

Florida Diversity Council hosts 2nd Annual MOVE Conference



Participants of this year's MOVE Conference

On Saturday, August 10, the Southwest Florida Chapter of the Florida Diversity Council hosted the second annual Men of Vision and Excellence Conference (MOVE). The event was held at Hodges University in Naples and brought young men together to explore various issues they face in society today: developing leadership skills, completing and excelling in high school and college, preparing for and succeeding in the workplace; branding oneself to be marketable, and becoming a positive community influence.

“The MOVE Conference created an environment which allowed young men, professionals and mentors to come together to discuss topics referencing college, finances and life lessons,” Dennis Kennedy said,

Founder & CEO of the National Diversity Council.

After a continental breakfast donated by Sam’s, Walmart, Publix, and Bob Evans, a welcome was offered by Dr. Cindy Gomez, the Vice-Chair of the Diversity Committee at Hodges University. Opening remarks were given by Gail Williams, the President of the SWFL Chapter of the FLDC, Chief Diversity Officer at Hodges University, and Chairperson for MOVE. Brian Follweiler, the Director of Programs and Community Outreach for the Mental Health Association of Southwest Florida and Co-Chair of MOVE also greeted the group. The morning breakout sessions offered a variety of topics to attendees: Hodges University: Exploring the Possibility, led by Katie Rhodes and

Theresa Garratt; Stress: Healthy and Effective Methods to Adapt, led by Jeremy White – a licensed clinical social worker affiliated with Florida Gulf Coast University; and Digital Strategy Session: Personal Branding, led by Chengi Muyambo with Core Functionality. During the morning break which offered snacks provided by Shula’s Steak House, the young men were encouraged to network with the presenters and other attendees. A special raffle was designated for collected business cards.

The engaging morning sessions were followed by a lively, interactive panel discussion. The panel was composed of several Southwest Florida executives: Bob Simpson, President and CEO of LeeSar; Joshua Rudnick, Partner with Conroy, Conroy, Durant & Rudnick, P.A.; Dr. Joel Bohemier, Director of Trinity Chiropractic; and Rick LoCastro, Chief Operating Officer at Physicians Regional Medical Center. David Fairman with Hodges Funeral Home moderated the panel. One panelist came in from Tampa to participate: Erik Smith, Valpak’s Director of Cultural Competence and Inclusion. This distinguished group of men addressed various issues related to being successful and achieving goals. The panel closed with each member offering a personal insight to the young men in attendance. Several questions, taken from audience members, were Participants of the Florida Diversity

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Council MOVE Conference also answered by the executives.

Two additional sessions were offered before the lunch break: Making Your Military Service Work for You, led by Tom Donahue of Shula's Steak House, and Social Networking: The Do's and Don'ts, led by Dr. Al Ball of Hodges University. A barbecue-styled lunch provided by the Florida Diversity Council offered the attendees, speakers, and mentors opportunities to interact. Several tablets and other donated items were raffled during lunch as well. Food and conversation flowed during this time as many of the participants were eager to discuss the morning topics.

Lunch was followed by a dynamic presentation by keynote speaker, "Action" J. Jackson, of RYSE Magazine and President of Jackson Enterprises, Inc. Mr. Jackson is currently based in Orlando and chose to spend the day with this group of young men. Jackson's talk was highly motivating as he encouraged each person to keep and carry his list of Ten Things Everyone Should Do. Jackson emphasized that this list helped established his personal success. The thought-provoking discussion was followed by a Q & A session.

The day came to a close with mentor roundtable sessions. The attendees were encouraged to meet with mentors who had been designated by group: middle/high school, college, and

young professional. Several mentors were available for each group of young men. Mentors included some of the day's speakers and other community leaders: Bob Simpson, LeeSar; David Fairman, Hodges Funeral Home; Erik Smith, Valpak; Gregory Eckert, ADP, Inc; Harold Weeks, NAACP; J. Webb Horton, FGCU; Jason Young, Shelter for Abused Women and Children; Jeremy White, LCSW; Joseph Frazier, Hodges University; Monte Warren, Hodges University; Kenneth Worthy, Hodges University; Paul McCreight, O3 Hygenics; Peter Ndiangu, Oasis High School; Lt. Ralph Anthony, Naples Police Department; Samuel Mitchell, and Twaski Jackson of the Housing Authority for the City of Fort Myers. Each MOVE participant was able to meet with a mentor to talk about future plans and life direction.

The conference ended with closing remarks from its planners, including sponsor recognition, and additional raffles. Each young man in attendance received a string pack, a MOVE t-shirt, and gift cards from Shula's, Walmart, and Zoomers. This event would not have been possible without the support of the sponsors already mentioned and other in-kind contributors: Sponsor Pages, Darleen & Friends, Lee Pitts Live, The Mental Health Association of Southwest Florida, 4What, and Zoomers Amusement Park. The work of several community-based committee members should also be recognized for their countless volunteer hours. Brenda Faulkner

with Walmart, Claudia Lozano with Goodwill Industries, Dr. Joseph Pepe with Hodges University, Lisa "Akita" Cannon with the NAACP, Monte Warren with Hodges University, and Theresa Garratt with Hodges University along with several members of the Southwest Florida Diversity Council worked tirelessly to make this event a success. The efforts of those involved are returned ten-fold when participants share positive feedback about the event. Parent, Jacqueline Dickey, shared her son's excitement with members of the planning team. She noted, "My son (Marcus Wynn) really enjoyed it. He talked to me about it for hours, he even remembered some of the things that were said and he was just glad that he went. Thank you so much for the opportunity!"

- "Action" Jackson's
Ten Things Everyone Should Do
10. Set Goals
 9. Develop and Appetite for Learning
 8. Handle Your Business
 7. Ask for Help
 6. Never Give Up
 5. Choose Your Friends Wisely
 4. Own at Least 1 Suit
 3. Give Respect to Get Respect
 2. Listen
 1. Learn Your History