

Prep school students divided on affirmative action

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (AP) - The debate over the role of race in university admissions has simmered since the latest batch of teens entered high school.

And now, as they prepare to apply to college themselves, high school upper-classmen seem as deeply divided about affirmative action as the U.S. Supreme Court was in its split decision upholding the right of schools to use race as a factor in admissions.

At The Associated Press' request, a dozen young people of varied backgrounds recently got together for an informal discussion about affirmative action. They were all attending the University of Maryland's Young Scholars Program, where excep-

tional high school students from around the country earn college credits.

Split along racial lines about how schools should achieve diversity, the students were united in believing that their college experiences will be better if they choose a place with a diverse student body.

Chrisheena Hill, a black senior from Niagara Falls, N.Y., said affirmative action can still help minorities get into places that might otherwise be shut off from them.

"It gives us a chance to get our foot in the door to prove ourselves," she said, pointing out that - even with affirmative action - whites far outnumber minorities on American college campuses.

Eitan Bernstein, a white junior from the Maryland city

of Rockville, took the opposing view.

"I just don't think it's fair for race to determine what type of education you get," he said. "This process will not help solve the problem of racism, it will further it."

Meanwhile, Colleen Swim, who is white, and Michelle Orr, who is black, each said that no matter who you are, it hurts to feel picked on because of your race.

A black junior from Washington, D.C., Orr said she feels the sting of racism each time a white store employee monitors her during shopping trips.

Swim, a white junior from Rockville, told how she'd once been denied admission to a middle school enrichment program because, as

organizers told her mother, the school needed to boost minority enrollment.

Swim's eyes began to tear at the memory and Orr - without hesitation - tossed a wad of tissues to her distraught classmate. Orr then called admissions policies that are blind to race and ethnicity "a very Utopian idea."

"We live in a world rooted in race and racism, so it's always going to be an issue," said Orr, who hopes to attend either a historic black college, Yale University or Sarah Lawrence College.

Joseph Green argued that, at most schools, race will be an issue only to a limited number of applicants who have fallen just short of a college's academic standards for admission.

"It only deals with a few people on the bubble and all it says to (both white and minority students) is that you should have worked harder," said Green, a white senior from Olney, Md.

Several minority students said they had already been debating internally whether to mention their race on college applications. As it happened, Camille Rivera-Garcia applied for a scholarship moments before joining the discussion.

When the application asked her ethnicity, Rivera-Garcia proudly filled in Hispanic. An hour later, she began having second thoughts.

"I'm thinking that maybe I'll change it," said Rivera-Garcia, a senior from Puerto Rico. "I want to be accepted

for what I've accomplished, not just because I'm Hispanic."

A black teenager, James Brounson, shared Rivera-Garcia's concern that white classmates in the future will automatically assume that the color of his skin got him into college. In deciding his qualifications, Brounson would prefer that college officials consider the strength of his character along with the obstacles he faced growing up in New York City.

But will he leave his race off all his applications?

"If it's a safety school I could care less about, I probably won't do it," Brounson said. "But if it's a school that I really want to attend and I think it will help me, I'll use it."

Community

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man Bill Young, Las Vegas City Councilman Gary Reese was a partner.

"Every year we try to get people out of their homes and into the parks or someplace with the police department," Young said. "The community can meet their neighborhood police officers, surrounded by fun, food, music, raffled gifts, cold drinks and provide loads of helpful information and knowledgeable staff in crime prevention."

Among other prizes, lucky winners walked away with a 13-inch color TV, in-line skates and a microwave oven.

National Association of Town Watch (NATW) is a non-profit organization dedicated to development and promotion of national law enforcement crime and drug prevention programs. The event drew more than 34 million people from approximately 10,000 communities across the United States, Canada and military bases worldwide.

The key messages that NATW stresses is cohesive and healthy neighborhoods are key to preventing crime and violence. Active block-watch clubs build community, increase hope and create harmony. Positive activities displace negative activity, as people spend more time outside. They take back their streets and neighborhoods. NNO is an opportunity for all parts of the community, including businesses, corporate sponsors, religious institutions, city agencies and the news media to come together around the shared goal of a safe and healthy community.

