

EMPOWERMENT

A Quarterly News Magazine



**Metropolitan Board
of the Chicago Urban League**
Empowering Communities and Changing Lives since 1983

Volume VIII, Issue I

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Behind the scenes at Revival: from State Street to Bourbon Street (pictured from l to r): Tiffany Lee, MetroBoard Vice President 2005—2007, Barton J. Taylor, MetroBoard President 2005—2007, Cheryle R. Jackson, President and CEO, Chicago Urban League, Nolan V. Rollins, President, NULYP and President and CEO, Urban League of New Orleans, LaTrice A. Smith, current MetroBoard Vice President.

A Story of Revival

By Jamil Simmons

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| A Story of Revival | 1-2 |
| Editor's Corner | 2 |
| MB First Annual Ski Trip | 3 |
| Project NOLA 2007 | 4-5 |
| Teen Summit Recap | 6 |
| The New Executive Board | 7 |
| Congratulations | 8 |
| The Presidents Podium | 9 |
| Our Sponsors | 10 |
| MB FY 2006 - 2007 | 11 |

The Metropolitan Board of the Chicago Urban League kicked off the summer in classic fashion with a New Orleans style celebration. The magic of Bourbon Street was revived as the MetroBoard hosted *Revival: from State Street to Bourbon Street*, on June 22 at the River East Art Center in Downtown Chicago.

This benefit raised funds for the Urban League of New Orleans' Hurricane Katrina Help Center and the Chicago Urban League's projectNext economic initiatives.

Over 400 young professional attended the event. *Revival* helped raise nearly \$40,000 in funds toward the intended causes.

The event featured a combination of New Orleans and Chicago cuisines, open bar, a silent auction, live band performances by The Jarrard Harris Band and The Harlan Jefferson SoSo Tight Band, Authentic Chicago Stepping provided by The Steppers Workshop, networking and dancing facilitated by WGCI's DJ Lil John.

Revival was featured in the "Jet Eye" section of the June 4, 2007 issue of JET Magazine. Over 400 JET gift bags were distributed to all in attendance. JET also conducted a special raffle for those in attendance to attend *The Color Purple* stage play in Chicago.

The silent auction included such items as; Oprah Winfrey Show tickets, autographed items and tickets from the White Sox, Cubs and Bulls, a Weber Grill, Southwest Airline Tickets, New Orleans hotel and Chicagoland resort stays, East Bank Club, McCormick & Schmidt and Catch 35 gift cer-



tificates and Spa and salon gift certificate.

Just as it was advertised, *Revival* brought the excitement of Bourbon Street to Chicago by providing fantastic cuisines, music and people in a festive atmosphere that could only be topped by Mardi Gras.

Revival was attended by such guest as; Chicago Urban League President and CEO, Cheryle R. Jackson, Urban League of Greater New Orleans President and CEO, Nolan V. Rollins, NBA All-Star Legend and the Chicago Bulls Director of Community Affairs, Bob Love, US Bank Vice President of Community Development, Robert V. McGhee, Fifth Third Bank Assistant Vice President Michael Jones and Grammy Award Nominated Recording Artist, Lupe Fiasco.

Post-event coverage from *Revival* will be featured in the "Jet on the Set" section of the July 23, 2007 issue of JET Magazine.



Editor's Notes



In my first Editor's Notes, way back in the summer of 2005....I challenged us all (including myself) to leave something behind for the next generation. This challenge was based on our president's goal for us to complete 2500 hours of community service. I remember looking at the expressions on people's faces during that meeting. Needless to say that there was a lot of doubt in the room. That's what inspired me to write those first notes. I even broke the numbers down. We needed 100 people to do 2 hours and 10 minutes each. However, like most good ideas, we did not reach our goal on our first attempt. We were some 600 hours short.

Ok, so now what do we do? First we needed to understand why we did not make it. Perhaps we did have enough programs that would have allowed us to meet our goal?

So, the Executive Board (mainly the Community Service Co-Chairs) went back to the drawing board and started again; with the same goal in mind. They devised a community service project schedule that would have made Sister Teresa jealous! I mean there was not one weekend that passed without at least one community service project on the calendar.

The plan was in place and all we needed was for people to come out and participate. The voice in *Field of Dreams* said that..."If you build it, they will come." That's exactly what happened. The MB showed up and answered the call to the point where some project sign-up sheets had to be closed due to too many people trying to sign-up. When was the last time you saw that when it called for people to give of their time?

At the end of the year, we exceeded our goal by some 700 plus hours on our second attempt. Absolutely remarkable! There is a famous quote that I have seen attached to two different people, Bill Cosby and Muhammad Ali. The quote simply states that "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth". Well, MetroBoard, I think that we are paid up for sometime now. Doesn't it feel good?



