

RESTORE MINISTRIES, INC.

May/June 2011

Volume 4, Issue 3

Determination



Elmi and Brian at National Honor Society

Over its 17-year history, Restore has touched hundreds of urban kids. Some died before they really ever lived. Others aged out and drifted away. Yet others grew into productive adults. And, increasingly, more and more graduate from high school and pursue higher education.

What separates those who "make it" from those

barely treading water or who drown is a mix of character traits, almost always including **determination.**

Most of us learn about determination through role models. In the

twentieth century, young people were routinely exposed to "The Little Engine That Could," a story made popular by lawyer Arnold Munk (aka Watty Piper).

We were inspired by the Little Engine's mantra, "I Think I Can, I...Think...I...Can!" Through this tale, we learned to take on challenges, even when they appear overwhelming to others.

Restore has been cultivating young people to serve as exemplars of determination. With donors' help, Restore has provided several youth with scholarships to nonpublic schools that require daily homework and serious effort.

In addition, we have encouraged others to "step it up" by entering the school district's college prep academies or by excelling in its theme schools. The result is that Restore has more and more kids who are determined to succeed.

Indifference is an enemy we battle at Restore. The tide of this war shifts often.

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Executive Director's Message

Restore kids have accomplished amazing things this year. Their momentum in 2011 has been wonderful.

Here's a brief list of accomplishments:

Emanuel and Henry finished their first year at Union County College. Amirah, Nanci, Newton and Jamie graduated high school and will attend, respectively, Union County College, Seton

Hall University, Oakwood University and Kean University.

Elmi, Carlos, Brian, Glaricel and Joey took the SAT in May.



Linwood Bagby

Elmi will attend a five-week, pre-college studio program at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where he was awarded a \$3,000 scholarship.

Carlos and Brian will attend The College of New Jersey's two-week residential pre-college Robotics program.

Glaricel will work this summer with a local non-profit.

*Your own
resolution to
success is more
important
than anything
else.*

—Abraham Lincoln

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Elmi, Brian, Linwood, Idalis
with Linwood at NHS ceremony

Exemplars notwithstanding, some kids say “no thanks” to our encouragement, prodding and expectations. We’ve lost more than a few. But, with renewed hope, we welcome new youngsters and invite them to choose determination over indifference.

In May, juniors Glaricel, Elmi, Carlos, Brian, Joey and Debbie took the SAT for the first time. Beltran, Shantiona and Christele are prepping for SATs this fall. Determined to graduate from competitive colleges, they are touring campuses and applying for pre-college summer programs and internships.

They follow in the footsteps of Newton, Nanci and Sheedy, who enter four-year colleges this fall and of Emanuel and Henry, who have just completed a college year.

Next in line are Rafael and Trevon, who are respectively, rising juniors at Union Catholic and at St. Benedict’s Prep.

Lessons in determination begin at birth. We rehearse at our parents’ feet, doggedly trying to stand, exuberantly forming first words. Later, we stick it out in the sand box and stifle a kindergarten tear.

Determined to succeed, we swing through space, leap an abyss, balance on a bike, raise a tremulous hand, ask for a date, drive a car, take the SAT, apply to college, risk intimacy, seek independence, dare to parent. Sadly, some of us do not. Our journey is made easier by loving, encouraging, demanding, understanding adults and by faith.

Many kids are fortified for the journey at Restore. Our mantra is “Yes, you can.” Determination, even with children of privilege, requires sustained support. With less advantaged kids, fostering determination is a challenge.

We deal in hope while trusting in God. Our hope for newcomers is that they find at Restore older role models, who are eager and determined to succeed. We expect that early teens will learn to plan, study and persevere. And, we cheer the arrival of younger kids, who can grow with us in safety and leave as determined young adults.

*There is nothing harder
than the softness
of indifference.*

— Juan Montalvo

“I, Too, Sing America”

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

*They send me to eat in
the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.*

*Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare say to
me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”*

Then.

*Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful
I am
And be ashamed ---*

I, too, am America.

