Black Student Alliance kick off hosted at Normandale

Written by Ivan Phifer, Staff Writer
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The Black Student Alliance (BSA), sponsored in conjunction with INOC Music (Indicted Nation Over Currency), hosted an event at Normandale Community College.

"The Black Student Alliance is where African-Americans students can come have fun, get to know each other, relax and talk about issue regarding us and in society," said Veronica Nicole, Treasurer of the BSA.

The overall mission of the event was to spread awareness of the organization for students to become more involved in extracurricular activities.

The kickoff featured musical performances from Crunch Time Exchange, a collective of hip-hop artists, gospel and soul artist, God's Queen, folk rock spoken word artist Said Kelly and Black Madonna, a live band with a classic, hip-hop and rock sound. The event also featured chess tournaments, art exhibits and human services provided for college students.

One human service organization present was Imani Youth and Family Services. The group provides behavioral health services.

"The services we provide are beneficial to students," said Marquise Armstrong, executive director of Imani Youth and Family Services. "Often times, students of color are first generation college students. That can be a lot of pressure on them. We provide counseling so they can be successful in academics, graduate and become not a liability, but an asset."

Imani has two locations, Brooklyn Center and Anoka, and they also provide in-home services.

"Another aspect that makes us unique is that our services are catered to the African-American community, with a diverse faculty," said Armstrong.

Pastor Danny Givens, with Above Every Name Ministries shared a testimony of his part in a robbery, which involved the shooting of a police officer. He encouraged students to pursue education not only for themselves, but their community.

"What I had to realize was my situation was not my defining moment," said Givens. "Checking off that you have been convicted of a felony is not the most ideal, but because of my college education I chose to move myself to the liability line to the asset line."

"The event is for the students, by the students," said Geoffrey Jones, Advisor to the BSA. "They created opportunities to network with one another, they organized the event. This teaches leadership skills, event planning, goal and mission setting, fulfillment of vision, all the essential aspects needed in life."

Jones said the event was a success because the Alliance reached out to all parties and communities. "Not only have they drawn from the student population, but the community as well. The joint sponsorship made it happen that way," said Jones.

INOC Music Group sponsorship was presented in the form of a $5,000 grant, which was approved for the campus event.

In addition to college campuses such as Normandale, INOC Music hosts a monthly event called The Cool, which takes place every second Thursday of the month.

"We need to support our young people," said Antwan Bradshaw of INOC Music. "If they are not robbing, stealing or killing, but instead changing car titles, (being a) professor or even a ballerina, we need to back them."

The Cool, which was previously hosted at The Beat Coffeehouse in Uptown, is a collective of spoken word, hip-hop, art and other musical aspects, which also provides youth with a safe space to hone talent and create a positive platform for all ages.

Beginning in 2013, The Cool will be held at the Capri Theater in North Minneapolis.