MB First Annual Ski Trip a Huge Success

By Telie Woods



When the Metro-Board has an event, people come from miles around to experience its infamous gather-

ings. This year's Winter Getaway Ski Trip was no exception. January marked the very first annual ski trip. Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, in beautiful Lake Geneva, Wisconsin welcomed over 150 young professionals with open arms. The resort offered such amenities as a fitness center, indoor water park and spa services. The excitement began to overflow as the weekend's events began to take place.

Our first night at the resort boasted a Hawaii themed luau, sponsored by **Eventurous**, to welcome all attendees. Greeted with bright colored reefs; partygoers filed in to the luau with the options of playing old school board games, spades, dominoes or taking a dip in the Olympic sized pool while Chicago house music rang in the background. What a way to start the weekend! The next morning, it was time to hit the slopes. A comfortable shuttle bus escorted us from the resort to the freshly snow blanketed ski slopes of the Mountain Top Ski Park. The young professionals immediately took to their hill of choice, after



a bit of training of course. Skiing was an experience that was new to most of us, but we took on the challenge with smiles, laughter, and unfortunately a couple bruised bottoms.

After hours of fun on the slopes, it was time to head to your activity of choice. You had the option of entering yourself in volleyball, football, and basketball sporting leagues provided by **In the Zone**. In between events, you even had the option of taking in a movie at our African American film festival that ran the first two nights of the trip. The film festival included classics like *Love Jones*, *Cooley High* and *House Party*. What more can you ask for in a ski trip? Well, how about a high energy dance party sponsored by **Collective Quest** marketing. As the saying goes, "ain't no party like a MB party" and it was the perfect way to top off a perfect weekend.

From skiing to snowboarding, from snowball fights to flag football, the sun shined brightly on what proved to be an awesome getaway with good people having good times. As I reminisce about our exodus from the resort back to the hustle and bustle of the big city, I can't help but wait in anticipation of next year's trip. Hope to see you on the slopes!



Project NOLA 2007: The Account of One MB Volunteer

By Sandria M. Washington



Hurricane Katrina was real.

It may sound foolish to say or even a little redundant considering we've all read the stories in the newspapers and watched the daily television coverage detailing the devastation of this natural disaster. Before traveling to New Orleans I knew that Hurricane Katrina was *real*, but it was different when I stood in the middle of the Lower Ninth Ward—surrounded by pieces of a family's life; dishes, TVs and CDs—on a plot of cement knowing a house once stood there. It was different being right there touching, seeing, smelling and walking through history.

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Going through the film of my New Orleans experience there is one particular photo that always causes me and anyone who sees it to pause. It's a photo of a house with the message, **HOME...This was HOME**. The misshapen letters spray-painted onto stone aren't the graffiti of a bored tagger. I suspect that these words were written by someone who once called this mass of brick, busted windows, mold and con-

caved dreams their home. Someone cared enough to stop in the middle of their life falling apart to write their testimony. Maybe they thought they needed to spell it out for whoever cared enough to stop and read it. I got the message loud and clear.

The residents of New Orleans don't only need our prayers, sympathy or money. The people who remain and wish to come back need a place to call home and it



An abandon house in New Orleans with the phrase "Home...This was Home" spray-painted on it.

should feel like home, especially after nearly two years. President Barton Taylor challenged us to not just talk about what needs to be done, but to "roll up our sleeves and get to work on returning [New Orleans] to normal." So, that's what the Metro Board did. We traveled to New Orleans (for the second time)—a mission affectionately called Project NOLA—to be people of action and not just voyeurs.

For two days we worked onsite with the New Orleans Habitat for Humanity building sheds for a row of newly constructed homes. Sheds? Yes, sheds. Seemingly, not quite as empowering or life-changing as gutting homes for two families (as on the Metro Board's previous visit), but our contribution this time around was just as important. As a group we bonded. Individually, each of us exercised endurance and skills we may not have known we had. I had no idea I could work a caulk gun so well!

Being at the worksite also gave us an opportunity to speak with the residents and share in their lives. Sandy Ricard lived in one of the new homes with her husband, daughter and father and greeted us with warm hugs and an endless smile. The media paints pictures of hopeless victims, but Sandy was not defeated by the storm. Her attitude was that of a conqueror. Despite a tragedy, she still felt blessed and can't imagine living anywhere else. In her words, "I want to die in New Orleans. This is home." I had to wonder what could be so great about New Orleans to

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* The articles submitted for the newsletter by MetroBoard members, in no way reflects the views, opinions, thoughts or beliefs of The Metropolitan Board of Chicago, the Chicago Urban League or the National Urban League.

Project NOLA 2007: The Account of One MB Volunteer Cont.

make a person feel so loyal, when at any time Mother Nature could betray you and take everything you cherish. I soon discovered why Sandy and so many others love to call NOLA home.

