

Les Brown teaches leadership skills to Muncie youths



Left to right, back to front: Les Brown, Anthony Taylor, Jordan Armstrong, Terry Woods, Dar-Ray McAllum, Brian Woods, Monique Armstrong, Darrell McAllum, Blair Broussard, Ashley Moore, Keianna Davis, Jasmine Taylor, Dionna Bass, and Haila Thompson

Motivational speaker Les Brown is one of several who are contributing their time, energy and resources to support the Muncie Housing Authority's Success Center Partnership.

These two not-for-profit Indiana organizations, have launched a program to Expand the Circle of Success In America through a network of locally designed centers for Successful Living that provide greater access to some of the best development training resources in the country.

Brown was recently in Muncie for a Youth Leadership Institute. This is the phase of Brown's involvement in the initiative. Brown has been

working with Charles Betterton, co-founder of Center Space, since 1990 on similar community development and youth empowerment programs.

"Mr. Brown donated his services, valued at over \$50,00, to provide this life-changing experience for the young people of Delaware County. His company, Les Brown Enterprises, also participated by providing access to the best audio and video based training programs Les has created, which the Success Center Partnership will offer on an ongoing basis," said Betterton, president of Center Space, which helped the Muncie Housing Authority create the

SEE BROWN PG. 15

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Success Center Partnership.

"In addition to Mr. Brown's support, Paul J. Meyer Success Motivation Institute, Brian Tracy, Jim Rohn, and the Strategic Marketing Group are providing some of their best training programs and materials, at discount prices, and they are donating thousands of dollars of technical assistance to help us successfully adapt for public housing residents these materials that are usually marketed primarily to corporate America."

"With this level of support from some of the best trainers in the world, we will surely succeed in our mission of helping Americans discover that we are people, one community, with one economy and one future," he said.

Brown and Mike Williams, his mentor and a training expert, are helping Center Space design new programs and materials for expanding the Circle of Success in America. There will be a number of follow up activities, including providing ongoing leadership development training for the core group which participated in the Brown workshop and ongoing seminars and workshops using video, audio, and workbook materials on Choosing Your Own Future.

Williams will return to Muncie at least once in the next few months, to assist with the ongoing refinement of the training materials and implementation of the training of trainers program.

One possibility being considered is a youth leadership retreat that would be held in the fall to further refine an overnight component of the package being developed for replication in the other 4,500 housing authorities in America. Initial funding for the training materials has been provided through a recent \$5,000 grant from the Muncie Delaware County Community Foundation.

One of the longer-range

activities being planned is a national conference that would provide opportunities for other housing authorities to gather for 2 days of seminars, workshops and brainstorming sessions in Indianapolis on how to replicate the Success Center Partnership in other communities.

"If things continue to go as well as we expect in Muncie,

and others. They will help involve some other people in lifting their lives and enhancing their sense of self and moving onto some kind of community agenda beyond just what happens to their own lives. They can then take a greater interest in what happens in the community at large.

"As these young people get

the world know they are drug free and proud of it," said Steve Hakes, president of Life's An Attitude Wear.

"We are grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the success of Les Brown's first Youth Leadership Institute. We share Mr. Brown's commitment to youth empowerment and his vision of a drug free America. That's why our

Housing Authority provides innovative educational programs that enable and encourage residents to participate in personal growth, success and achievement programs. It also fosters community mobilization and civic pride initiatives, and activities designed to help residents and resident organizations develop increased abilities for helping direct their lives and influence the institutions that affect them, their families and the community."

"When we held the first meeting of the Success Center Partnership last November, we invited about 55 community leaders to attend. We had hoped that at least 10 to 12 might attend. We were pleasantly surprised when over 40 individuals attended that meeting and just in the past few months, over 80 individuals, representing over 50 organizations and businesses in every sector of the community, have participated in some way."

Betterton said, "Over the past 2 years, we offered the Success Center concept and the events with Les Brown to a number of organizations in Delaware and Madison counties. Ms. Benita Smith was the only one who saw the vision, appreciated the significance of what was being offered and she responded with the courage and leadership required to bring the vision forth for the benefit of the larger community."

