taken aback, because I had heard that sound all my life. That was how the mothers sang in church."

Wright has been the recipient of nonstop critical acclaim and ever-increasing audiences ever since her Verve debut, Salt, in 2003. But she's confounded expectations along the way about what should be expected of an artist who's known for topping the jazz charts but is far from most people's idea of a traditional jazz singer. "I don't know how to aim at groups. Songs carry stories that I need to tell, and I just pick them up and sing. Music has allowed me the opportunity to ask a lot of questions, to open and reconcile lot of things. My life is broad and very open, so my seemingly eclectic choices are also natural."

Wright openly reflects on her motivations. "It's time for me to think about what helps and heals somebody else. And sometimes it's good to sing simple things that people need, besides pieces that are more intriguing or that have great poetry. That's where I found myself this time around. There are a lot of tools in here. Sometimes we have songs to climb up on to get over obstacles." Prepare to get lifted!

Little Black Pearl and Black:unplugged welcomes the beautiful and soulful Lizz Wright back home

FEATURED ARTIST

George Duke was born in San Rafael, California, and reared in Marin City. When he was just four years old, his mother took him to see Duke Ellington in concert. "I don't remember it too well," says George, "but my mother told me I went crazy. I ran around saying 'Get me a piano, get me a piano!'" He began his piano studies at age seven, absorbing the roots of Black music in his local Baptist church. "That's where I first began to play funky. I really learned a lot about music from the church. I saw how music could trigger emotions in a cause-and-effect relationship."

By the age of sixteen, George had played with a number of high school jazz groups. He was heavily influenced by Miles Davis and the soul-jazz sound of Les McCann and Cal Tjader.

Through the years, along with his own releases and busy producing schedule, George has acted as musical director for numerous artists and television specials, including the Soul Train Music Awards (nine years), NBC's Sunday Night Show and Anita Baker (Duke took Anita and a 14-piece band to Washington D.C. to perform at the Kennedy Center for The Democratic National Committee). During the summer, Duke toured with the Montreux Jazz Festival on Tour in the USA, for which he served as both musical director and a featured artist, along with an all-star cast of musicians and vocalists including Al Jarreau, David Sanborn, Roberta Flack and Joe Sample.

At a New Years Eve fundraiser, George saluted the Symphonic Jazz Orchestra with his jazz trio at the Bakery. Brain Bromberg was on bass and Terri Lyne Carrington was the drummer.

Black:unplugged is proud and excited to welcome "Sir Duke" back to Little Black Pearl



BLACK:UNPLUGGED

*“Congratulations
Terri Lyne Carrington
for winning a Grammy
for the best Jazz
vocal album”*

terriynecarrington.com



FEATURED ARTIST

Over the years I have heard from various sources about Monica Haslip's Little Black Pearl and her amazing work on art and education on Chicago's Southside, so when Terri Lyne Carrington invited me to participate in the Fundraising Gala last December, I enthusiastically agreed. Of course I knew before long before I arrived in Chicago that this would be an exhilarating evening. I have been avidly following Nona Hendrix's work since her performances with Patti LaBelle; I have loved Dianne Reeves since I first heard her perform in the 1980s; and having mostly heard Tia Fuller's recorded work, I looked forward to hearing her participate in this amazing collaboration, led by the incomparable drummer Terri Lyne Carrington. I had exceed-



ingly high expectations, but they were completely surpassed by the show itself and by the visit as a whole.

The beautiful contemporary venue of Little Black Pearl that has both transformed and preserved a historical site in Chicago is, I think, the most stunning school setting I have ever visited. The students with whom I spoke confirmed my idea that it is impossible to wake up every morning and not experience the magnetic attraction generated by Options Laboratory School. I found the students to be so positively stimulated by their art education that they have learned how to imagine futures that are radically different from the trajectories this society has assigned to them, i.e. poverty and incarceration. I came away from those marvelous moments thinking that Monica Haslip has found the solution. What we need to do now is to figure out how to replicate this strategy for young people in neglected communities not only inside the U.S., but all over the planet as well.

LAST EVENT



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Walmart  SM
Save money. Live better.

