



Our Voice

Editor: Gwenné P. Gibbons

The mission of Sister to Sister is to intervene in the lives of teen girls to help them make choices that keep them out of the criminal justice system.

Our Vision

The program envisions each girl experiencing nurturing one on one mentoring relationships, which support them in developing into healthy, confident, and contributing young women. By teaching the girls life skills, the value of education and the critical principles of positive self-esteem, personal responsibility, service and hard work, the program looks forward to the day when each participating girl graduates from high school and college and reaches unparalleled levels of success while making significant contributions to her community.

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Program History

The Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, affectionately referred to as GABWA and the [Fulton County Juvenile Court](#), with the assistance of the Georgia Supreme Court Commission formed the Sister 2 Sister Mentoring Program in 2000. The first class of girls were funded with a grant received in 2001 by GABWA in co-sponsorship with the Georgia Supreme Court Commission on Equality. Sister 2 Sister is now operated as a program of the [GABWA Foundation, Inc.](#), which is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

Sister2Sister Mentoring Program

c/o GABWA Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 7381

Atlanta, GA 30357

Sister to Sister Spotlights Courtney, "Ms. CSI"

By: Gwenné P. Gibbons

S2S is proud to honor Courtney Thornton for her consistent improvement and participation in S2S. Courtney has been a mentee since January 2009. Currently, she is an entering Freshman at Creekside High School.

Courtney's mentor is Teri Larkins, who describes Courtney as a "sweetheart," who has "exhibited a positive, winning attitude from the time she entered the program, and is very respectful to me, other mentors and mentees." During the S2S sessions, Courtney actively participates by making insightful comments and asking thought-provoking questions. "Every session is positive, and I have fun when I am with all the mentors and [mentees]," explained Courtney.

Teri notes that Courtney "is on the road to success and is planning for her future." "The program makes me want to achieve a higher education," says Courtney, who desires to become a Crime Scene Investigator. Prior to college, Courtney "Ms. CSI" plans to join the Armed Forces, which will assist her in paying her college tuition.

S2S has made a positive impact in Courtney's life. "I [have] learned to respect myself more by looking at the mentors as my example of how to be and conduct myself as a young lady," expressed Courtney.

Significantly, Courtney's development has not gone unnoticed. According to Saniyyah J. McCullough, Executive Director of S2S, when Courtney first entered the program, "she was very shy, would not make eye contact and it was clear she had trust issues. However, Courtney has evolved into a very confident young lady, who displays acts of courage, strength and perseverance. She has become a shining example of what S2S can do for its mentees. We are so proud to serve young ladies like Courtney."

Courtney's mother also shares Saniyyah's sentiments. "Courtney is a great daughter. Being apart of the S2S program, I have seen her blossom into such a beautiful daughter. I love the young lady she is turning into," commented Ms. Pauline Thornton. Looking towards the future, Ms. Thornton wants Courtney to understand "[success] takes hard work, but she can achieve anything that life has in store for her."

Congratulations Courtney!!!



S2S Goes to the Supreme Court of Georgia

By: Hoganne A. Harrison-Walton



On June 4th S2S conducted and participated in a Moot Court exercise at the Supreme Court of Georgia. They put on their judicial robes and argued the case of Jack Jones v. Washington High School, which calls into question whether the school violated Jack's Fourth Amendment Rights.

Following the Moot Court Exercise, S2S had the honorary privilege of having a special lunch with the distinguished Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein, who is the second woman in history to serve as a member of Georgia's highest court.

During our lunch, a mentee asked, "how did you become a Georgia Supreme Court Justice?" Chief Justice Hunstein responded by giving everyone a peek into her life as a cancer survivor, being a young, divorced, single mother at the age of 23, and battling sexism in a male-dominated field. By

the end of our visit, we all walked away feeling inspired and believed that anything and everything is obtainable with perseverance and inner strength.

S2S would like to give a special thanks to Chief Justice Carol W. Hunstein for such an awe inspiring testimony, and to her Staff Attorney, Ms. Tia Milton, who shared, "Programs like [S2S] always remind me of how blessed I am to have had all of the people I did growing up that supported and encouraged me. There but for the grace of God . . . reminds me of my responsibility to help this generation of sisters prepare for success".



Etiquette By: Donnica C. Copeland



How are you supposed to shake someone's hand? As women, we think we need dainty handshakes. However, during our Etiquette session on May 22nd, Kuan-Yin Hamlet and Margaret Daniel told S2S that we need to have firm handshakes during interviews and other occasions in which we greet individuals; a firm handshake shows confidence.

Three key points for displaying an appropriate image during an interview are posture, appearance, and personality. Hamlet and Daniel were dressed professionally, which served as an excellent example of proper interview attire. In addition to maintaining a professional appearance, it is also proper to make eye contact and be assertive. Putting this lesson into practice, the girls role-played interviews. Initially some had poor posture or were soft-spoken; however, after reminders from Hamlet and Daniel, they all did a great job!

