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Area middle and high school students got the opportunity to interact with a group of celebrities and executives as the United Negro College Fund's (UNCF) Empower Me Tour came to town.

Grammy nominee, Ledisi, actress Kim Coles, Olympic silver medalist, Lashinda Demus, record executive, Amir Windom and attorney and syndicated radio host, Warren Ballentine were just some who offered words of wisdom to nearly 200 area students and parents who gathered this past Saturday at Dunwoody College of Technology. Talks ranged from issues of self-esteem and self-worth, to leadership, finance and even how to write a professional resume.

The tour, in its fifth year, made its third annual stop in the Twin Cities. It targets minority middle, high school and college students and parents, aiming to empower them through career and college readiness seminars, personal development workshops and subject-matter expert and celebrity-led panel discussions. The tour also provides assistance for students and parents in planning and saving for college.

"This event is important because what we've found is young people and their parents are

lacking resources to get into college, so we've got college ready curriculum and career content and it's provided by celebrities who are 100-percent committed to these students' success," said Monica McCluney, UNCF national director of strategic alliances and corporate relations. "If we're not reaching back and getting to these kids at an early age they won't be able to attend our member institutions."

The UNCF has 38 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) as member institutions. The UNCF provides scholarships and institutional support such as operating resources and institutional improvements to its member institutions. But McCluney said the mission of the UNCF has evolved throughout the years.

"We have begun to focus more on the student and not just the member institutions," said McCluney. "We're not saying to a child, 'you've got to go to a HBCU,' we're saying, 'you've got to go to college.'"

McCluney said the organization has also broadened its reach to include other ethnic minorities such as Hispanics, Native-Americans and Asians.

For seven-time Grammy nominee, Ledisi, her involvement with the UNCF is a labor of love.

"This is the best part of my career, being able to give back," said Ledisi. "This is my seventh year with the UNCF and I'm going to continue with them as long as they let me."

Actress, Cole encouraged the students to embrace education.

"I have a love for learning," said Cole, who is best known for her roles on the hit shows "In Living Color" and "Living Single." "Education is a continuing process. Knowledge really is power."

Syndicated radio host and attorney Ballentine said increased education means increased wealth.

"The more education you have, the more money you will have," said Ballentine. "Stay hungry for education. Even to this day, I sleep about three hours a day because I've got to know what's going on in the world – business, politics, so I can talk about it on my show."

Ballentine hosts a popular, syndicated radio program that airs in nearly 40 media markets.

For 27-year-old record executive, Windom, the Empower Me Tour is about teaching kids to be great in whatever they do.

"I've got this motto you hear me say so much – I don't just want to be successful, I want to be significant," said Windom. "Being significant is positively impacting the lives of others."

Windom, who is one of the youngest top executives in the record industry, is a graduate of Florida A&M University – a HBCU.

"You really are a part of a family when you attend a HBCU," said Windom.

Watch: UNCF Empower Me Tour