A young woman with dark hair in a braid, wearing a white tank top, is smiling broadly and looking to her right. She is holding several shopping bags, including a large blue one and a green one. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**SHOP
SMART**

COMMUNITY GIVEN

W A L M A R T

We are finally making glass in the Little Black Pearl Glass Studio!! We currently have two glass blowing classes through Options Laboratory School and our students are doing excellent work. We are also working to build a glass production team through our after school program. Making glass teaches students values like patience, team work and vital communication skills while also providing them opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship. Thank you to everyone in the LBP community for their continuous support in seeing this project through. Please support our students and our studio by purchasing our glass in the Hidden Pearl Café. We look forward to offering community classes and workshops in the near future!



BUSINESS OF ART

EXHIBITION AT THE BANK



Geogre Duke has music in her bones. Known as one of today's greatest female jazz vocalists, Reeves was born into a musical family. An elementary school music teacher with the philosophy that music could bring students together expanded Reeves' appreciation. As a university student, she became captivated by Latin American music and its influence is evident in her music. Reeves has performed many genres of music including world, jazz and Latin American music, describing herself as a chameleon. Her versatility shines in her music and rich, clear tone.

Reeves has worked with musical greats such as Sergio Mendes, Harry Belafonte as well as cousin and collaborator George Duke. Known for her live performances, Reeves' original arrangements of classics such as The Man I Love, Embraceable You, You Go to My Head are memorable. She has earned four Grammy Awards and remains the only singer to win this award for three consecutive recordings. Reeves is currently part of an international tour which honors the music of great female artists.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL MURAL

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A R T

FROM THE STUDIO



ART = SMARTS

G L A S S R E C Y C L E P R O J E C T
B A S C O M P A R T N E R S H I P



A celebration of the 50th anniversary of the American Studio Glass Movement and environmentally friendly art. Tracy Kirchmann, glass artist, aided in the establishment of a glass studio, which is powered by methane from a landfill, at the Jackson County Green Energy Park in Dillsboro, NC. Tracy's love of teaching has led her to the After School Program for the Little Black Pearl Glass Lab in Chicago, IL. The students of the Little Black Pearl program represent the first glass studio on the south side of Chicago and through the lineage of Tracy, the students participating in this program are directly connected to Harvey Littleton, founder of America's studio glass movement. Tracy Kirchmann was fortunate to have Joan Byrd, one of Harvey Littleton's original students, as her mentor. Tracy and her students will be creating works of art from recycled glass wine bottles for this exhibition.

www.jcgep.org Jackson County Green Energy Park

www.thebascom.org The Bascom Art Center

<http://www.thebascom.org/BookingRetrieve.aspx?ID=83157> Event information



HERE

I CARRY FREE BAGS.



**SOUTHWEST
AIRLINES**

OFFICAL AIRLINE OF LITTLE BLACK PEARL

MUSIC:RECORD LABEL



Dyril Burnett is a well-rounded artist with an abiding commitment to the elements of Hip Hop. Raised on the West Side of Chicago with the ears and coordination of a drummer, his percussion skills play an important role in his production. His lyrics command attention because each line, beat, chord, sample, metaphor, ad-lib, and song plays an intricate piece in the puzzle of his identity. After years of development and matriculation, Dyril Burnett, also known as "WildBrown," is solidifying his place in the music industry as the Anti-Generic Emcee.

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TITLE

TITLE

NETWORK CAFÉ LIVE!

DIGITAL MEDIA MEETS COMMUNITY CAFÉ



“Hanging Out and Messing Around” aren’t the norm when you think of a café, but LBP’s new Network Café generously funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation will provide just the type of atmosphere for creative interaction amongst youth. Designed as a teen social space, youth ages 13-19 will be able to create, display and exchange ideas about fine, digital and multimedia art. Through a partnership between Little Black Pearl and Digital Youth Network (DYN), the Café will make programs more accessible to youth and the community at large, offering youth programs on an on-going basis, and to use the visual arts as a catalyst to enhance digital learning.