Steve Fuquay, crime prevention specialist for Metro's Northeast Area Command, served as coordinator for the



Sentinel-Voice photo by Les Pierres Streater

Children were out in force during National Night Out festivities around the valley. Enjoying the annual crime-fighting event at Freedom Park last Tuesday were, from left to right, Stephanie Skeen, Sha'Nikka Skeen, Key'Ara Stark, Audrey Jackson and Ke'Andre Kelly.

NNO event.

"We have a lot of organizations and groups participating in this event providing information on community services. The police department is equally important in its role of talking about awareness and crime prevention," Fuquay said.

"As it states on the sides of our patrol vehicles,

'Partners with the Community,' we are working to get the community aware and involved. This is an extension of police efforts to be in the community and get the community to notice that police exist beyond black and white patrol cars and share closeness with the community. "We also have a program at each of our substations called "First Tues-

day," Fuquay added.

"We feature presentations on such things as crime prevention, domestic violence and traffic. On our Web site, lvmpd.com, we offer information to the public about crime prevention, auto theft, and crime mapping that tells you about various crimes committed in your area by your address within a 500-foot to 1000-foot radius."

Two groups shared a common theme, helping parents prepare their children for emergencies. In cases of missing children, Nevada Child Seekers and Radio Shack covered the cost of fingerprinting and gathering samples of DNA through hair, nail clippings and teeth. Photos and descriptions of physical characteristics will be kept

in an informational folder.

Baskin Robbins was also a sponsor.

"There's nothing better than having a community event to bring out the family that Baskin Robbins and Radio Shack can be apart of," said David Flatt, Radio Shack manager. "This is the second year that Baskin Robbins and Radio Shack have participated as corporate sponsors. Radio Shack will continue to dispense Child ID and Fingerprinting Kits in participating stores throughout the year."

Another group lending support to NNO was B.C. McCabe Branch of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas. Students volunteering from the local branch assisted in cleaning Freedom Park and

setting up the event.

One volunteer, Jamar Horton, talked about his role at the NNO event. He said, "I want to show the community that there's more to it than gangs, drugs, and violence. We need to respect our community. I have been involved with the Boys & Girls Club for the past five years, working to make a difference, having fun and meeting other interesting people. You can redirect your negative energy to doing some positive things."

Additional information about services included

D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education); parent's guide to internet safety; alcohol and under-age drinking; parent's guide to gun safety; tips for teens about crack and cocaine; when to use 9-1-1 and 3-1-1.

Information was also provided on protection against telemarketing fraud; teaching kids how to deal with bullies; recognizing child and elder abuse; neighborhood justice center's community mediation program; and becoming a candidate for the Metro police force or corrections department.

Retrial

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Whereas Hutchinson and activist Najee Ali spoke harshly against the prosecution in the first trial, Cooley applauded Deputy District Attorneys Michael Pettersen and Max Huntsman for their efforts in prosecuting Darvish and Morse. Cooley said Pettersen and Huntsman will file a motion with Hollingsworth to retry Morse.

If it were up to attorney Leo Terrell, that would be the extent of Pettersen and Huntman's duties.

"The district attorney's office is buddies with the police," said Terrell, who recently faxed a letter to Cooley volunteering his services at the retrial. "That's the biggest problem. It has been and always will be.

"You have to come up with a whole new prosecution team [that is] going to use time and resources," Terrell said. "When they want to, the district attorney's office can spend some money." Also, he said, the prosecution should not rely on the videotape, which depicts Morse slamming Jackson onto a patrol car during the July 6, 2002, arrest at an Inglewood gas station.

"You can't win this case solely relying on the videotape," Terrell said. "You have to explain the events that occurred before and shortly after the tape. If [Cooley] puts me on the case, I could win it. I've tried police cases on the civil side several times."

Ali, who has been to all of the legal proceedings at the Airport Courthouse, agreed with Terrell, saying a new prosecution team is needed and one of the members should be Christopher Darden, one of the district attorney's lawyers in the O.J. Simpson murder case. Prior to "falling out of favor" in the Black community following that trial, Ali said, Darden prosecuted many successful police abuse cases with the district attorney's office.

Gene C. Johnson Jr. for the WAVE Community Newspapers.