



The Skillman Foundation Presents

YAKTIVITIES FOR HELPING KIDS

What's Next?

Dynamic Programs Offered to Brightmoor Teens

By John O'Donnell

On January 24, with inaugural ceremonies still fresh in their minds, a group of young women from Detroit's Brightmoor neighborhood was exploring the background and values of new First Lady Michelle Obama.

It was the launch of BE BEAUTIFUL ... YOUNG WOMAN, a pilot program of Strategic Builders, Incorporated, a non-profit group with a mission to rebuild local communities by improving the education and lives of children and their families in Detroit.

This was the first of eight sessions to focus on self-discovery, self-development and improving one's self-esteem. Facilitator and President of Strategic Builders Laura Goodspeed says the young women, ages 14 to 18, learned that the First Lady already had a plan in place as a teenager.

"In high school, Michelle possessed style and confidence," Goodspeed says. "She was focused, involved and committed, and she had an idea of what she wanted and what she brought to the table even before she met Barack Obama."

BE BEAUTIFUL ... YOUNG WOMAN has taken each of the 10 participants on a personal and team-oriented journey together at the Redford Branch of the Detroit Public Library. The fun, interactive classes have created a positive atmosphere for self-discovery and development.

Participants were recruited through the distribution of flyers in libraries and other community centers and through the Career Assessment and Development program for Brightmoor teens sponsored by the Skillman Foundation's 10-year \$100-million Good Neighborhoods program.



The BBYW program reveals and brings greater acceptance of different personalities as the young women find their "True Colors" and the ways to make their individuality work in a team setting. Sessions also deal with social issues that young women may face, which may require them to "Be Bold" and "Be Brave," including the problem of domestic violence.

"They need to know that domestic violence is real and that it comes in many shapes and sizes ... and can be physical or verbal," Goodspeed says. "To those who may have

already experienced it, the program will let them know that it is nothing to be ashamed about and that help is available."

Goodspeed also stresses the important role that a positive body image plays in young African American women. BE BEAUTIFUL ... YOUNG WOMAN featured a "Pamper Party" and a focus on skin and hair care in closing sessions. The goal is for girls to emerge from the program with self-esteem, confidence, greater acceptance of themselves and other people and personalities, and with team-building skills to apply at home and the workplace.

BE BEAUTIFUL ... YOUNG WOMAN is one of the What's Next? Transition Programs for high school students offered by Strategic Builders, Incorporated, which also includes the Career Assessment and Development program at City Mission, sponsored by the Skillman Foundation.

For More Information
Call 313-717-4033



THINK ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN'S NEEDS

The BE BEAUTIFUL ... YOUNG WOMAN program seeks to develop self-esteem in teen girls, promote self-discovery and encourage self-development in a team-building environment. With family or friends, talk about the challenges or problems faced by teen girls 14 to 18 years old. Then talk about the kinds of support that could help young teen women meet challenges or overcome problems. Which kinds of support can come from family? Which from friends? Which from schools? Which from counselors or mentors like those in the BE BEAUTIFUL ... YOUNG WOMAN program?