Written by Brandie Hill, Senior High School Student , Cooper High School
Monday, 17 August 2009 12:01

As we grow old we come to understand that it is our young people of today that have the possibility to make a better tomorrow. During the 2008-2009 school year, WE WIN Institute partnered with Cooper High School in the Robbinsdale district to create a mentoring program called, “Women of Distinction,” for girls of African descent. The great need for a partnership of this kind revolves around the fact that African American students have the fastest growing failure rate in the state of Minnesota with only 38 percent graduating from high school. Minnesota has the worst graduation rate for African Americans in the country. The purpose of the program is for junior and senior high school girls to mentor freshman and sophomores so that they will stay on track academically, socially and psychologically.

Many of today’s African American youth are dropping out of high school because of pregnancies, lack of family support and lack of encouragement by friends, as well as peer pressure. The mentoring program moves on the premise that if we don’t help our children NOW, who else will.

The 2008-09 school year was the first year of our mentoring program. It was a real learning experience for all of us. We learned a lot about what to do and things we wanted to do for year two of the program. This summer, dedicated mentors have been meeting together with the director of WE WIN Institute and looking at what worked in the program and what we want to see different for this fall. We have really been tightening up the loose areas found in last year’s program. We as mentors have pointed out key areas that need specific help in terms of providing the best support the mentees need. We are also looking at the support we as mentors need.

[redacted]