

NAACP New York City ACT-SO
Weekly Enrichment Workshops, 18th Annual *Olympics of the Mind* 2005 & Awards Ceremony
FACT SHEET

A One-of-A Kind Competition

Presented with pageantry and excitement, the *Olympics of the Mind* gives Black high school students an incomparable opportunity to showcase their talents in 25 humanities, arts, and sciences categories. The *Olympics of the Mind* is the signature event of the NAACP New York City ACT-SO program. ACT-SO is an acronym for Afro-Academic Technological and Scientific Olympics. The goal of NYC ACT-SO is to inspire and encourage high academic and cultural achievement and to foster confidence and skills that high school students will need to thrive as adults. With 150 chapters nationwide, NAACP ACT-SO is the largest program dedicated to academic achievement of Black youth in the country.

Olympics of The Mind Set for April 23 – VIP Reception & Awards Ceremony is April 25

Operating under the administrative aegis of the NAACP – the nation’s oldest, largest, and most effective civil rights organization – NYC ACT-SO will host its 18th annual *Olympics of the Mind* competition on Saturday, April 23, 2005, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Manhattan’s Martin Luther King High School, 122 Amsterdam Avenue, between 65th and 66th streets. The VIP Reception (invitation only, 5 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.) & Awards Ceremony (open to the public with ticket purchase, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.) will follow on Monday, April 25, at con Edison, 4 Irving Place in Lower Manhattan.

Medals, Cash Prizes

NYC ACT-SO *Olympics of the Mind* top three winners in each category receive a gold medal with \$500 in cash, a silver medal with \$300, and a bronze medal with \$200. The gold medallists (among 1,200 gold medallists from local competitions across the country) advance to the national NAACP ACT-SO *Olympics of the Mind* to be held July 7-11 in Milwaukee, where the top three winners in each category receive a gold medal with \$2000, a silver medal with \$1,500, and a bronze medal with \$1,000. Every national medallist also receives a fully-loaded laptop computer! There still is time for students to apply to compete!

Enrichment Workshops, Activities Prepare Students

Participants’ road to success and the *Olympics of the Mind* competition begins at the start of the school year with intensive enrichment workshops beginning in November. A kick-off rally is held in January, and the enrichment workshops, conducted on Saturdays at Manhattan’s P.S. 84, 32 W. 92nd Street, between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West, continue through April. The workshops are led by coaches, who are accomplished professionals in the competition categories. They help students to choose and develop individual projects. Since its inception, NYC ACT-SO has mentored more than 4,500 students through coaching sessions, the *Olympics of the Mind*, and other enrichment activities, which include field trips to Broadway plays, museums, and cultural centers; college admissions workshops; studies broad; and internships.

NYC ACT-SO – Driven and Led by Volunteers

All coaches, mentors, and judges donate their time to work with the students. The program’s success depends on the ability to recruit and retain dedicated volunteers from communities throughout New York City. It takes hundreds of hours to involve students, coach them through the competition, judge their entries and celebrate their successes. Today, NYC ACT-SO has 400 judges, 40 coaches, and 75 other volunteers. The organization is seeking more judges for this season’s *Olympics of the Mind*.

The Need, Impact, and Successes

NYC ACT-SO’s mission is to overcome the vicious cycle of low scholastic expectations and achievement that plagues minority communities throughout the city. More than 98 percent of NYC-ACT-SO students graduate from high school and 85 percent go on to college. The program offers a singular experience and level of recognition that greatly impacts students’ lives long after high school, including the lives of these NYC ACT-SO alumni:

Mike Phillips, a world-renowned saxophonist who has toured with Stevie Wonder, given a command performance for Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg, South Africa, and toured with Prince’s 2004 Musicology Tour. Mr. Phillips is signed to Hidden Beach Recordings and will release his sophomore album in May 2005. He also is the first non-athlete to secure an endorsement contract with Nike.

Kimberly Acham, an accomplished artist who earned her fine arts degree at New York University, became a junior curator for the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and is a purchasing agent for a major art dealer.

Everton Prospere, M.D., who earned his medical degree from the City College of New York and is a successful, practicing physician in Brooklyn.

Carrying on the Legacy of National NAACP ACT-SO Creator Vernon Jarrett

The 2005 NAACP ACT-SO season is the first since last year’s passing of legendary journalist and civil rights activist Vernon Jarrett, who created the national program in 1977. The NYC ACT-SO chapter was founded in 1987 by Anton Tomlinson and Benjamin Duster IV, a direct descendant of justice crusader and journalist Ida B. Wells. NYC ACT-SO will uphold and expand Mr. Jarrett’s legacy through its annual student enrichment and fundraising activities. NYC ACT-SO is grateful to its foundation, government, and individual supporters (listed on the press release), and the community at-large!

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