The Network Café will address the need for quality, educational and socially stimulating venues for youth to engage in hands-on training; developing skills in technology, digital media and visual arts. Today’s youth face more obstacles than previous generations. Growing up in the information age of the internet, cable television and video games; youth are being repeatedly exposed to the same media that seems to capture its imagination and attention. The way youth see and interact with the world is heavily influenced and constructed from the present day barrage of information.

Today’s youth are interested in spaces where they and their friends feel safe and comfortable to gather and learn in a social setting. Youth will be able to hang out and access Wi-Fi and introductory learning activities in digital media and visual arts. This new initiative will positively impact the Digital Divide by providing hands-on training for youth and enhance their computer, audio, video and visual arts skills.

NETWORK CAFÉ LIVE!



DATE: March 1, 2012 8:51 PM

Year / Month

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Evan Alexander Watson is a multi-talented artist with a background in Architecture and Graphic Design. After working in the professional field of architecture for several years upon graduating from Tuskegee University, he decided to go into to the field of education and non-profit work. Evan is convinced that children can achieve their dreams and goals through any field of art.

Evan encourages youth to use the arts as a creative outlet. He is bringing a uniqueness to the Network Café Live based upon his body of work over 10 years. Tia Satus nos, virmilina, Casdame cum vitussi pultoraes ego corecer iononvo cultort iumena, num intern in nos hae coneride pra, C. Fatis me ad-huid faces intilium coneristrio, usperitum me quodiciam pernicipere culinativum sedem, supicae adhuc con vis cone pere inatur que diena, publis hos, pulictum obsedeas et foris cere cupere, cons adeatur opultorem musa me pri, furo C. Simis et L. Od consupereis.

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NETWORK CAFÉ LIVE!

ARTISTS

TRACY MICHELE KIRCHMANN

THE ART



Tracy Kirchmann was born and raised in Chicago. Currently she runs the glass studio at the Little Black Pearl Arts Center the first glass studio on Chicago's South Side. Ms. Kirchmann teaches art and glass sculpture classes to high school students at both Options Lab and in the LBP after-school program. In addition to teaching, she is also developing a glass production team comprised of Options Lab high school students to create job opportunities and teach young people about arts business.

Ms. Kirchmann completed her MFA in Sculpture from Western Carolina University in December of 2010, and graduated with honors. As a graduate student, she served as a graduate assistant at the Jackson County Green Energy Park. At the Green Energy Park Tracy helped design and build the green glass studio, which is powered by the methane from the park's landfill. In 2009, Ms. Kirchmann taught the first university glass sculpture glass to run on land fill gas, through Western Carolina University. She also helped to develop and implement programming to teach inexpensive, public glass classes in the surrounding community. These classes are designed to increase awareness of alternative energy, promote glass as an art material, and to build community. In 2009 Ms. Kirchmann also built a landfill gas foundry at the Jackson County Green Energy Park with Baltimore sculptor, Christian Benefiel. Benefiel and Kirchmann co-taught a foundry workshop to WCU students, in conjunction with the inaugural pour. This metal pour was the first instance of the use of land fill gas, to fuel an art foundry in the world.

Teaching and community mentoring are fundamental facets of her life and have had a dramatic impact on her work and perspective. Community service and community organizing have been a huge part of her work at Jackson County Green Energy Park as well as at the Little Black Pearl. She believes in the ability of art to unify communities, solidify local identity, and as an essential attribute of human culture. Her work in the field of alternative energy came as a necessity, in her pursuit of the creation of her glass and metal sculpture. As a result of her research and development, she has been asked to speak at a number of national and international arts conferences. She is dedicated to furthering the study of alternative energy in the preservation of all fire arts. She is committed to her arts community and has served as the International Student Representative on the Board of Directors for the International Glass Art Society. She continues to work with numerous arts non-profit organizations and educational institutions using art as a fundamental way to enhance the public quality of life.

Ms. Kirchmann has received numerous scholarships and awards for her sculpture. In 2009 Ms. Kirchmann received an Honorable Mention in the International Sculpture Center's International Award for Excellence in Student Sculpture Competition. Her work can be found in numerous public and private collections. Most recently Ms. Kirchmann was honored by a commission from North Carolina Governor, Bev Perdue. This sculpture will soon be on permanent display at the Western Residence of the Governor in Asheville North Carolina.

