

New Web portal aids in their college search

By La Risa Lynch
Special to Sentinel-Voice
 CHICAGO (NNPA) — College searches may have gotten a little easier thanks to a newly developed Web portal that connects students to colleges and vice versa.

Educatouryouth.com is an online resource hub that puts information on colleges, financial aid and careers at students' fingertips via the web while amassing a directory of potential students that colleges can recruit directly.

The Web portal is the brainchild of Emmanuel Jackson, CEO and chair of EMBRI International, a Chicago-based enrollment management service. For the past seven years, Jackson has worked to place over 300 students in colleges, but wanted to do it on a broader basis. The Internet was the way to go.

"That is where the students are," said Jackson, who also serves as a post-second-

ary education consultant at Chicago Hope Academy, a private near West Side Christian high school.

On average, students get eight minutes with their counselors to talk about college, Jackson said, citing figures from the National Association of College Counselors. That puts inner-city students at a disadvantage since a counselor may have 500 students, he added.

But the Web portal is a virtual college fair in cyberspace. Both colleges and students register free on the site. Students can upload their transcripts, GPAs, ACT and SAT scores on a searchable database that colleges can peruse.

Additionally, the website has a section where students can upload their performance pieces if they are theatrical arts majors. Athletes can upload their game footage and students can do video bios highlighting their college and

career aspirations. The portal gives students a venue to present their credentials to several colleges and to interact directly with them through email.

Also, the portal has links to little known websites such as Elefoo and Colleges Navigator, both college search engines. College Navigator offers a comprehensive list on enrollment figures, gender ratio, ethnic composition and the admission process.

It also gives retention and graduation rates, major academic and athletic programs. There is also a link to the government's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) website and to Career Voyages, a site detailing career options.

"The key is to have everything here," Jackson said. "All of this is important to the preparation, motivation, and matriculation process of students going to college."

Although launched April 2008, Jackson is still fine tuning key components. He wants to include a live online tutoring page and a jobs cen-

ter. The jobs center will allow employers to place their links listing job training and employment opportunities.

Jackson noted that while every student should go to college, not every student is college material. Companies like Caterpillar have job training programs for auto-mechanics that students may be unaware of.

However, the goal is to have students sign up for the portal as early as seventh grade.

Jackson believes by reaching students early, colleges can offer tutoring for those who show a proclivity for science and engineering. Colleges, he contends, can mold students to become engineers instead of importing them from other countries.

"If we want better Black students in college, then colleges can have their talented students tutor people from seventh grade to high school," Jackson said, added that Educatouryouth.com is not a social networking site.

Only in its infancy, the portal has developed a fol-

lowing. The site has 105 registered users and several colleges including Rice College, Morgan State University, Fort Valley State University, Hampton, Tennessee State and Howard.

Willie Hatcher, who graduated from Hope Academy, counts himself as a fan. Hatcher, who will attend Morgan State University in the fall, found the Web portal helpful. The 18-year-old North Lawndale resident liked the site's capability to post video bios. That feature allows colleges to get to know students more personally than just words on paper, Hatcher explained.

"Other than traveling to schools and meeting with admission counselors, this would be a good way... to see how (students) present themselves and their character before scheduling a meeting," said Hatcher, who will be the first in his family to go to college.

"Colleges, basically, will get everything they need when looking at their profile on the Internet," he added.

Chicago Hope Academy founder and president Robert Muzikowski was impressed with the Web portal. The school just graduated its first senior class of 14. They all uploaded their profiles to the site.

Muzikowski liked the site because it is "censored" to block profanity or racial epithets, and it's student-oriented.

"The portal is really going to help us take our time... and match students to the schools that is best for them with the financial aid package to get there," Muzikowski said. "We can get students into college, but paying for it and having them graduate is a whole other piece."

However, Muzikowski urged other high school counselors to "buy into" the Web portal because it shouldn't "be one more good idea that people spend a lot of money on to develop, and it just sits there."

La Risa Lynch writes for the Chicago and Gary Crusader.