Langston Hughes



Tre’Quan in Homework Center

*What we are
is God’s
gift to us.
What we become
is our gift
to God.
— Louis Nizer*

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Michael received a \$4,500 scholarship to attend St. Benedict's Prep in Newark.

Rafael, Joey and Jovan will work in August at Johnsonburg Presbyterian Camp's leadership program.

Erik, Jakub and Wilfredo graduated from their middle school's D.A.R.E. program.

Restore students continue to volunteer weekly at a non-profit by setting up and serving food and clothing to needy people in Elizabeth.

These activities provide our members with an opportunity to learn, to grow, to develop a talent or skill, and to expand their sense of self and their potential.

We see the results every day as our members exhibit more motivation and pride, take on new challenges and talk with hope about their future.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the work of the Restore family.

It's all of you... volunteers working with the kids, Dennys supervising and

making sure the program keeps going, partner agencies collaborating to enhance programs, trustees who support and guide our efforts, and all the friends and supporters of Restore who recognize the importance our work, pray and donate time and money. It takes all of you to make it happen the way it should.

I thank each of you for everything you bring to Restore. Let's together keep the successes going and meet the challenges.

We plan to have a five-week summer program

filled with daily activities, field trips, and relationship building.

We need and want you to be part of our family. We're all in this together and together we are transforming lives in Elizabeth.

Linwood



Newton, Rafael and Peter win vocabulary contest cash

Dennys' Update



Tutor Ethan Hessney from ConocoPhillips works with Brian, Elmi and Carlos

Restore would like to thank ConocoPhillips engineers, who again this year contributed their time and talent as homework center volunteers.

Through their persistence and patience, they have helped many students improve significantly.

We recognize that Restore's success is dependent on talented volunteers who are passionate about helping urban kids achieve.

ConocoPhillips volunteers have contributed to Restore's mission in numerous ways.

For example, this spring Jose L. Aguirre along with Ethan Hessney played a big role in assisting Michael Freeman with his science fair project. They helped him create a display board and compose a lab journal that was evaluated by three judges.

Gary, who attended the science fair, writes: "Michael's science

teacher praised his turnaround since March. I think that Michael's improvement reflects directly the intervention of the ConocoPhillips tutors."

Restore also sponsored three vocabulary contests. The first, a self-made test with Gary, earned cash for nine participants. The second, a team competition, resulted in twelve kids winning \$15-30 each. The third, "Go-For-The-Bucks-Day," involved a written test for different grades. The winners by grade cluster were Peter \$150, Angelo \$250 and Elmi \$400. Finalists Glaricel and Carlos won gift certificates.

Congratulations to all!

Restore at a Glance

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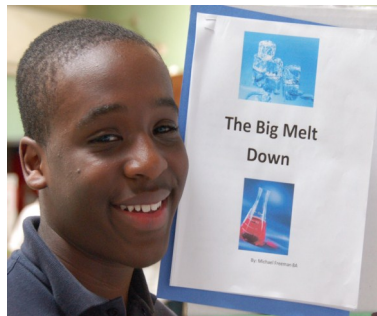
REALIZING

POTENTIAL...

MAXIMIZING

ACHIEVEMENT

Student Profile: Michael Freeman



In June, I completed 8th grade at Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy in Elizabeth. This spring, I was thrilled to receive a scholarship to attend St. Benedict's Prep, where school begins in late July!

I will have to take a bus into Newark each day, but that doesn't bother me. I'll just have to get use to going to bed early and getting up before the sun.

Last year, I had to attend summer school. But this year, I worked really hard, so I don't have to. And Restore's homework center tutors helped me do well in my classes. For example, they guided me in preparing social studies research papers and served as science fair advisors.

My plan at St. Benedict's is to continue to work hard and earn good grades. I'll need them to try out for the freshmen basketball team.

I want to do my best at St. Benedict's and achieve the goal of being the first one in my family to graduate from a four-year college.

I think I can.

My cousin Amirah introduced me to Restore. I noticed that she was going everyday and really liked it. I gave it a try and liked it too. Restore was everything she said: fun things to do, nice people and really good food. I knew I belonged.

Everyone accepted me and it was easy to make friends. I liked Restore so much that I invited five friends to join.

