

# Rites of Passage

Reshaping Education

&

The St. Louis Community

One "Child" at a Time!

TRAINING  THE WHOLE

June 14, 2014

Mary Ann Dunlap, Chief Executive Officer of "IMANI RITES OF PASSAGE, COMPANY," poses with her program Administrators: Leslie Stevenson and LaTricia Clark as they celebrate the "PHENOMENAL WOMEN" who successfully leverage community resources, dedicate their time, and professional acumen in the continued success of the organization for over three years. The women were honored for their extraordinary and exceptional hard work and services to the organization and in the community. As a testament to the value of the experience, a few of the honorees have successfully undergone the full Rites of Passage experience from their childhood into their adult lives. These women currently hold prominent roles in their profession, community, and personal lives. One highlight of the event included the natural and spiritual meaning of earthly spices and herbs and their correlation to the resilience, essence, and strength of each of the honorees. The organization works with state, local, and community organizations to aid the participants as they forge the most functional processes of their lives at home, school, in the community, and in their career choices.



**Pictured-**Zakiyyah Marshall, Mary Ann Dunlap, Felica Ezell, Shanessay Carr, Anita Williams, Beverly Dew, Gerthia Carter, Mildred Smith, Leslie Stevenson, LaTricia Clark, Elaine Williams, Yvette Gilleylen, Gwen Bogan, Johanna Wharton, Betty Strong, Eurania Jackson, Ida Casey, Michelle Price, Kendra Neely-Martin, Sharon Carr, Chanel Watkins, Sonya Little, Gwen Fouché, Judy Lynom -----

This occurs through a series of stages as their lives change -passage and rites – rituals of social, community, educational, family and cultural immersion of programmatic experiences. This promotes the full discovery of the youth’s intrinsic capabilities as they transition from childhood, adolescence, into society as young adults. *"Failure Is Not an Option" is the motto: and recently, Dr. Ian Buchanan, Imani Board President challenged the youth in their capstone event: to "Own & Know Their Why!"* This school of thought translates into the youth making life choices that are in alignment with their individual goals and not necessarily because it’s a peer or popular choice. Most importantly, the youth must effectively articulate their



aspiring "Why" into healthy peer, community, and adult relationships. According to Mrs. Dunlap, *"Everyone must understand that goal setting at an early age is important. The proper guidance by adults is essential to allow the child to make the successful transition from childhood to adulthood. Furthermore, we also understand that knowledge, strategies, resources and accountability are -strong determining factors for the success of every child."* Male Mentors who facilitated this event included: Naheem Whitaker, Martin Dunlap. Raqib Muhammad, Jonathan Strong, Michael Franklin, Tallis Piaget, Kunama Mtendaji.

Every extended education, cultural, & community experience is designed to allow the whole child to develop naturally all the while being socially aware of their development as responsible citizens. The organization accepts both male and female youth entering fourth and fifth grades. The Rites of Passage experience develops and guides the youth as they matriculate through the program from childhood, into young adults, as they enter college and their careers. The full Rites of Passage experience includes a continuum of wraparound services over a six year period for participants, parents or



extended care givers. The mission of Imani Boys to Men is to develop young boys emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually as they transition from young boys to productive and responsible men. The full participation of parents, caregivers, or extended family members is required for the duration of the experience. (4<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grades)



Spaces are limited - Enrollment Period August 15<sup>th</sup> thru September 30<sup>th</sup>. If you or someone you know may be interested in participating you may send an application request to [stevenson.leslie07@gmail.com](mailto:stevenson.leslie07@gmail.com) or [clark.latricia23@gmail.com](mailto:clark.latricia23@gmail.com) only emails with the title subject: "ATTN: RITES OF PASSAGE APPLICATION Male or Female" will receive a response.

Zuri Umoja (Beautiful Ones) pictured at St. Louis Public Schools -Pamoja Preparatory Academy Through a variety of workshops, cultural experiences and activities, the girls will enhance their development, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. The girls participated in community projects, programs focused on self-love, creativity, unity, and worth, historical and cultural significance. The girls also participated in workshops designed around the art of Doll-Making, the art of Quilting and the art of communication through different methods and the Principles of Nguzo Saba. Linda Opaleke and Muymbi Bynom are Coordinators of the girls programs and services at Pamoja Academy. One highlight included the young girls learning and experiencing the traditions of quilting as an African Art, community, and trade. The girls ended the session with a wonderful luncheon in which family and friends were present to celebrate the culmination of their Rites of Passage Training experience.