

Dr. Shelby T. Wyatt * Kenwood Academy Brotherhood Program

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Organization Overview

Founded in
2004

The vision to successfully mentor African-American male students became a reality through the establishment of the Brotherhood Program at Kenwood Academy in 2004. Driven by the desire to guide African-American male students to pursue educational excellence, Dr. Shelby T. Wyatt, organization founder, implemented a male mentoring program at the urging of two senior students, Kyle McGhee and Howard Stokes. Embracing the Kenwood spirit of creating a supportive learning environment, these two young men desired to establish a student led male mentoring program, and Dr. Wyatt immediately agreed. The Kenwood Academy Brotherhood continues to meet after school each Friday and its' members participate in uplifting activities from college tours to basketball, all with the underlying focus of maintaining good grades and citizenship. Dr. Wyatt firmly believes that African American males benefit from positive role models, many of whom lack fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers and cousins to help guide their journey to manhood. This male mentoring/leadership organization is the practical application of his doctoral dissertation entitled, "*Measuring the effectiveness of an Afrocentric Male Mentoring Program with adolescent African American males*".

Since its origin, the framework and principles of the program have spread throughout the Chicago Public Schools, as well as, other school districts throughout the United States. The impetus to implement a district wide male mentoring initiative grew out of the success of the Kenwood Academy Brotherhood organization. Dr. Wyatt states, "It had been my dream to establish a district wide school-based male mentoring organization to address the issues that are crippling African American and Latino American males from accepting education as the catalyst for their success". In 2006, the Kenwood Academy Brotherhood organization helped launch the Chicago Public Schools citywide Male Initiative Project. This project brought groups of male students from over 25 schools to attend workshops and participate in discussions focused on issues facing urban male students of color. The first conference was held at Kenwood and now is hosted on a college campus, DePaul University. The college setting connects urban male students to the reality that college is possible and highlights the importance of education to future success.

Dr. Wyatt is a sought after counselor leader who continues to present the Brotherhood Program to practicing school counselors, administrators and other educators at local and national conferences throughout the United States. His conference presentations include the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), College Board Forums, College Board Midwest Regional Conference, The University of Maryland Male Summit, Philadelphia Urban Educational Conference, National Association of Black School Educators, National Office of School Counselor Advocacy, Illinois School Counselors Association, and the Illinois Resource Center. Dr. Wyatt and Brotherhood members have also completed trainings with Long Beach, California and Kansas City, Kansas school districts.

Since mentoring is a lifelong occurrence, several Brotherhood alumni organized the Alumni Foundation in 2007. Its purpose is to perpetuate the Brotherhoods' mentoring philosophy into young adulthood. The foundation grew and incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) not for profit organization on February 7, 2012. The Board of Directors consists of Brotherhood alumni with Dr. Wyatt still leading as the president. Its purpose is to provide mentoring and financial support to the Kenwood Academy Brotherhood members.

The Kenwood Academy Professional School Counseling staff and the administration proudly support Dr. Wyatt as he continues working to drive the success of male students. The publication of *The Brotherhood book* by ASCA and the feature documentary *The Education They Deserve* (www.unitedwelearnil.org) are testaments to his work. The bible declares that "faith without works is dead". The enormous faith and hard work of Dr. Shelby T. Wyatt continues to resonate with all segments of the community and all collaborative work to support the growth and development of diverse male students.