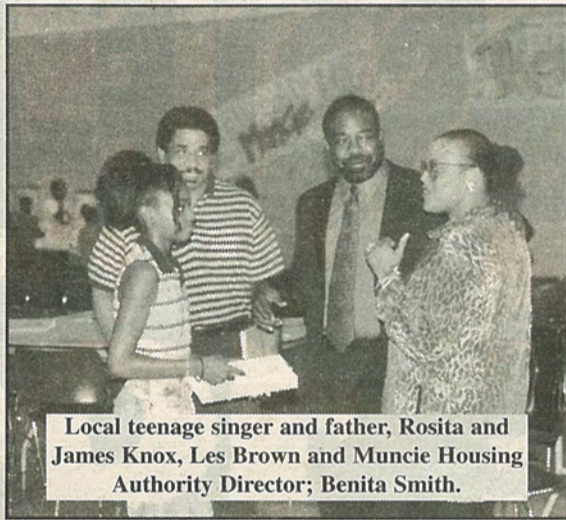
"I commend Ms. Smith and expect the Muncie Housing Authority to be awarded national recognition by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO)."

For more information on the Success Center Partnership and Future training programs based on Les Brown's materials, contact the Muncie Housing Authority at 765-288-9242.

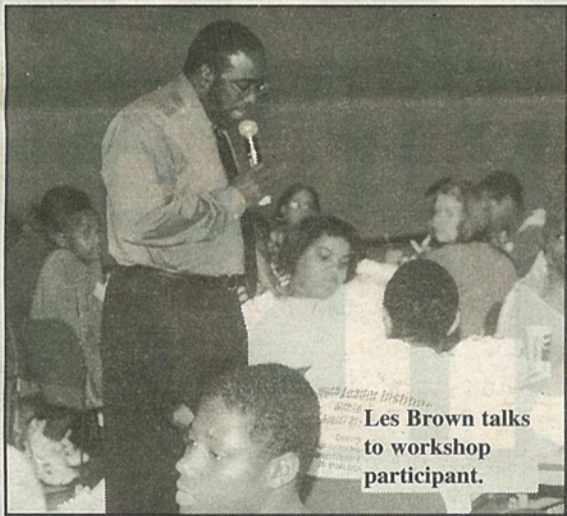
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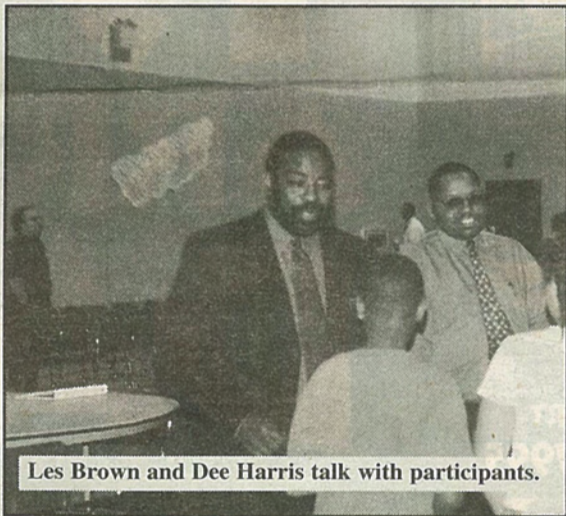
Geohn Huggins and Les Brown



Local teenage singer and father, Rosita and James Knox, Les Brown and Muncie Housing Authority Director; Benita Smith.



Les Brown talks to workshop participant.



Les Brown and Dee Harris talk with participants.

we would like to take this program to other places," said Brown. "The youth participating in the Institute all completed a Contract With Themselves to take action and engage other people and they signed the Seeds of Greatness Pledge which reads: "I do hereby pledge to discover and develop the greatness in me and to plant Seeds of Greatness, in my words, as well as my deeds, for myself, for my family and for my community. God grant me the courage and wisdom to do what I can, to make the world a better place."

"Each one of them will touch another three or four people, other youth, their families, community leaders

together, reach out to engage others and start getting involved, there will be an even greater positive impact within the community as a whole, and perhaps throughout the nation," Brown said.

The T-shirts for the youth were donated by Life's An Attitude Wear, a Coleville, Texas company dedicated to promoting drug-free lifestyles for youth. The company that was founded on a principle to improve quality of life, is committed to drug education and offering hope to the children of those who did not make a choice to be "drug free."

"By wearing our "official Drug Free and Proud Of It Apparel," young people let

company donates 20 percent of the profits from the sale of all our products to Life's An Attitude Scholarship Foundation for children who have, or who have lost, a drug dependent parent."

"We established the success Center Partnership in late 1997 to expand the economic and educational opportunities for public housing residents, especially youth by enhancing access to successful life and work skills training, job readiness training, job placement assistance, and self-employment training to help residents start their own small businesses," said Benita Smith, executive director of the Muncie Housing Authority.