

## AAHMI MISSION

The mission of the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative (AAHMI) is to promote and strengthen the institution of healthy marriage in the African American community.

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# AAHMI NEWSLETTER

## AAHMI 5th Annual Connecting Marriage Research to Practice Conference: An Outstanding Experience!



Diann Dawson

Beautiful Hampton University was host to the AAHMI 5th Annual Connecting Marriage Research to Practice Conference: Preparing Resilient Families for the New Decade held June 22-24, 2010. The conference was formatted

according to tracks: Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRP); Youth and Young Adults (YYA); Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (FBNP); Family Dynamics and Parenting in Challenging Economic Times (FD&P) and Health and Healthy Marriage (HHM). Each track featured relevant workshop topics presented by renowned researchers and practitioners. Registration for the conference exceeded well over 450!



Dr. Linda Malone-Colon  
and  
Dr. Pamela V. Hammond

Diann Dawson, Director of Regional Operations and Dr. Pamela V. Hammond, Provost Hampton University provided the welcome and opening remarks. Immediately following, Carlis V. Williams, Regional Administrator, Region IV introduced the plenary session, *The Resilient African American Family: Challenges and Triumphs* led by Dr. Linda Malone-Colon of Hampton University. Dr. Malone shared some of the cultural strengths, assets and challenges contributing to sustained and viable African American marriages and family life experiences. She also made a compelling case for marriage indicators that track the health of marriage in America and their importance.

Morning workshop topics on day one included Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood: A Sound Government Investment (Dr. Stacey

Bouchet and Ted N. Strader); Dating Challenges: Promoting Healthy Relationships (Dr. Monique Quinton-Sherrod and Quentin Walcott); Sustaining Faith-based and Community Healthy Marriage Programs: Fill Your Toolkit (Dr. D. Fredrica Brooks and Jocelyn Whitfield); Yours, Mine and Ours: Parenting and Complex Family Structures (Dr. Pajarita Charles, Dr. Anne Jones and Robin Key-Banks) and Violence, Urban Trauma and Mental Illness: Promoting Mental Wellness for African American Children, Youth and Adults. At lunch, youth from the Teen Advisory Board, Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative presented short skits on teens and healthy relationship interaction.

The afternoon plenary on day one (moderated by Joyce A. Thomas, Regional Administrator, Region II) was titled *Black Family Life in the Media: Taking Back Our Image* and featured Dr. Cassandra Chaney of Louisiana State University and Lamar and Ronnie Tyler, founders and executive directors of [BlackandMarriedwithKids.com](http://BlackandMarriedwithKids.com). The session examined research on the portrayal of Black families in television sitcoms from 1951 to 2009 and how those images shaped perceptions of Black marriage, fatherhood, parenting and family stability. Lamar and Ronnie Tyler talked about how they started a movement to take back the images of Black married couples.

Afternoon workshop topics on day one included the showing of the documentary *Black Fatherhood: Reconnecting with Our Legacy* (Dana Ross and Tashon Jackson, Sr.); *Inner City Truth: What's Hot and What's Not* (William J. Juzang and Holly Maust); *Is Nothing Sacred?: Faith Issues in Sexual and Domestic Violence* (Rev. Dr. Aleese Moore-Orbih and Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis); *Just When You Thought It Was Over: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren* (Dr. Deborah M. Whitely and Leslie Sessley) and *Beauty Is Only Skin Deep: The Mirror's*

“Children who receive the child support they're due have many better outcomes in life. They tend to do better in school, don't get involved in juvenile crime and have higher educational achievements.”

**Pam Compton**

**Focus on Fathers: August is *Child Support Enforcement Month* By: Karen Elliott**



“Through its mission of locating parents, establishing paternity, and establishing and enforcing child support orders, the child support program connects to families in six main domains. These are: preventing the need for child support enforcement, engaging with fathers from the birth of their first child, promoting family economic stability, helping men and women form and maintain healthy families, ensuring that families have good health care coverage, and preventing and reducing family violence.”

This mission statement and visualization emphasize the importance of the total child support enforcement program which goes beyond the traditional image of locating fathers who are not contributing income to the child’s upbringing and making them accountable.