I won't say that the young professionals of the MB "kicked it." Let's just say that we enjoyed the riches of New Orleans culture...a lot. At night, we explored the "touristy" parts of NOLA and it felt surreal. Palm trees lined the Canal Street strip and the businesses were booming. It was a trip seeing people walk down Bourbon Street with open liquor and half-naked women standing outside crude establishments advertising adult entertainment. People were out having fun, being free and enjoying life. We rode the trolley for \$1.25 and dined on authentic Southern Cuisine in the French Quarters. Café du Monde became our hangout, as we found any and every excuse to devour



MB members take a moment to pose with Katrina survivor Sandy inside of her new home.

the warm and powdery addictive goodness known as beignet (don't call it a doughnut!). Sitting in the café late at night discussing the world over pastry and hot coffee all felt very French. Like, we were in Paris and not in New Orleans. For a second the exoticness can make you believe Katrina never happened. But it did. Hurricane Katrina was real.

Before leaving Sandy's home she shared with some of us that the name Katrina means "to cleanse." Sure enough, I googled it and the name derives from a Greek word meaning "pure." Maybe New Orleans needed to be cleansed and start anew in order to become better...stronger. The same way our bodies become ill to cleanse toxins. The same way negative situations are introduced into our lives to challenge us and ultimately lead to

our greatest victory and purpose. Perhaps Hurricane Katrina came to make way for the revival of NOLA—making her land and its people better and stronger than ever. The members of the MB helped share in this revival and we are forever connected to our brothers and sisters—from Bourbon Street all the way to State Street.



Teen Summit Meets The Apprentice

By Telie Woods



In a day and age where many of our youth are focused on the latest hip hop song, more im-

portant issues get put on the back burner. This year's National Day of Service kicked



NUL President and CEO Marc Morial addresses the students in attendance at Teen Summit.

off in Chicago and was themed **Teen Summit: It's Payback Time.** This summit was created to educate youth on savings, credit, and wealth management utilizing the NUL's partner, Citigroup's financial education curriculums.

The highly successful Teen Summit series has impacted the lives of numerous students in and around Chicago. The day's events took place at University of Illinois at Chicago where dozens of teens listened to pan-

elist express the importance of money management. National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial and Chicago Urban League President and CEO Cheryle Jackson were among the guest speakers.

"The NULYP/Citicorp National Day of Service accomplishes two important goals: First, It gives young black professionals the golden opportunity to give of themselves to a younger generation. Second, it helps instill in youth the importance of sound money management in creating a prosperous life for them," said NUL President Marc Morial. It should also be noted that Chicago's Teen Summit program was selected as the model for this year's NDOS.

The Citigroup volunteers cov-



Students discussing their presentation during lunch with an MB member.

ered a range of relevant topics that included how to be smart shoppers, the importance of saving and where to save. To make the classes fun and interactive, the sessions concluded with "The Apprentice" challenge. Students were teamed up to solve various financial challenges. Each team creatively designed solutions to each test and presented them in the "Board Room" which featured judges Felicia Clark, Erick Matombo, Michael Worthy, and Lady Emmy.



A student presents her groups' solution to the judges during "The Apprentice" Challenge.

A New Executive Board Takes Charge

By Jamil Simmons



In April of this year, the MetroBoard held its annual elections to select the future leaders of the organization. As selected by members, the 2007 - 2008 Executive Board consist of Karen S. Williams - President (pictured left), Latrice A. Smith - Vice President, Jamila N. Knox - Re-

cording Secretary, Elise J. Cochran - Corresponding Secretary, Thom Duckworth - Financial Secretary, Dana Kyles - Treasure and Andre L. Edmonds - Parliamentarian.

The general body also approved the appointment of the following committee chairs: Kia Padgett and Rocky Ephraim - Community Service, Brian Stith and Erica Williams - Fundrais-

ing, Angela Brooks - Membership, Tiphany Pugh - PPD, Late-sha Lipscomb and Renee' Matthews - PR, Michelle Connley and Nicole Durham - MB 25 and James Simonson - By Laws.

I know that we can all rest assured that this cast of dynamic individuals will continue to stay the course and lead the MetroBoard to higher heights.



Pictured below, the 2007 - 2008 Executive Board takes the oath of office given by CUL President and CEO, Cheryle R. Jackson.



MB Empowerment Card Company Spotlight

At the June general body meeting, it was announced that a partnership between the Metropolitan Board and Brooks Brothers Clothiers had been formed. This partnership provides **15% Savings** on regular and everyday value priced merchandise at Brooks Brothers U.S. branded stores.

