

STEM eyes minority success in math, science

By John T. Stephens III
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Science and math may not be the easiest subjects, but mastery of both disciplines can often yield great professional dividends, particularly for minority communities underrepresented in careers predicated on either subject.

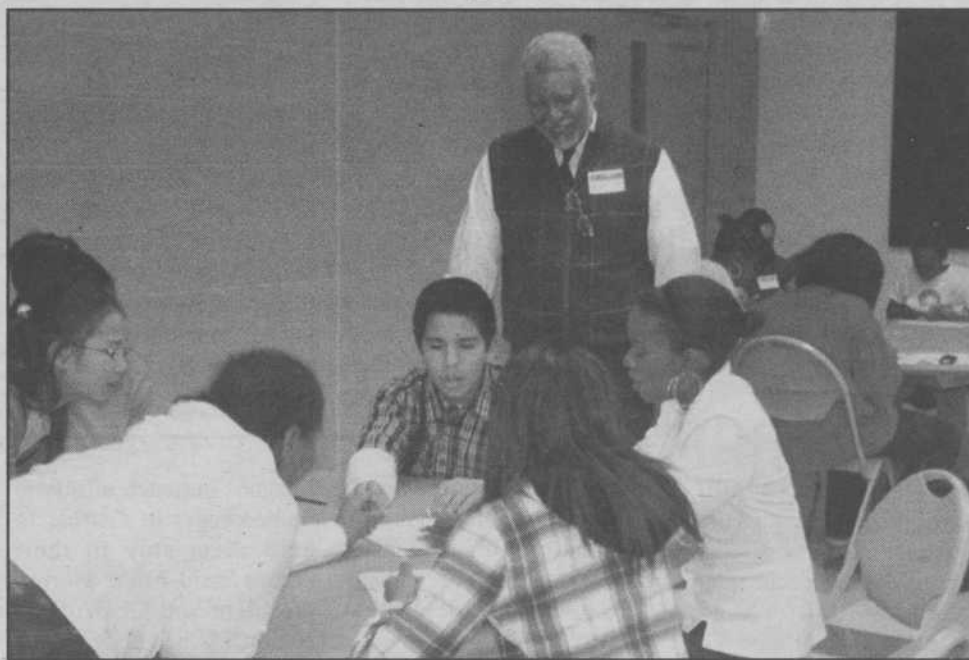
Sherman Rutledge hopes to help bridge the gap—to make science and math not only palatable, but profitable and fun.

As executive director of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) he works with high school students on gaining appreciation and knowledge of math and science disciplines.

The free, year-round program is open students in grades five through 12. Classes are offered around the Valley on Saturdays.

“The STEM (Student Ambassadors Program) was introduced to close the student achievement gap in science, technology, engineering and math.

“Middle school age stu-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Monitoring the progress of his STEM ambassadors, Sherman Rutledge, executive director of the math and science program, said he hopes to erase achievement gaps in both areas.

“Middle school age students have become a national concern as a pivotal point for academic success or failure,” Rutledge said. “(It) works to bring the community together in preparation to enter college with special emphasis on the rewarding, empowering and high wages of a professional career.”

According to data from

the 2007 ACT Benchmark test, 23 percent of graduates met all the thresholds of the ACT Readiness Scores in 2007. That same year, 97 percent Blacks, 90 percent of Hispanics and 89 percent of Native Americans high school graduates who took the exam scored low in English, science, math and read-

ing. STEM hopes to change dismal local numbers. Rutledge said the program, now in its second year, is “intense, exciting, rewarding and fun.”

“Students learn advanced STEM software and they participate in STEM team-build-

ing concepts, mathematics development, communications skills and ACT (American College Testing) and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) development.”

The STEM Student Ambassadors Program will be holding a conference this

Saturday, in the Morse Arberry Telecommunications Center at the College of Southern Nevada Cheyenne Campus from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Those interested in more information can call (702) 648-0889 or visit www.STEMUSA.us.

