

## Minneapolis Urban League's PROJECT READY hosts Annual Historically Black College Tour

Written by  
Friday, 02 April 2010 13:56

---



Helping at-risk youth—for whom college often is not a consideration—realize their dream of going to college and having the doors of opportunity open for them is the main reason the Minneapolis Urban League has been hosting its Historically Black College Tour for more than two decades. Since its inception in the 1980s, more than 600 students have participated in the tour.

This year nearly the MUL-sponsored Black College Tour took 28 students through seven cities, including Baltimore, MD, Washington, D.C., Cary, Raleigh and Durham, N.C., and Hampton and Petersburg, VA. They students toured Coppin State and Morgan State Universities in Maryland; Howard University in D.C.; St. Augustine College and North Carolina Central University, and finally Virginia to visit Virginia State and Hampton Universities. Along the way the group visited the Black Wax Museum, took a tour of the U.S. Capitol, and enjoyed some relaxation and fun at Virginia Beach and the Busch Gardens. The tour left on Friday, March 26 and returned to Minneapolis on Saturday, April 3.

“Motivating young people to choose college is what this tour is all about,” said Scott Gray, president/CEO of the Minneapolis Urban League.

Each year the Minneapolis Urban League offers youth in grades 9-12 from Minneapolis-area

## Minneapolis Urban League's PROJECT READY hosts Annual Historically Black College Tour

Written by  
Friday, 02 April 2010 13:56

---

high schools the opportunity to visit predominantly Black colleges and universities during spring break as a way to inspire them to prepare for college and experience life on a college campus. What's significant about the Urban League's Historically Black College Tour is that it encourages students who aren't thinking of going to college to change their minds.

Marsha Matthews took the Project Ready/HBCU Tour twice — in 2005 and 2006. “Not only was the tour an educational experience, but it was also exciting to see that there are institutions where Black college kids can feel ‘at home.’ The meetings every week and the fundraisers we participated in as a part of the Project Ready program were essential preparation for entering college. I appreciate everything the Urban League has done for me because I wouldn't be at Alabama State University without the staff and teachers keeping us on our toes,” said Matthews who is currently studying Criminal Justice, with a minor in sociology, at Alabama State. She will graduate in May 2011.

More than being a casual opportunity, this tour prepares students for success. Project Ready, an initiative designed to prepare 9th, 10th and 11th grade students to navigate college options, enrolls participants in an eight-week curriculum. Over this eight-week period, students learn how to prepare for the PSAT and ACT tests and develop an individual college development plan (ICDP). In addition, students research each school on the tour and develop a portfolio containing transcripts, letters of recommendation, and personal letters to present to each college/university they will visit.

New this year, students used their cell phones to blog about their experiences, sending updates and photos back to the Minneapolis Urban League, giving their perspective on each stop along the tour in real time.

## Minneapolis Urban League's PROJECT READY hosts Annual Historically Black College Tour

Written by  
Friday, 02 April 2010 13:56

---

“No other program prepares students as well as we do,” said John Ross, the director of the MUL’s College Readiness/Career Development Intersection and the Principal of the UL Academy High School. “Of the 35 students who participated last year, 17 were accepted on the spot to more than one college.” Ross manages the tour each year, with the assistance this year of nine adult chaperones.