STI's By: Gwenné P. Gibbons

The acronym STI stands for many terms or phrases, including, "So That's It," and Soft Tissue Injury. However, during our June 26th session, STI stood for Sexual Transmitted Infections, previously and more commonly referred to as Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

First, S2S took "The Five Love Language Test" by Gary Chapman in order to discover whether words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service or physical acts make us feel loved. Markeita "Dr. Mac" McIntosh reminded S2S that "sex is an act—an intimate act, but it does not equate to love."

Dr. Mac then discussed with S2S the two categories of STI's which are: (1) Bacterial (which can be effectively treated and cured); and (2) Viruses (which cannot be cured). Did you know although there are at least 18 STI's, most exams only cover the most popular? Moreover, some of these STI's are asymptomatic, meaning there are no symptoms. In addition, self-diagnosing should be out of the question, as the appearances of some STI's have evolved over time. Accordingly, Dr. Mac noted the importance of getting tested and ensuring the testing is comprehensive.

S2S Goes Around the World at the Atlanta Coca-Cola Museum By: Hoggane A. Harrison-Walton

World of Coca-Cola met S2S on Saturday July 10th, when our ladies put on their walking shoes and equipped themselves with a cup, ready to conquer the quest of deciding which country had the best Coca-Cola product.

The ladies sampled beverages from Asia, Africa, and Europe. It was not established which country had the best Coca-Cola drink, however the majority agreed that Italy had the worst.

In addition to the wide variety of beverages available to sample, S2S was able to hear recorded testimonies from individuals that received funds and scholarships from Coca-Cola. These testimonies gave everyone hope that a

better future is always possible. At the end of the tour, a few of the mentees gave their own Coca-Cola testimonies.

Afterwards, we laughed and talked while strolling through Centennial Park. Nothing makes a day more memorable than good company and cold, refreshing Coca-Cola beverages.



Conflict Resolution By: Adrienne Leon

On June 12th Counselor Rochelle Kennedy had a round-table discussion with our ladies. She discussed the root of conflict, an issue many believed stems from respect. Kennedy asked mentors and mentees to define what respect meant to them. Participants described characteristics of respect as using good manners, acknowledging a person's presence and agreeing to disagree. Cursing, poor body language and tone of voice were identified as behavior that shows disrespect.

Kennedy later addressed healthy, but realistic alternatives to handling conflict, such as talking out differences or simply not saying anything at all. The latter suggestion was highly recommended for mentees who shared their frustration in verbal disputes with their parents.

Kennedy gave examples of the negative consequences that result from making poor decisions when resolving conflicts, including jail time, a criminal record, school suspension or expulsion and even acquiring a bad reputation. She left the girls with the following points to ponder at the close of the session:

- Ask yourself, "why am I feeling this way?"
- Don't act off impulse. Think of the consequences to your choices.
- Consider the Event Cycle: Think, Feel, Do:
Think about the event, What feeling caused the action, What are you to do?

Life After High School By: Gwenné P. Gibbons

On July 24th S2S was privileged to have a panel-discussion on how to prepare for college. The moderator was GABWA's Past President, Yolanda Johnson, who also serves in District 6 of the Atlanta Board of Education.

First, Jessica Johnson discussed making college affordable. She advised our young ladies, "Don't eliminate yourself from the scholarship pool because of your GPA." J. Johnson further explained that when applying for scholarships, the goal is to make yourself stand out; accordingly, become a leader, get involved in the community and prove why you are a worthy investment.

Fernanda Meier, from Kaplan, offered the young ladies excellent advice regarding test taking. Meier pointed out that there will be numerous tests throughout one's life, which may include the CRCT, driver's license test, job evaluations, SAT, ACT, and tests for graduate-level studies. No matter what the test, it is important to remember to remain self-motivated. Furthermore, in this day and age—Meier reminded S2S that "there are no barriers to education!"

The final presenter, Al Duncan, disclosed that while effort, determination, and perseverance definitely play a role in success; the word "choice" is what most accurately describes what it takes to become successful—because exerting effort, having determination and displaying perseverance all require making a choice.

No matter what your background consists of, Duncan advised S2S to "never let someone else's mess get in the way of your success," and explained that "failure is only permanent if you quit."



***For photos from all of our sessions, please visit:
<http://s1046.photobucket.com/home/AtlantaS2S>

Contact S2S Staff

Saniyyah J. McCullough - Executive Director - saniyyahs2s@gmail.com
 Donnica C. Copeland - Program Director - donnicas2s@gmail.com
 Gwenné P. Gibbons - Historian - gwennes2s@gmail.com