Here's how to enroll:

- Enroll online at **Membership.BrooksBrothers.com** (do not type in <http://> or www. in front of the web site address). Enter your Organization ID# **45001** and your Pin Code# **19703**. Upon completion, a temporary shopping pass will appear for you to use immediately. Your actual card that is personalized with your name and the MetroBoard's name will come in the mail in 3-5 business days.
- Enroll by telephone by calling Corporate Incentive Services toll-free at **1-866-515-4747**, Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm, ET. Please have your Organization ID# and Pin Code# available.
- If you choose not to use it after you enroll, there is no penalty to you or the MetroBoard.
- If you choose to, you may renew with no charge at the end of the two years (should the MetroBoard renew its agreement).



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CONGRATULATIONS

The Metropolitan Board would like to congratulate everyone that gave their time, finances, ideas, wisdom and creativity during the 2006-2007. Your efforts helped the MetroBoard achieve the following:

3200+ COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS!!!!

Member Accomplishments

Award Winners

Each year the MetroBoard selects one member and one officer who has shown an outstanding level of commitment to the organization as "Member of the Year" and "Officer of the Year." Congratulations to this years' winners:

Elise Cochran

2006-2007

Member of the Year

William J. Alston

2006-2007

Officer of the Year

The Newsletter Staff Needs You

Do you like:

- Taking Pictures?
- Writing Articles?
- Editing Articles?
- Working in Publisher?



If you answered yes to any of the above questions, the newsletter staff needs you. Please contact us pr@metroboard.org.

WE ARE THE MASTERS OF OUR FATE, WE ARE THE CAPTAINS OF OUR SOUL

By Barton J. Taylor (Immediate Past President)



A few years ago, when I was relatively new to the Metropolitan Board of the Chicago Urban League

(MetroBoard), someone asked me to consider running for President of the organization. I looked at them like they were nuts, but gave them the courtesy of an attentive ear. What I didn't realize was that this was a snowball effect that would launch a renaissance for this organization.

Still in denial, I found myself standing before the general body asking them to "allow" me to take them through a renaissance or a rebirth of our commitment to this MetroBoard movement. I dared us to come together and not only continue to serve our communities, but to do it more often. I challenged us not only to raise more money, but also to give to the Chicago Urban League consistently. More importantly, I proposed that we not only recruit more members, but also retain and develop them better once they enter the MetroBoard.

These were some daunting tasks, but I was blessed (yes I said it, blessed) to have a group of young professionals that not only served as a great group of officers, but also believed in the vision. They believed we were the *Masters of Our Fates and the Captains of Our Soul*. They saw the big pic-

ture with me and dedicated and sacrificed themselves to make this a reality and I declare my love and admiration for them today and forever more.

Officers alone did not do these tasks. Many of you believed in this renaissance and gave talent, commitment and perseverance to this movement. You believed in the notion that an organization that fears change is an organization that fears possible success. You served on committees, volunteered time, raised money and made the MetroBoard more and more family like. You continued our legacy and embraced a promising future.

Who knew that our future held an operating treasury growing from \$5,000 to \$25,000 in one year? You all did. Who knew that we would answer the call to one of the worst natural disasters of this country's history not once, not twice, but three times? You all did. Who knew we would average 12-15 new members a month in 2006-2007? You all did. Who knew people would start to re-identify the MetroBoard with excellence, substance and professionalism? You all did.

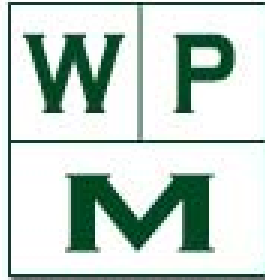
It wasn't an accident we surpassed 2,500 community service hours this year. It wasn't an accident we have events that others want to copy. It's not a coincidence that every month, more and more new people join the MetroBoard. You

all made the MetroBoard what it was, is and will continue to be; *a vehicle for young professionals to empower communities and change lives in Chicago*. As I close this article and this tenure as President, we are a young MetroBoard, but we're stronger and more energized as an organization. We are a larger MetroBoard, but we're more focused. We are a diverse MetroBoard, but we'll never forget our humble beginnings or our bright future.

So what does the future hold for the MetroBoard? You tell me. Your actions, dedication and support to this organization can only answer that. Your passion for changing lives will address this question. Your motives will ultimately help or hinder our future successes. As this baton of leadership is proudly passed to the President-elect, Ms. Karen S. Williams, Esq., it is my hope that you all support her and her administration as much as you supported mine and more. It is my wish that you all appreciate this moment in MetroBoard history, as you are 25 only once. It is my desire that long after I'm gone (from active participation in the MetroBoard), I can click on a webpage, turn to a newspaper, or click on a TV and still see the MetroBoard doing its thing; being the *Masters of Their Fate and the Captains of Their Souls!*



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Metropolitan Board FY '06-'07

 Urban League of
Greater New Orleans

Empowering Communities.
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