

You are invited...



Who: Legislators, Superintendents, Principals, Teachers, Educators, Parents and Business Leaders who wish to be part of the growing movement to eliminate achievement gaps and uplift their communities.

What: **Black Star's North Carolina Kick-off Ceremony & Awards Dinner**

CSI is kicking off its 2006 planned giving program by inviting the brightest stars in our business and education community to join us in welcoming a positive new force in education for North Carolina: The Black Star Project. At this event, you will learn about programs that have narrowed and in some cases, eliminated achievement gaps in schools throughout the country. These programs are now coming to North Carolina, thanks to a unified effort from our communities, schools, districts, businesses and elected officials. This event includes dinner, an awards ceremony, a silent auction to benefit the "Million Father March," a presentation by Phillip Jackson, Executive Director of the Black Star Project and guest speakers from schools and districts that have significantly narrowed the gap in their communities. Over \$10,000 in classroom technology donations will be presented to several North Carolina Schools and one principal will receive the *Promethean Award for Outstanding Contribution in Education* to honor his or her school's dramatic improvement in raising achievement and inspiring higher standards for its students.

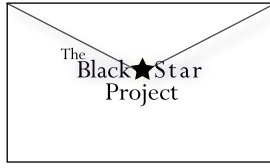
Where/When: Tuesday, April 4th, 6:00 – 6:45 wine/hors d'oeuvres reception
6:45 – 8:15 pm - dinner & presentations

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, 421 S. Salisbury Street in downtown Raleigh
A discounted room rate is available for \$89/night.

Cost: \$50 per person / \$500 per table

Why: Because you are concerned about the racial academic achievement gap and you want to do something about it. Learn about proven programs - new to North Carolina - that will now be offered in schools statewide. Honor and support North Carolina Schools that have given new life to their communities by raising the hearts, minds and achievement standards of their children.

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS WILL BE NOTIFIED OF AWARD RECIPIENTS
2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THIS EVENT.



Background

In the 1990s, fueled by committed leadership and a focused, statewide effort, North Carolina made steady progress toward eliminating their racial academic achievement gap. However, the gap in performance and test scores between Black & Latino students and their White peers in North Carolina is still markedly high. By 4th grade, a 32-point achievement gap exists in North Carolina between Black & Latino and White students.¹ This gap only increases by high school. Educators across the state seek creative solutions that will stimulate academic achievement while developing community resources that will support children beyond the school environment.

In 2001, SAT scores showed an achievement gap of 206 points between North Carolina's Black & Latino and White students. By the time Black & Latino students reach graduation, the achievement gap is beyond reversal. Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina is among the twenty cities in the United States with the lowest graduation rates for Black & Latino male students - only 34% graduated with their classmates in the spring of 2002.^{2/3} The racial academic achievement gap that exists in North Carolina is by no means unique to our state.

45 percent of black men ages 20-24 are out of work and out of school in America. According to the Department of Justice, 33 percent of black children born after 2001 will go to prison at some time in their lives. Nationwide, more detention facilities are being built than ever before.

# of African-American Males	1980		2000
In College	463,700	602,03	2
In Prison	143,000	791,60	0

Source: Justice Policy Institute

Median Net Worth—U.S. Households	1996	1997	1998	1999	2002	% change
White	\$75,462	\$77,368	\$79,905	\$86,370	\$88,651	+17.4
Hispanic	\$6,961	\$7,801	\$7,167	\$10,495	\$7,932	+14.0
Black	\$7,135	\$7,013	\$7,837	\$8,774	\$5,998	-16.1

Source: Pew Hispanic Center

"Schools can't fix this problem because they didn't create it. This gap, it comes to school from the children's homes, from their communities. You can't legislate what I'm talking about. You can't mandate it. There is only one thing that can solve this: parental involvement. It's that simple. You've got to have the parents.

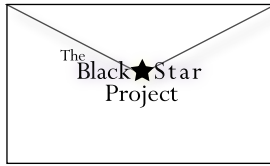
This is a problem that the black community has to solve. Until the black community creates its own high expectation for achievement, schools aren't going to be able to succeed. They can't succeed."

(Phillip Jackson, quoted in *Chicago Sun-Times* November 12, 2003)

¹ 2003 National Association of Education Progress Reading Exam.

² "North Carolina SAT Score Increases Four Points; Nation Up One Point." North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. 28 Aug 2001.

³ Holzman, M. Public Education and Black SMale Students: A State Report Card. Schott Education Inequity Index, Cambridge, MA; The Schott Foundation for Public Education. 2004.



The Solution

Computer Software Innovations (CSI), a technology vendor to hundreds of schools and districts throughout the Southeast, is calling on private and public organizations throughout the region to support a sweeping effort to bring proven solutions from other parts of the country into North and South Carolina. After researching its successes, CSI agrees with educators statewide that The Black Star Project, a Chicago-based not-for-profit organization, offers the best and most appropriate programs for communities in the Carolinas.