Jealous

(Continued from Page 3)

of the *Kansas City Call*, still an NNPA member newspaper. W.E.B. Dubois, an NAACP founder in 1909, wrote columns for the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *New York Amsterdam News*, all still NNPA members. Dubois then served as editor of the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine for nearly 25 years.

Ms. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, also an NAACP founder, was best-known for her anti-lynching crusades in the *Memphis Free Speech*, which she co-owned.

John B. Smith Sr., honoring Jealous with the organization's Chairman's Award, recalled words that he had written to Jealous when he first came to work for NNPA. "I said a blessing has been bestowed upon us. He was a guardian angel who had been sent to us," Smith recalled. "We are open to build coalitions with you and NNPA."

Jealous responded with a charge:

"We have serious work to do," he said. "Of course the former managing editor of a Black newspaper, the former executive director of the NNPA will work more closely with the Black Press. But we've got to work as if the success of our publications depends on it, the success of our small businesses depends on it, as if the success of our children depends on it."

NAACP

(Continued from Page 4)

"We are not on a witch hunt against troopers," he said.

Martin's decision comes almost three months after the state settled a related lawsuit known as the "Driving While Black" case. Plaintiffs in that suit, filed in 1998, accused state police of pulling over drivers because of their race. The six remaining plaintiffs received a total of \$400,000.

As part of a federal consent decree, state police made sweeping changes in traffic-stop procedures in 2003. Since then, troopers have documented the race of drivers they stop.

According to the Maryland attorney general's office, state police have provided detailed information about racial-profiling complaints, including the race and gender of those making the accusations and the race of the troopers involved.

But NAACP officials said several requests for such documents were denied, prompting the civil rights organization and the ACLU to file a lawsuit last September.

USA

(Continued from Page 1)

added to the show with his sharp humor. "It's simply an education for me; they reached out to me. And I was honored to support our young Black women," said Rucker.

For more than 20 years, the Miss Black USA organization has recognized the accomplishments of outstanding African-American women in mind, body and spirit. This includes celebrating scholastic achievement and the belief that education is the key to success. Talent was also a significant part of the competition. From opera, gospel, mime, poetry and acting, the group seemed ready to go on tour.

A turning point in the competition was apparently White's response in the question and answer session. "To whom much is given, much is required," said White when asked how she would balance being the next Miss Black USA and her current duties. It was a solid, confident answer when it seemed most contestants were struggling. Others took her lead referring back to her statement; no doubt flattering the former Miss Black Georgia.

The goodbye for the reigning beauty queen about to turn over the crown is one



Sentinel-Voice photo by Lafayette Barnes

Miss Black Georgia, Elizabeth White, performs an opera piece in the talent competition at the Miss Black USA Pageant in Las Vegas. It was the pageant's first time here.

of the most emotional and longest traditions in any pageant; one that former Miss Black USA Kalilah Allen-Harris had to deal with as she gave her farewell.

"This has been a very remarkable year. It's a bitter-sweet occasion I will miss the interaction with the staff. But its time to move on and do

other things; I'm really grateful for the opportunity to be Miss Black USA and it will always be in my heart," said Harris, beaming with joy. She is now headed for medical school.

The runner-ups were also outstanding. Melissa Safiya McClinton (Miss Black Massachusetts) brought the house

down with her monologue about starting a new form of pageant.

"I'm through with all these beauty contests. I'm gonna start me an ugly pageant. That's right. Imagine what it would be like with ugly women from all over the world to be part of this," said McClinton to a huge laugh. In a southern accent, she was portraying herself as a southern man.

Topping the evening, the evening gown contest showed the true essence of all the women. As they lined up for one final time each looked like queens. Runner-ups were Brittany Carradine (Miss Black Oklahoma), Audrey Allison Cox (Miss Black North Carolina), and Sonja McCord (Miss Black West Virginia).

"It's tough being close, but I know that God has a plan for me. He led me through this and I know that the more I stay involved, the closer I will get," said McCord.

Upon receiving her crown, White also received a walk-on role on the TBS show Tyler Perry's "House of Payne." Her new life begins.

She said, "I've been trained in film, and it's something I've always wanted to do, so I'm ready."