

**To: Mayor Mark Kruzan
Common Council of the City of Bloomington**

**From: David Hummons, Chair
Bloomington Commission on the Status of Black Males**

**Re: Annual Report from the City of Bloomington Commission on the Status of
Black Males**

Date: May 17, 2010

The City of Bloomington's Commission on the Status of Black Males was created to address the challenges faced by African-American males in the areas of health, employment, criminal justice, and education. The purposes and duties of the group include, in part, to serve as a catalyst to promote positive public and private remedies to address the multi-faceted problems confronting Black males in the community, to organize and convene community meetings to discuss the status of Black males, and to network with other groups in the community and the state.

Members of the Commission during 2009 included Commission Chair David Hummons (appointed by the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration Commission), Larry Brown (Human Rights Commission), Marty Deckard (Mayor), Cedric Harris (Mayor), Adrian Land (Mayor), Bev Smith (Common Council), and Greg Tourner (Common Council). Staff support is provided by the City's Liaison, Special Projects Coordinator Craig Brenner.

In January of 2009, Mayor Kruzan called for nominations for the Outstanding Black Male Leader of Tomorrow Award. The Commission selected Eddie R. Cole, Jr. and presented him the award at the Black History Month Gala on February 28, 2009.

During 2009 the Commission began making serious efforts to attract more African-American Males to the services provided by Volunteers in Medicine. This effort included meeting with VIM staff and developing and distributing promotional materials specifically targeting African Americans. Commission member Greg Tourner began volunteering on the VIM Marketing Committee and continues doing so in 2010.

Tony Pope, Captain of the Bloomington Police Department, and Roger Kerr, Fire Chief of the Bloomington Fire Department, met with the Commission in April, 2009 at the request of Commission for the purpose of discussing the proposed Public Safety Academy for youth. Kerr stated that many kids have a negative perception of firemen and police officers because they are usually only present when there are problems. The proposed Academy will show that there is a human element underneath the uniform and inside the squad car by letting youth interact with police and fire personnel. Several goals that are shared by the Commission and by Police and

Fire will be addressed by the creation of a Public Safety Academy for youth. These goals include introducing youth to possible careers in fire and law enforcement; helping youth understand the importance of cooperating with police and fire personnel; and helping youth understand the value of good citizenship.

Chris Enstrom of the Indiana University 21st Century Scholars Program also met with the Commission in April, 2009. Enstrom discussed a proposed collaboration between the Commission and the 21st Century Scholars program which would link current Scholars on the IU campus with new 21st Century Scholars in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, with particular attention on African American males. This mentoring relationship would help the young students who have been identified as eligible for the program and make sure they remain in school through graduation, so they can enter Indiana University.

After several interim Superintendents of Instruction, the Monroe County Community School Corporation hired Dr. J. T. Coopman, who began July 1, 2009. The Commission made it a goal to speak with Dr. Coopman during the 2009 year and discuss on-going efforts on behalf of students of color since the Town Hall Meeting it sponsored several years ago. Commission Chair Hummons, Bev Smith, Community and Family Resources Director Pete Giordano and Craig Brenner met with Dr. Coopman during the summer and discussed the difficulty in recruiting African-American male teachers and other topics. Dr. Coopman said he was open to ideas to recruit staff of color into MCCSC and also hosting diversity roundtables to provide suggestions and support. He plans to attend the March, 2010 Commission meeting (see meeting minutes of March 10, 2010 for details) to discuss ways to increase the diversity of faculty, staff and administrators; possible formation of working groups to address climate issues; and other ideas presented by Dr. Coopman and those attending the meeting.

In November the Commission participated in the Men and Women of Color Leadership Conference on the campus of Indiana University, hosting a successful workshop. Commissioners David Hummons, Bev Smith, and Adrian Land facilitated the discussion, which centered on the impact of Barack Obama's presidency on the future of young people of color.

The Commission ended the year by planning a Black History Month Conversation for youth on the importance of selecting good role models. (The conversation took place in February of this year at a local Black barber shop, and involved 35 men and youth. A few photos are attached. More details about this will be included in the 2010 report.) This successful event is a prime example of the positive influence that the Commission has on the community: an inexpensive way to have a lasting positive impact on the lives of African-American males.

For detailed information on the activities of the Commission, please refer to the City's Web site at www.bloomington.in.gov/cfrd.

The photos below are from the “Saturday at the Barbershop” Conversation which took place on Saturday, February 20, 2010 at College Town Cutters.