While the inner circle of the bubble chart states the mission of child support enforcement, the outer circle portrays the vision of child support enforcement for the future. This image is a more positive, strength based approach compared to a previous “policing” image of child support and is the concept to be used in strategic planning for the future of Child Support Enforcement at the national level.

As part of Child Support Enforcement Month, take time to learn more about the positive activities provided for families in your community who participate in child support enforcement programs.

Establishing August as *Child Support Enforcement Month* brings to the spotlight the importance of child support enforcement in the daily lives of millions of families in the United States.

Vicki Turetsky, Commissioner, Office of Child Support Enforcement, has presented a new “bubble chart” to visualize the mission of child support enforcement.



**Spotlight on Health: Accidental Drowning By: Barbara Andrews**

Early in August, six teens, all African Americans, died in Louisiana when they tried to save a cousin who had slipped into a twenty-five foot deep portion of the Red River. Reportedly, none of the teens who died nor any of the adults in attendance knew how to swim. This tragic incident highlights the high percentage of African Americans who do not know how to swim.

Summertime brings lots of fun, but it can also be a season of danger. Accidental drowning occurs throughout the year, but the incidence is highest during summer. Drowning is defined as death resulting from suffocation within 24 hours after submersion in water. Nationally, drowning is among the leading causes of accidental death. For African American children ages 5 to 14, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics indicate that the fatal drowning rate is 3.1 times that of White children in the same age range. Drowning fatalities, especially for infants and young children, occur at home — not only in residential swimming pools, but in bathtubs, buckets and toilets. Most drowning of those older than 15 years of age occur outside the home in natural water settings such as lakes, rivers and the ocean. In cases of near-drowning, survivors can suffer brain damage and permanent neurological disability, such as memory problems, learning disabilities and loss of basic functioning.

According to a 2010 study conducted by the University of Memphis for USA Swimming, the national governing board for the sport of swimming in the United States, almost 70% of African American children have low or no swimming skills; this raises the risk of accidental drowning. This study found “fear of drowning” to be the strongest overall predictor of swimming inability among the

## Spotlight on Regions I, II, and III: 2010 Northeast Family Strengthening Conference By: Darlene Tart



The Immediate Office of the Regional Administrators from Regions I, II, and III convened what is becoming their annual 2010 Northeast Family Strengthening Conference in beautiful Albany, New York on July 22nd and July 23rd. The theme of the conference was, “Rethink, Retool, Renew: Innovative Strategies to Strengthen Families and Neighborhoods.” Over 250 persons attended the conference that featured 15 workshops and four plenaries with diverse topics such as parenting; asset building and financial stability; mentoring; teens and healthy relationships; coalitions, collaborations, and sustainability; mental health; families

experiencing incarcerations and re-entry, and program evaluation and measuring adults.

The morning of July 22nd began with a welcome provided by Joyce A. Thomas, Regional Administrator, Region II and Gladys Carrion, Commissioner, New York State, Office of Children and Family Services. David A. Hansell, Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families followed the welcome with a keynote presentation, *Supporting Families: A View from the Administration for Children and Families*. Mr. Hansell spoke about the role of the federal government in supporting and strengthening families; he also talked about federal priorities and new proposals to strengthen families and create economic stability. Morning workshops included presentations by Haji Shearer and Donna Linder on Parenting as Partners; Diane Litterer on Teaching and Promoting Protective Factors; Doug Edwards, Greg Owens and Justin Pasquariello on Mentoring; Denise DeVaun and Maria Hawe on IDA’s and Financial Literacy Strategies, and Masha Teverovsky, Roxana Barillas, and Sapna Pandya on Organization Cultural Competency.

The lunch plenary was titled, *Technology is Here to Start—Using the Digital World to Deliver* which featured representatives from [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org), [www.thatsnotcool.com](http://www.thatsnotcool.com) and [www.twoofus.org](http://www.twoofus.org)—E. Lauren Sogor, Jeanine Hays, and Kate Tomlinson. They spoke about how organizations use social media tools and techniques for outreach, to recruit and target audiences and to build organizational capacity and how this phenomenon is transforming the way non-profits work with and relate to their constituents. Afternoon workshops included presentations by Rita DeMaria and Nisa Muhammad on Strategies for Conflict Reduction for Parents and Couples; Jacqueline Garret and Ilene Marcus on Building Sustainability; David Miller, Tina Williams, and Kenneth Braswell on Raising Tomorrow’s Fathers; Jeanne Alhusen and Jeanine Hays on Parenting After Violence and Lora A Chaves and Nayda Negron Montalvo on Healthy Relationship and Family Strengthening Strategies.