A recent study by the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools shows that parent and community involvement improves student achievement. Regardless of race, income or language barriers, the benefits include:

- Higher grade point averages and higher scores on standardized tests
- Higher enrollment in more challenging academic programs
- More classes passed and credits earned
- Better school attendance
- Improved behavior at home and school
- Better social skills and adaptation to school

The Black Star Project

The Black Star Project is working to eliminate the racial academic achievement gap by getting parents & communities involved in their children's education when it makes a difference – early on. By enlisting parents & communities as partners, Black Star is working to reverse the trend and create a better future for these kids. If these kids get a better future, we all do.

Student Programs

Since 1996 the Black Star Project has provided services to over 100,000 students of all races, faiths and ethnicities in hundreds of schools nationwide. By offering the **ComEd Student Motivation Program**, the **Celebrity Reading Program**, the **Destination College Program**, the **Wall Pre-College Preparation Program**, & the **Business and Entrepreneurship Program**, the Black Star Programs boost a school's ability to narrow the achievement gap.

Parental Involvement



To encourage greater parental involvement in the process, The Black Star offers a number of parent-oriented programs. The **Million Father March**, for example, gets fathers to take their children to the first day of school. In 2005, the March drew 83 cities across the nation – including Raleigh and Goldsboro, NC. Other programs include monthly **Educational Forums Educational**, the **Proud Parent Journal** (published six times per year), a **Fathers Club**, the **100 Concerned Black Mothers Initiative**, the **Toyota/Black Star Parent University** and many parent resource fairs.



Keynote Speaker – Phillip Jackson



Phillip Jackson is the Founder and Executive Director of The Black Star Project: the only organization of its kind that specifically works towards the elimination of the racial academic achievement gap. His diverse career includes serving as:

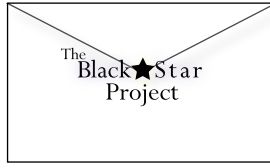
President & CEO, Boys & Girls Club
Deputy Chief of Staff, Chicago Public Schools
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Chicago Public Schools
Chief of Staff, Chicago Public Schools
Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Housing Authority
Chief of Education, City of Chicago.

Amongst Mr. Jackson's many professional awards, he recently received Alpha Kappa Alpha's 2005 "Monarch Man of the Year Award" and the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative's 2004 "Father of the Year" award. Mr. Jackson's numerous civic and volunteer roles include having served on the Board of Directors of the American Red Cross and as President of The Gap Community Organization. In 1991 he organized People to Feed Somalia – the largest grassroots relief effort & response to the famine.

Mr. Jackson has appeared on Fox, NBC, CBS, Channel 26/WCIU Chicago, and Chicago's Channel 11 Television, and has spoken on National Public Radio. Recent speaking engagements include: the Congressional Black Caucus, University of Chicago, and Loyola Chicago University's Law School. Mr. Jackson got his BA from Roosevelt University in 1974.

During his five-year tenure at Chicago Public Schools, Jackson helped CPS achieve the highest number of contracts in history with businesses owned by Blacks, Latinos and Women. As the director of intergovernmental affairs, Jackson he managed a team that secured millions of dollars in grant funds for new construction and renovation projects, as well as innovative educational initiatives. During this tenure, Phillip became acutely aware of the racial academic achievement gap, and eventually decided to enter the non-profit sector in order to address this problem. In 1996 he founded The Black Star Project to address this issue.

Phillip Jackson advocates for community involvement in education and the importance of parental development to ensure that children are properly educated. In 2005, Phillip Jackson and The Black Star Project led the nation back to school with the Million Father March – an event that drew attention from over 200 media outlets worldwide. This back-to-school march encouraged men to take children to school on the first day, marking a commitment to a year of positive male involvement in education.



Event Registration

3 Ways To RSVP To This Event:

1. Log onto www.eliminatesthegap.org and reserve your seat or table online.
2. Complete the form below and
 - a. Mail it to 119 Sulphur Springs Road, Asheville, NC 28806
or
 - b. Fax it to 312-423-1859
3. Contact Rebecca Friedman at 917-509-5298 to reserve your space by phone.

Registration Form:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Company Name: _____ (if applicable)

School/District Name: _____ (if applicable)

Please Select One:

YES - Please reserve a table (8 persons) in the name of _____ (\$500/table)

YES - Please reserve _____ seats in the name of _____ (\$50/seat)

NO - Unable to attend. Please accept a donation of \$ _____

Sponsorship:

YES - My company is interested in sponsoring this event.
(you will be telephoned to make arrangements)

Special Needs:

I prefer a vegetarian dinner.

I am handicapped and will require assistance.

Business Attire Is Requested.
The Black Star Project is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.