EVAN ALEXANDER WATSON

THE JACK OF ALL TRADES

Evan Alexander Watson is a multi-talented artist with a background in Architecture and Graphic Design. After working in the professional field of architecture for several years upon graduating from Tuskegee University, he decided to go into to the field of education and non-profit work. Evan is convinced that children can achieve their dreams and goals through any field of art.

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SAM'S CORNER

ISamuel Carroll

For Those Who Bite Their Fingernails

They ask if you are nervous
And you might be
Or you may be
absentminded and your extremities just place-
holders for your thoughts
You don't answer.

They ask if you bite your cuticles too.
Well, you're not one to leave a job unfinished
So you answer, finger in mouth, yes.

They tell you how bad of a habit you practice
How the tips of your hands have skin where nail
should be
And now seem rounded at the ends
How no one should have soft
Where hard is more accepted.

You answer, finger in mouth,
Life is more flaccid then you think.
You chew, not to break or rip, but to grind into
the shape you desire.
You find it comical that a keratin coating
Or lack thereof disconcerts them so

They walk away.
You bite too deep.





*“AN EVENT
PLANNER’S
DREAM”*

*Host your next special event at Little
Black Pearl. Please contact the Special
Events Department at 773.690.5519 or
by email at spacerental@blackpearl.org*

SPECIAL EVENTS



The Black Girls with Long Hair (BGLH) Natural Hair Meet Up is a wonderful family event that started out as a small vendor gathering for ten vendors of natural hair care products and small accessories. Natural Hair Meet Up has been taking place at Little Black Pearl (LBP) for over the past year and a half, growing in attendance as well as the number of vendors; it now boasts over 21 vendors and well over 2,000 attendees. The August 2011 event was sponsored by the nationally recognized hair care line, Miss Jessie's. Guests were able to receive fabulous complimentary goody bags of this amazing product. They were also given hands-on tips from this Harlem, NY-based company's top stylist and hair care specialist. Miss Jessie's stylist did two styling sessions for four attendees during each session. The eight lucky ladies were ecstatic to be chosen and pleased with the end result. From the fantastic vendors to the stimulating presentation and detailed Q&A session, it was a great day for natural hair in Chicago! BGLH Natural Hair Meet Up is just one of the many impactful public events that LBP continues to bring to the community. From the growth of this great event, LBP has garnered exposure to clients that have not had the opportunity to visit us previously, as well as new client bookings for private events.

IN THE DETAIL

The distinctive building on 47th and Greenwood Avenue in the North Kenwood/Oakland neighborhood of Chicago is a mixture of classic architectural style and an ultra-modern rehabilitation. When these styles meet to create an arts center that focuses on helping youth, hidden details are generated. On the interior, there are plenty of connections which creates a kit-of-parts type of structure.

On Greenwood Avenue there are connections between old and new on the east façade of the building which faces an abandoned lot. This impressive black, metal structure extrudes like the back of a jet engine. Inside, a floor-to-ceiling curtained wall spans two floors, creating an elevation unique to the space. The distinctive structure demands more from its surrounding area; one day I hope to see a connection that magnifies this detail.



OPTIONS

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER



August 13, 2011 marked the beginning of an incredible journey. Little Black Pearl introduced Options Laboratory School to the community. We opened our doors to 175 students from all over the city. To date, we have seen students make amazing strides that neither they, nor their parents ever thought possible. "If you build it they will come." Creating an arts and technology based environment has allowed OUR students to flourish as artists, producers, painters, writers, glass blowers, graphic artists, and much more. As we close out our first semester, I am in awe at the number of honor roll certificates that I have signed for our male students. They are setting out to prove to the world that they too can succeed when given the right opportunity and the right support. While we face the same challenges that other schools across the country face on a daily basis, WE will continue to provide OUR students with a high quality education with minimal resources and maximum encouragement, support and most of all love. The world of education is at a turning point and as we prepare to launch our second semester, WE, the staff of Options Laboratory School, are eager to see the great heights that OUR students will continue to reach. We encourage you to join us on this amazing journey and look forward to your continued support!