On day two of the conference after opening remarks by David J. Lett, Regional Administrator, Region III and Elizabeth Berlin, Executive Deputy Commissioner, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, attendees participated in an engaging discussion on *Transforming Lives with the Power of Assets and Financial Literacy* lead by Ida Rademacher, Margaret Miley, and Khadijah Jones. They spoke of how assets and financial literacy could help meet today’s challenges and build better futures. The day’s workshops included presentations by Eileen A. Carranza and Irene Varley on Educating Teens about Health Relationships; Rita DeMaria and Douglas Tanner on Program Evaluation; Ann Adalist-Estrin and Elizabeth Gaynes on Working with Families of the Incarcerated and Re-Entered; Helena Davis and Joseph Hunter on Mental Health and Alan Inman and Diane Sims-Moore on Coalitions and Collaborations. Finally Region I Administrator, Mary Ann Higgins, introduced John Badalament who gave the last plenary address, *Fathering, Mothering and Family Life in the Age of the New Provider—The Big Challenge*. Mr. Badalament talked about how parents could be helped to identify priorities and become better prepared to manage them.

Regions I, II, and III are looking forward to begin planning their 4th annual conference to be hosted by Region III. Stay tuned for more details as they become available!



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## Youth Insights!

### Youth From Across the Country Attend AAHMI Conference for Relationship Lessons (As experienced through the eyes of youth writer Briauna Holmes)



Virginia's scorching hot and humid summer weather did not stop youth groups, from across the country, from attending the AAHMI Conference. Nor did the heat detour them from focused listening to motivational presentations and engaging in group discussions on relationships.

Included in the workshops provided by AAHMI were sessions aimed specifically at involving youth in a group discussion format. This atmosphere made asking questions and commenting on various issues comfortable for youth to openly express their opinions and personal life experiences.

In the first plenary session speaker Dr. Linda Malone-Colon revealed the shocking statistics of African American relationships in the U.S., thereby giving youth an eye-opening reality check for the odds of their future relationships. She ended her presentation with this quote of hope by Wesley Philipps: *"It is in the quiet crucible of our personal private sufferings that our noblest dreams are born. And God's greatest gifts are given in compensation for what we have been through."*

Youth and young adults gathered for their first seminar--"Dating Challenges: Promoting Healthy Relationships." Here youth learned about abusive relationships, specifically why men and boys are abusive (while acknowledging the uprising of female abusers).



Moderator Janice King-Dunbar established the real reason why men and boys abuse by getting the youths' opinion. Several shout outs from the youth underscored their beliefs for abuse: insecurity, peer pressure, father absence and media advocating violence.

"We have to find a way, together, to not support the idea of abusive relationships" said one of the youth participants. King-Dunbar shot the reasons for abusive relationships down, and said the real reason why men are abusive is because of [their] "Choice." She then offered some preventative advice: "Teens are at a critical stage for setting expectations for their relationships. You set the boundaries for what is acceptable in your relationship."

"Inner City Truth: What's Hot and What's Not?" presented by William Juzang II from MEE Productions Inc. and Holly Maust from Barkley REI gave youth a chance to engage in group discussion on how the internet, media, movies and cell phones influence youth relationships, and how it is changing their world. "The discussion made it more interesting because everyone was able to talk and give feedback throughout the seminar .... It was really informative and was nice to hear people debating in a good manner" said Dallas Richardson, a 16 year-old girl from Seattle's First AME Church.



Later that evening, the youth gathered for the "Clarifying IT Through Real Talk" seminar. Youth first viewed several music videos by artists such as Lil Wayne and Trina, depicting the vulgarity in media today. They resonated with the music such as Lil Wayne's "Every Girl", saying every lyric with the video. The discussion that followed left some re-examining if that was how girls should be depicted in videos—with disrespect.

