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NATIONAL BLACK MBA ASSOCIATION LEADS YOUTH DELEGATION TO LONDON

Trip to the United Kingdom Gives High School Students Place and Purpose in a Global Society and Highlights Commonalities Among Black Youth Internationally

CHICAGO (November 28, 2007) — As they boarded the plane to London, Sherise Alexis, Kendall Grant, Matthew Hester and Jessica Romeus had similar thoughts about the U.K. students they'd soon meet.

They'd be uptight, arrogant and unapproachable.

They'd shun American students, thinking them too ignorant, misinformed, loud and boisterous.

They'd have funny accents.

While there were, indeed, accents, what these students encountered were youth who were pretty much the same as they were, who knew all the same songs, who dressed the same and had similar slang...and who knew a lot more about the American culture than the four of them knew about the United Kingdom.

"I knew so little of their culture, so I tried to pick up on as many things as I could. The U.K. kids didn't meet the assumptions I had going in to the trip, and after getting to know them, I know the world is smaller. Hopefully I'll keep my connections, my bonds, and I think that will ultimately make the world a better place because you're getting knowledge while making friends," says Grant, a sophomore at Stephen F. Austin High School, Houston.

Bridging these cultural divides, addressing misconceptions, and connecting young black youth globally are among the goals of the National Black MBA Association's Leaders of Tomorrow (LOT) International Leadership Camp, a program that focuses on leadership skills, career development, team building and personal growth via networking and educational activities that encourage cross-cultural/historical study. Alexis, Grant, Hester and Romeus were among the 14 U.S. students who joined 14 U.K. students as part of the camp; Delta Air Lines sponsored the travel costs and NBMBA covered all transportation, hotel and meal costs.

"The Leaders of Tomorrow program is one of the crown jewels of the National Black MBA Association. It had been almost ten years since we did an international camp, and as the organization focuses more and more on global relevance and doing business internationally, we knew it was imperative that we begin to expose our LOT students to a world much wider than their everyday lives," says NBMBA President and CEO Barbara L. Thomas. "We know the world is becoming more and more flat, and as adults, we work to adjust. But the beauty of youth is being unassuming, open and unset in your ways, so they take to these new global realities quickly and seamlessly — they just need the opportunity, the chance to travel and meet people, and that's what we wanted to provide."

During their 7-day immersion, the students visited the Greenwich Royal Observatory, the Embassy of the United States, the Tower of London, the Foreign Commonwealth Office and the London Aquarium. And they were all thoroughly impressed and stunned by Paul Wilson-Eme, a consultant for Obi

Development who has been teaching and lecturing for 15 years and has served as the LOT program speaker at the NBMBA Annual Conference for the past 3 years — many of the students proclaimed that he was the most fascinating instructor they'd ever encountered, opening their eyes to the etymological roots and relationships between the words of their everyday language and offering sociological, anthropological and historical examinations of contemporary movies and music.

In addition to singing the praises of Prof. Eme, all of the students spoke of a broadened, enhanced world view, increased acuity about media and popular culture imagery, and an expanded realm of career possibilities as positive changes they've recognized in themselves after returning home. "I really love to travel, so it was great to say I've been to another place. I hope to have a career where I can travel a lot — the visit to the embassy made me think of being an ambassador," says Alexis, a sophomore at Northwest Christian Academy, Miami.

The camp was open to active LOT program participants (LOT programs are facilitated by NBMBA local chapters). Because they would serve as ambassadors for the NBMBA, the United States and their local communities, LOT International Leadership Camp applicants were required to write an essay about their hometowns in order to be considered for the program. Participating students are expected to take the skills and knowledge they acquired to their local chapters to share with their peers.

"This trip showed me that my dreams have no limitations," says Romeus, a sophomore at Brien McMahon High School, Norwalk, Conn. "We shouldn't stereotype because while the U.K. students are not the exact same, we're all more similar than we are different — meeting those students was special, and it gave us the opportunity to form relationships for a lifetime, and who knows, we might even go into the same profession! And people should never doubt themselves, because I never would have imagined I would have gone on a trip like this, but it gave me an experience I'll hold with me for the rest of my life."

"As a young, black male, I want a chance to see the differences in other people, and to learn more about my history and culture from a universal perspective: It's important to me," says Hester, a sophomore at Oxon Hill High School, Oxon Hill, Md. "I feel very honored and privileged to have been chosen to go over there."

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About The National Black MBA Association

Established in 1970, the National Black MBA Association (NBMBA) is dedicated to creating partnerships that result in increased intellectual and economic wealth in the black community through its five channels of engagement: education, career, leadership, entrepreneurship and lifestyle. With 40+ chapters, a membership base of more than 6,000, and over 400 corporate partners, the NBMBA provides access to its constituents through services such as the Annual NBMBA Conference, Local Empowerment Initiatives and other programs. The NBMBA Conference is the nation's largest professional African American exposition of its kind. To learn more about the NBMBA, please visit <http://www.nbmba.org>.

About Leaders of Tomorrow®

The NBMBA Leaders of Tomorrow program works with high school students — average students who are not have leadership potential, but require motivating people and additional factors to realize their full potential — to positively influence their career and life choices and develop their leadership potential and commitment to the community. The organization, along with its corporate partners, provides programming at both the national and chapter levels, which includes workshop, scholarships (via an essay competition), mentoring and participation in NBMBA Annual Conference.

MEDIA CONTACT

Meghan Haynes, Beaman Incorporated
mhaynes@beamaninc.com OR 312.751.9689, ext. 15