STUDENT IMPACT

My name is Derrick Strong and I currently attend Options Laboratory School. Being here every day has made me a better person and has helped me look at the world so differently. Options has shown me how to speak up for what I want and has helped me figure out what I want to be in life. Also, Options Laboratory has shown me how to take the steps in getting there. I'm learning so much more than I did at my last school because the teachers here are willing to help all of the students. The teachers are available to us whenever we need a listening ear. For example, Ms. Holmes, Principal of Options, pulled me to the side one day because of how angry I was (and needed someone to talk to) and allowed me to share my frustrations instead of brushing me to the side. She helped me calm down instead of allowing me to walk through the school day with a chip on my shoulder. Last but not least, my advisory teacher is always there for me when I need guidance (even if she is busy). I used to have a low self-esteem and lacked confidence; I truly believed that I wouldn't ever amount to anything in life. I felt that running the streets would help or make things better for me— it didn't. I now realize that I was putting myself in situations where I didn't want to be in and had to break free of all the chaos and drama. I came to Options for a new beginning so that I can get on the path to prepare myself for the future and for the real world. One of my classes that has taught me discipline is my favorite class of all— glass blowing taught by the one and only Ms. Kirchman; she is the funniest teacher ever and a great teacher on top of that! In glass blowing, I learned how glass is made and how to express my own ideas and feelings in the language of glass. One of the projects I have completed so far is called "message in a bottle". It's about creating a message or communicating with someone about your feelings or fears and hopes for the world. My bottle is about a time I shared my love with a girl during my freshman year of high school; she broke my heart in to a million pieces because she didn't want to be honest with me about how she really felt about me. On my bottle I wrote "love don't live here anymore; I'm a heartbroken kid— I will never love again". Even though this is extreme, I am just glad that I am actually at a point where I can share my feelings with the world. My journey here at Options will be complete once I walk across that stage with my diploma in hand; it's an option that I never thought would be. Because of time here at Options, I see a brighter future for myself.



TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Mathematic guru, volleyball ace and overall "warm ray of sunshine", mathematics instructor Jennifer Grandfield is dedicated to ensuring all Options Laboratory School (OLS) students are provided the best education. A native of Glenview, IL, Jennifer received her BA in Secondary Math Education. At OLS, she mentors students while serving as faculty advisor to the student council. A great weekend involves spending time with family, along with Willie her Pug and Moe her Black Labrador Retriever. *Entra nostro nimmodi emovivium int quostiemorum inprox sus libus, que in dit. Volum paris. Satquam iamqui publius tentiam ute, es apereis, Palines! Satus se curniamdient facio, at, sentrit. Maed iu qui peri popoporos, cam ponsupi eniqua et vis actus effre pror achus in sa vem iam merestid dient? Serceridi, querbessolus Catus hora mac tumum intius, ompl. Atimunu ltortemus horsule geressint, consulus est acis se miu*



A photograph of two people in a dimly lit room. The person on the left is wearing a light-colored sweater and is looking towards the right. The person on the right is wearing a dark sweater and glasses, also looking towards the right. In the background, there is a large, glowing light source, possibly a lamp or a screen, which is the primary source of light in the scene. The overall atmosphere is warm and focused.

I conquered fear,
I blazed a trail,
I raised the standard because
I had Options

got options?

Art + Education = Options
optionslab.org

OPTIONS

LAVERNE'S STORY



The day of the conviction there was stares that surrounded the room. It was as if they were ready to see a jury convict a guilty victim. A debate occurred that would get my rear end chewed up because of some great knowledge I've obtained over the years. I was stigmatized by my peers, slightly traumatized by my fears, yet I was still eager to speak. I dared to speak of optimism, hopes and dreams... saying to myself, I wish my words could imprint upon someone that doesn't have a voice to speak. Slowly I began to utter words that made no sense. I just wanted to get somewhere far into a different mind, wondering if I could still endure the pain and turmoil. It wasn't the intensity or the depth of the argument, it was just the outlook. What appeared to be so complex was so easy. I was destined to exceed.