Urban League book offers home advice

Special to Sentinel-Voice

(NNPA) — Wells Fargo has announced that with the National Urban League it will co-sponsor a new edition of The Foreclosure Workbook: The Complete Guide to Understanding Foreclosure and Saving Your Home. The workbook, written by foreclosure author Carla Douglin, will be free-of-charge to at-risk customers across the nation through Wells Fargo’s “Leading the Way Home” initiative. “Our vision has long been to help our customers succeed financially by helping them achieve and sustain homeownership,” said Cara Heiden, co-president of Wells Fargo Home Mortgage.

“We believe in doing what is right for our customers, and that includes working with them to find solutions to keep them in their homes when they face financial difficulties.

The hands-on guide will help homeowners experiencing challenges making their mortgage payments and who may face potential foreclosure. Copies of the workbook will be

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Fair

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borhood Justice Center and others. Rebecca Fuentes of the Southern Nevada Health District, spoke about the need to test young children that may have come in contact with lead paint poisoning.

Children exposed to high lead contents are susceptible to increased bouts of attention deficit disorder, hyper activity, aggressive behavior, and possible brain damage.

“We’re here testing children ages 1-6 for possible lead paint poisoning. We also provide a service where we go out to homes built prior to 1978, testing the paint and tile for high concentration of lead.”

Officials from the offices of Rep. Shelly Berkley and Sen. Harry Reid provided information on how the \$787 billion federal stimulus package will impact Nevada.

According to a panel discussion with city and state officials, Nevada will receive \$200 million for state highway construction and improvements. Clark County will get \$38 million in stabilization funding, while the City of Las Vegas will receive \$20.6 million stabilization funding. Title 1 and special education will receive \$20 million. Seven million dollars is earmarked for ju-

venile justice assistance. Officials expect the \$1.5 billion in federal monies will create 30,000 jobs in Nevada.

Vendors like the U.S. Census Bureau made sure guest knew that it was hiring right now. The bureau is looking for African-Americans to collect data for the 2010 Census. Diane Ireland, a partnership specialist for the Census Bureau, said the bureau simply doesn’t have enough Black applicants.

“All of our federal funding is based on an accurate head count of the population residing in our communities, and if we don’t get a good count we lose out on dollars necessary to support our communities,” she said. “So we need individuals that can assist us in reaching those families that might not get counted and as a result losing much needed federal funds.”

Another vendor, Three Square Food Bank, sought to spread the word about its mission to help eradicate hunger in the Valley. Three Square partners with America’s Second Harvest, a national network of more than 200 food banks. It collects truckloads of donated food from the local food industry and national donors and distributes meals to non-profit and faith-based entities

operating food pantries, soup kitchens, youth programs, senior centers and other programs in Las Vegas. Three Square is busier than ever.

“From 2008-09, our organization distributed over 10 million pounds of food to the greater Las Vegas communities,” Christian Velasquez of Three Square said. “Today we are providing a list of over 140 pantry locations to help those families trying to survive during these tough economic times and feed themselves.”

Rhea Gertken, directing attorney for Nevada Legal Services, encouraged people to contact her company if they’re dealing with legal issues.

“We’re here to assist individuals with legal issues like denials and termination of government benefits, unemployment, welfare, Social Security, housing discrimination and eviction defense, etc. All of these services are free or on a sliding scale depending upon your income.”

Yvette Anderson appreciated the valuable information provided by the fair. “I came here because I work for a general law firm and I wanted to get as much information that’s available to assist our clients as they struggle to deal with this unpredictable economy.”

7th Annual Women's and Young Women's Conference

Wise Women's Wisdom - Listen, Share and Spread the Knowledge

This conference will provide an opportunity for women of diverse and unique backgrounds to come together as one; to gather tools that will ultimately rejuvenate a loving self through invigorating workshops. This year's conference will focus on the bond between women in the community and how mentored women can listen, share and spread the knowledge throughout the community.

Saturday, March 14
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
West Las Vegas Library Theatre, Conference Rooms and the West Las Vegas Arts Center
951 W. Lake Mead Blvd.

Las Vegas-Clark County LIBRARY DISTRICT
www.lvcld.org

Co-sponsored by the City of Las Vegas, Arts & Community Events Division, the College of Southern Nevada and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Free and open to the public. For more information, please call 507-3989 or 229-4800.