The youth were then split into two groups for a girl-to-girl talk and a boys-to-men talk, engaging in discussions on relationship experiences, how listening to vulgar music makes us feel and what it takes to be responsible for personal and social success. Healthy Relationship experts Rozario Slack, Nisa Muhammad, Sharon Rabb, Alishia Shipley and Charles Jackson facilitated the groups. The youth opened up and shared life experiences in a safe, confidential environment. It was agreed that no matter how bad an experience seemed, the life lesson learned was the most important. The group was supportive with emotional sharing that the group members agreed would be memorable and instructive in their lives. After the talk, the two groups joined together and watched another set of music videos, showing the positive sides of relationships, and concluding that not all popular music was bad.

After a successful day one at the AAHMI Conference, day two brought even more youth discussions and eye-opening seminars. Youth started with "Demystifying the Fog Zone: Misperceptions and Magical Thinking" workshop where youth were exposed to the myths and facts of unplanned pregnancies. Speaker Kelleen Kaye kept nothing back sharing the pervasive general mistrust of birth control common among teens and reinforced by the misinformed thinking: "It doesn't matter if you use birth control or not, when it's your time to get pregnant, it will happen."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Cliff Baskerville followed by sharing his personal experiences about how surprises affected his life. He emphasized the idea that it is how you deal with these surprises that makes the difference.

That afternoon the youth came together for a documentary discussion on the Bring Your “A” Game documentary, which was targeted to urban youth, but specifically to boys and men. The documentary showed facts, such as 75% of white people graduate high school, but only 50% of African Americans graduate. We also learned that one out of every three African American men go to prison.

“In these young years when you’re thinking about what do I want to do in my life? Get knowledge, get smarter. The earlier you drop out, the quicker you’re on your way to failure,” said Ice Cube on the Bring Your “A” Game documentary.

AAHMI certainly held nothing back, even towards the end when the youth were presented with two more motivational workshops. The “Step Up, Stand Out, Give Back: Dynamic Strategies for Successful Leadership” discussion and activity were great fun! Speaker Johnny Lake split the youth and adults into groups of five and made them ask each other questions to figure who was the most eligible leader in their five person group. The more you could prove to your group that you are a leader in your community involvement, the better chance you had at becoming your group’s leader. Afterwards, standing up, each nominated leader was asked to explain the reasons given by their group for his/her leadership. This turned out to be a great way to interact with people and make new friends.

Editorial note: My group chose me as leader because I have experience in editing my school newspaper and starting my own band at school. They also said I stayed on task throughout our group discussion and keep time.” The note that resounded loudly among the teens was: “We’ll see you next year. Until then, text me!”

### The Three Doctors



The closing plenary session seemed to be aimed directly towards youth, when “The Three Doctors” Samson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt authors of “The Pact”, “The Bond” and other top sellers spoke of their lives growing up. The Three Doctors’ books have been quoted as “gripping, courageous and inspiring” by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Their popularity across the United States seems to grow with each book they publish and every life they motivate to be successful.

“The Pact” is a true story about the power of friendship. The three men decided they would stick together, attend college, graduate and become doctors, no matter their current life circumstances. Together, they beat the odds (being black men, poor, raised in a single-parent family with no Black male role models). The doctors now share their dynamic story across the nation, encouraging others to succeed.

I was left in deep thought about the following quote on patience: “Today’s youth are in an age where they want everything now, and instant success is not only rare, but it is also deceitful ... you need a strategic plan on how you propose to live your life and carry out your goals for the long-term and that’s just the starting point.”

The doctors gave youth at the AAHMI conference specific hints on how to be a successful student and how to set goals on what you want to accomplish in life. “Where you are today, is just the base line ... Keep going and identifying the classes you need to improve in. Whatever rock you have to turn over to figure it out, you need to turn it over,” said Dr. Sampson Davis.

This year’s AAHMI Conference left youth ready to apply the new relationship strategies and knowledge they gained from the conference to their everyday lives back at home. We’ll be checking on each other—just like the doctors did when [they were] young men.

Be sure to sign up for next year’s conference early to guarantee your access to all AAHMI has to offer! Don’t miss out on learning, fun and great friendships!!