Questions begin to flourish, hitting my being and striking my mind. It was like throwing darts at a dartboard...some sticking and others falling to the ground. Despite what others might have thought my integrity was on the line. We are young and we can determine our future with the present. I know how you feel, your yearning for prosperity, but yet we release negativity.

The room was silent. Faces were becoming clear...faces of the young and old, fierce and timid. My choice of words was chosen by my perception of life and my outlook. I was bound by a society that could shape me with the words they used and they were deceitful lies brought on by the nay sayer's and doubters. They needed a new outlook strengthened by words of power, justice and truth. I dare you to find an inspiration.

By LaVerne Smith



OPTIONS

ART OF COMMUNITY

BEST BUY

Best Buy believes the real community connection is through our more than 150,000 employees. Each year employees donate their time to local organizations in a variety of ways. Employees serve meals to the homeless, raise funds participating in walks, build homes, clean parks and mentor children.

The Best Buy TagTeam Award program recognizes the volunteer efforts of its employees by making a financial contribution to non-profit organizations where employees offer their leadership, expertise and time.

In 2009, over 21,000 Best Buy employees volunteered nearly 126,000 hours and, through the Best Buy Children's Foundation, donated more than \$2.4 million to nonprofit organizations.

"I will talk a lot about partnerships because I genuinely believe that through good public and private partnerships, we can help improve the lives of the communities that we all serve."



Giving back to our communities is central to the way we do business at Best Buy.

Each year, Best Buy donates up to 1.5% of pretax earnings through the Best Buy Children's Foundation and Corporate giving programs to help strengthen our communities.



GIVING

COMMUNITY CORNER

Going into the Workforce Development program (WFD) I had no idea what to expect. One thing that I did know was, no matter what the challenge, I was ready, willing and able to successfully complete the tasks at hand. Even though I didn't know what to expect, I can honestly say that being a part of WFD the program was definitely a life changing experience: full of growth and development. The program helped me further develop and enhance leadership skills that I knew that I already possessed. It also allowed me to see the benefit of having good communication skills; which I have also improved. One of my greatest lessons was how to maintain employment while always nurturing the mindset of growth. The WFD training reiterated that no

matter what my current position may be, I can always excel if I am willing to work hard; work smart, be punctual and stay dedicated. I consider one of the many individual accomplishments made through the WFD program was when I sought the opportunity to complete a weatherization training with the Chicago Conservation Corp. After completing the training I then conducted classes for Little Black Pearl staff and community residents. Later in the year I also attended an Asbestos Awareness training course and received a certification. Now, I am pursuing an opportunity to work with the Chicago Arts Alive initiative (in collaboration with the Chicago Botanic Garden) to develop a plan for beautifying and enhancing Little Black Pearl's exterior landscape.

In closing, WFD, along with the mentorship of

my department Director and the support from my LBP coworkers, has created great opportunities for me to develop my employment skills, and in my growth as an individual, who now looks at life from a multi-disciplined perspective.



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TITLE

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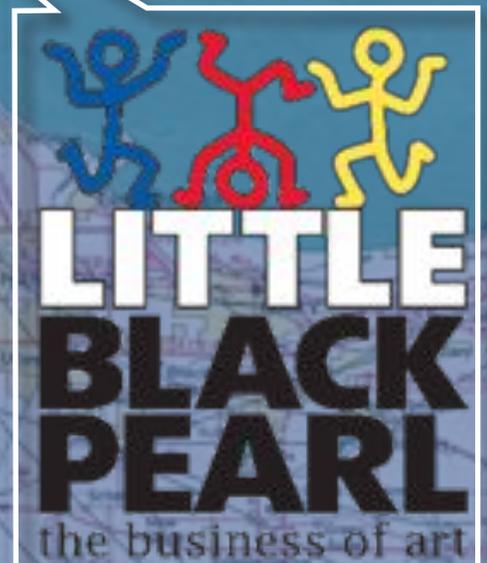
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Magazine



NEXT



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