

# Kunjufu preaches about hope, fulfilling promise

By Lés Pierres Streater  
Sentinel-Voice

A workshop commemorating the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and in honor of Peace Week was held at the West Las Vegas Arts Center Sunday to address the issue of how young Black males need to be responsible and accountable about their lives. The workshop drew more than 100 participants and was conducted by guest lecturer Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, president of African-American Images. Kunjufu is the executive director of a tutorial, mentoring, counseling and rites of passage center in Chicago, along with having 24 books to his credit.

The workshop attendees were predominantly male in an effort to address the growing concerns of how young Black males are being raised in today's society and the problems confronting them as they reach adolescence and manhood. A wide range of topics and types of images were discussed. Gang affiliation, single-parent households, sexual relationships, education, career choices, self-respect, role models, and other key issues dominated the discussion.

One of the myths addressed by Kunjufu was the emergence of a young Black male as the head of the household at an early age:

"This is an irresponsible act conducted by the mother lying to this boy at the age of nine, telling him that he is the 'man of the house.' A nine-year-old boy is not a man," Kunjufu emphasized. "Your mama meant well, but she lied to you. That's why some brothers have a difficult time assimilating in the home, because that boy thinks that he is the 'man' of the household," he continued instructing.

"This boy reaches the age of 18, still not working, and his mother buys him [for example] a \$150 pair of Nike basketball shoes that LeBron James and Michael Jordan had made in Korea for \$2.38. Now, the boy is 40-years-old and still living with his mama. He shacks up with his girlfriend until she kicks him out, and he goes back to live with his mama because she tells him that he can never do no wrong."

He further explained, "This boy grows up with a complex. He feels that every-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

**Noted lecturer and cultural critic Jawanza Kunjufu addresses a crowd Sunday at the West Las Vegas Arts Center.**

body is picking on him. The teacher doesn't like me, the principal don't like me, and the coach doesn't like me, because your mama is always protecting you. You will never become a man until you break the cord with your mama."

Kunjufu spoke about the difference between being a boy and a man: "Boys like to play, and you can be 40-years-old and still be a boy. A man will work, and a man is responsible. A man keeps his word and is only as good as his word. A man can borrow on his word. Boys make babies; men take care of them. Boys think with their little head, their penis, and men think with their brains. Are you going to be a boy or a man?"

Kunjufu outlined five types of Dads: "The first type of a Dad is a sperm donor. He spends about 18 seconds making you, [then you know] he doesn't hang around to see you grow up. The second is the no-show Dad: He promises on Monday to pick you up on Saturday but never shows up. Then you have the ice cream Dad... [who comes] and takes you to a basketball game, a baseball game, Six Flags, etc., buys you pizza and a soda but doesn't help you with your homework, chores, or [teach you about being] responsible."

Kunjufu encourages the two strongest types: "The step-dad is the one who stays,

helps pay the bills, checks the homework and still looked upon as being second, because the sperm donor is called dad. And then we have Dad, the one who has never left."

He gave statistics to illustrate how times have changed for the worse.

"In 1920, we had 90 percent of our fathers in the home. In 1950, we had 80 percent of our fathers in the home. (See Kunjufu, Page 3)

# Summer Business Institute seeks to aid more teenages

By Tasha Pope  
Sentinel-Voice

For the 11th year, Clark County Summer Business Institute is offering 100 jobs for high school students in Las Vegas. The institute allows selected applicants to team up with professionals in their fields of choice to obtain employment, as well as valuable experience.

The program is a partnership between Clark County and more than 80 area businesses. Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates said she felt it was necessary to create the institute to ensure that disadvantaged inner-city youth have the opportunity to access career fields that may otherwise be inaccessible.

"The institute is a multi-faceted program that services an incredible need in our community by giving youth from all backgrounds the opportunity to gain experience through exposure to careers not traditionally pursued by minority children," Gates said in her mission statement. The program allows applicants access to the fields of law, medicine, architecture, education, communications and others. The eight-week program also assists youth with college preparation and teaches them the importance of community service. In addition, local professors and members of the business community are recruited to teach workshops that focus on money management skills.

"We conduct workshops half-day. We bring in professors from UNLV and guest speakers from the business community," said Debbie Conway, Clark County's Business Development Division manager.

To be sure there is inner-city youth involvement, a select number of jobs have been reserved for teens living in the Enterprise Community neighborhoods, which are located throughout the valley. One of the zones is in the Historic

Westside area.

"We usually reserve 50 spots for students living in the Enterprise Community, but we're usually not successful [in filling those spots]," Conway said. To get participation she said they spread the word through fliers at churches, information on school campuses and at businesses.

As an added bonus, participants will be eligible for college scholarships at the close of the summer. This year's Summer Business Institute program will be held from mid-June through mid-August.

The question is, how successful has the Summer Business Institute been since its inception?

"Lots of success stories. One student, who was placed with an insurance company, they kept her and they are assisting her in going to college. And he's [the owner of the insurance company] training her to be a partner in his company," Conway gladly reported about just one of them. With the wonderful success of the program, Conway hopes to see the institute grow and have the ability to accept more applicants in the future.

They seek applicants who may get life changing benefits, like the young man who went through the program and who Conway said is now a manager of a local Wells Fargo branch.

"We'd like to be able to add more students," said Conway. She spoke about one of the plans to "add another component where we can bring in more students that are freshmen in college."

Entry applications are available at the Clark County Government Center at 500 Grand Central Parkway on the 5th Floor. Applications can also be picked up at KCEP radio station at 330 W. Washington Ave. The application deadline is March 3. For more info, call County Business Development at 455-4432 or 455-2426.

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