### About the Writer

**Briauna Holmes is a 17-yr. old high school senior who is also in her second year of junior college majoring in journalism. She resides with her family in California.**

variables investigated.

Drowning can be prevented. If you are going to be playing or working in or near the water, learn how to swim; wear a life jacket. All swimmers, regardless of age, should swim with a buddy and preferably at sites with lifeguards. Children should always be supervised by a responsible adult.

Cullen Jones, a 2008 Olympic gold medalist and the first African American male to hold a world record in swimming, is part of the USA Swimming Foundation's *Make a Splash* campaign. The goal of *Make a Splash*, a national child-focused water safety initiative, is to teach every child in America how to swim. Jones is using his fame to heighten awareness of this issue and ensure that more children learn to swim, especially in urban communities. Jones is touring the United States to promote the availability of low-to-no-cost swimming lessons to give all kids access to life-saving swimming skills, regardless of their ethnic or economic background. More information about the campaign and local partners is available at [www.swimfoundation.org](http://www.swimfoundation.org). A fact sheet about unintentional drowning is available at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). By the way, learning to swim is not just for children, it's a valuable skill at any age.

## **All Around ACF: David A. Hansell Appointed Acting Assistant Secretary of ACF**



Effective July 19, 2010, David A Hansell became the Acting Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), within the Department of Human Services. Mr. Hansell is no stranger to ACF!

David Hansell most recently served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at ACF from June 2009 to July 2010. From 2007 to 2009, he served as Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the state agency charged with oversight of support programs and economic assistance for low-income New Yorkers. From 2002 to 2006, Mr. Hansell served as Chief of Staff of the New York City Human Resources Administration. From 1997 to 2001, he was the Associate Commissioner for HIV Services at the New York City Department of Health and subsequently served as Associate Commissioner for

Planning and Program Implementation.

Prior to his government experience, David Hansell served in a range of positions at Gay Men's Health Crisis, including Director of Legal Services and Deputy Director of Government and Public Affairs. From 2000 to 2006, he was an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the New York University Wagner School of Public Service. He has also been a consultant on healthy policy and social services issues to a wide range of governmental and non-profit organizations.

In an address to ACF staff, Mr. Hansell said that he was honored to begin serving again as Acting Assistant Secretary. He reiterated that the mission of ACF remains unchanged:

- To help families achieve economic success
- To support healthy and comprehensive child development
- And to build ACF's institutional capacity to make a real difference in the lives of children and families.

In addition, David Hansell, "I'm honored because I believe the work we do is crucial to our nation's most vulnerable children and families, especially in these difficult economic times. I'm honored because I now have met so many of you, and know how capable and dedicated you are. And I'm honored to step in to carry on the work begun by Carmen Nazario, who did so much in a short time to enhance ACF's stature as a human services agency." He ended the address by stating, "I feel privileged to work with you on behalf of the people we serve. They deserve our best efforts, our enthusiasm and our hard work, and I know they can count on each of us."

David Hansell is a graduate of Haverford College and Yale Law School. Among other honors, he is the recipient of an Outstanding Public Service Award from the New York County Lawyers' Association and a State Leadership Award from the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty.

**Please send comments or questions to Darlene Tart  
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Dr. Cassandra Chaney

Reflection (Dr. Anita Hawkins and Jenne Johns). The day ended with a youth activity called Clarifying It Through Real Talk. Speakers Ahlishia Shipley, Dr. Rozario Slack, Nisa Muhammad, Charles Jackson and Dr. Sharon Rabb engaged youth in “real talk” about healthy relationships.

Day two began with the plenary *Asset Building and Financial Literacy: Strategies to Support Low-Income Fathers and Couples*. This session was moderated by David Lett, Regional Administrator, Region III and included presentations from Ida Rademacher of the Corporation for Enterprise Development and Kenneth Braswell of Fathers Incorporated. They spoke about the research and evolving practices using asset building and financial education as anti-poverty strategies. In addition, a model to assist fathers to build assets utilizing the Earned Income Tax Credit was highlighted.

Morning workshops on day two included African Diaspora and Healthy Marriage: Relationship Challenges (Dr. Martha Okafor, Martin Sungoyo and Agnes Oswaha); Demystifying the Fog Zone: Misperceptions and Magical Thinking (Kelleen Kaye and Cliff Baskerville); Sustaining African American Marriages: Utilizing Prayer and a Culturally Sensitive Enrichment Model (Dr. Tera R. Hurt and Drs. Clarence and Ja’Ola Walker); a showing of the documentary *You Saved Me* (Lamar and Ronnie Tyler) and *Successful Coping: Partners and Spouses Living with HIV/AIDS* (Dr. Eboni Taylor and Rev. Dr. Ronald Edward Peters).



Site of Proclamation Ceremony

During lunch participants were invited to the presentation and reading of the Hampton Proclamation lead by Dr. Linda Malone-Colon who not only serves as the chair of the psychology department at Hampton, but is also the founder and executive director of the University’s National Center of African

American Marriages and Parenting. This was followed by the final plenary of the day, *Responsible Fatherhood, Marriage and Family Innovation*, moderated by Mary Ann Higgins, Regional Administrator, Region I. Speakers Yvette Riddick of the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE); Vera Butler of the Mississippi Department of Health and Human Services and Alan Bannister and Shandell Jamal of Ohio Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives discussed the changing strategies of the OCSE and President Obama’s proposed Fatherhood, Marriage and Family Innovation Fund. The Ohio representatives highlighted several examples of state investments and approaches to strengthening fathers, families and marriage.

Day two afternoon workshops included Addressing Marriage and Fatherhood with Incarcerated Men and Their Families: A Proactive Approach (Dr. Christine Lindquist and Rev. Dr. Stephen T. Hall); a showing of the documentary *Bring Your “A” Game* (Dr. Rozario Slack and Rev. John H. Vaughn); *Latinos and African Americans: Cultural Influences, Marriage and Parenting* (James Rodriguez) and *Obesity and Chronic Conditions: Couples Coping Together* (Dr. Leandris Liburd and Rev. Dr. Ronald

Edward Peters). For those who were interested, there was an evening encore performance of the documentary *You Saved Me*.

The final day of the conference began with the plenary *Military Couples, Children and Families: Understanding Their Needs* moderated by Kent Wilcox, Regional Administrator, Region V. The speakers were Col. Elspeth Cameron Ritchie, MD of the Department of the Army, Office of the Surgeon General; Chaplain Michael L. McCoy, of the Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America and Joyce Wessel Raezer of the National Military Family Association. The topic was the prevalence, symptoms and issues related to post-traumatic stress and other mental health challenges faced by partners and their families returning from military duty.



Dr. Martha Okafor and Joyce A. Thomas

Workshops for the day were Healthy Relationship Education: The Impact on Social Work Practice (Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley and Karen Allen); Step Up, Stand Out, Give Back: Dynamic Strategies for Successful Leadership (Dr. Assata-Nicole Richards and Johnny Lake); Social Justice and Prison Ministry: The Role of The Church (Samuel

Harrell and Dr. Owen Cardwell); Single Mothers Raising Young Men: Attitudes and Strategies (Ron Clark and David Miller) and a showing of the documentary *Crisis in the Crib: Saving Our Nation’s Babies*. Following was the plenary *Health Disparities and Social Determinants of Health* featuring panelists Onjewel Smith of the Robert Wood Foundation, Dr. Martha Okafor of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute and Mirtha Beadle of the Office of Minority Health. The session provided an overview and addressed some of the complex social and economic conditions that contribute to health disparities and inequities. It focused on the relationship between marriage and health outcomes and highlighted a national plan of action to end health disparities.

The final plenary of the conference was introduced by Leon McCowan, Regional Administrator, Region VI and was titled *The PACT: Stick Together-Go-To-College-Graduate-Become Doctors*. This inspirational session featured the story of Drs. Sampson Davis, Rameck Hunt and George Jenkins of The Three Doctors, LLC. These three men formed a strong bond as teenage boys in Newark, NJ to go to school and become doctors. This was an extraordinary feat given the negative influences and lack of positive role models. Participants were wowed and heartened by their journey. Diann Dawson closed the conference with heart-felt remarks.

Look for 2010 conference proceeds and more pictures on the AAHMI website ([www.aahmi.net](http://www.aahmi.net)) to be available during the fall season as well as for information about upcoming events!