

# Men's group taps MLK legacy



## MLK Day events, Jan. 19

7:00 a.m. registration and free breakfast, "Coppertop" Church,

7:15 a.m. local program

8:00 a.m. large screen broadcast, Colin Powell's speech

11:00 a.m. march from Washington Center to rally, Lake Ave. between 3rd & 4th St.

11:45 a.m. Rally, DECC

More events and information

[www.mlk-duluth.org](http://www.mlk-duluth.org)

## AAMG mentors African-American students, serves community

By Michael Kooi

You've seen them ringing bells for the Salvation Army. Raising money to stop the genocide in Darfur. And maybe even introducing a llama to kids in a park.

They are young men of color, and thanks in part to the efforts of Duluth's African-American Men's Group, they are developing into the community's next generation of leaders.

"These are creative and exciting young people," says AAMG President Carl Crawford. "We need to create a support network for them. It's our obligation as men to accept that challenge...and reclaim the roles we need to play in our community."

For the members of the men's group, this means acting as visible role models in the community, sharing experiences as mentors and demonstrating the value of making smart choices in life.

Since its inception in 1992, the AAMG has done this in a number of ways. To emphasize the value of education as a pathway out of poverty, the group has created a college scholarship in honor of Allen Butler, Duluth's first African-American police officer. AAMG also provides gifts each year to minority high school graduates as part of a celebration that both recognizes their achievement in graduating but also encourages them to continue on to college or vocational schools.

As important as this financial support can be, the group's most significant contribution may come through the personal time that

**AAMG**

Cont. on page 7



Photo by Michael Kooi

Carl Crawford, president of the Duluth's African-American Men's Group, stands at Lake Superior College where he works as the Intercultural Center Coordinator

# African-American Men's Group contributes by mentoring teens

**AAMG**  
Cont. from page 1



File photo by Lisa Kane

Samie McCurley is a founding member and former president of the African American Men's Group.

members dedicate to mentoring teens and putting them in touch with the world beyond their neighborhoods. Each summer, for example, AAMG members take kids from Neighborhood Youth Services on a fishing trip in honor of Howard Taylor, a late member of the group.

"Some of these kids grew up next to Lake Superior, but they've never been on a boat," marvels Samie McCurley, AAMG's founder. "It's just a joy for us to see the smiles on the kids' faces when they catch a fish. That's what lets me know I did the right thing in starting the group."

According to Kelly Looby, program coordinator at NYS, this personal interaction with positive role models makes the kids feel

like they "fit in and belong [in this community]." In fact, two former participants in the annual trip, Don Morris and Jamal Winters, have gone on to earn jobs at NYS.

It also helps to bridge the generation gap and form lasting connections for future success. "We have to interact with [these kids] and feed off of each other," Crawford explains. He says it's the only way that his generation can understand the challenges facing kids today.

Forming such connections is one of the primary goals of the African-American Student Alliance at Woodland Hills, which founder Cal Harris says was inspired by the AAMG. Harris, a senior youth treatment specialist at Woodland, brings his group to sit in on AAMG meetings periodically.

For AASA members Jesus, Edward and Danny (whose last names have been omitted to

protect their privacy as minors), the African-American Men's Group breaks down negative stereotypes. Interacting with AAMG members gives them the courage to be active in the community by raising money for

models. Perhaps nowhere is this connection more explicit than in the group's contributions to Duluth's annual MLK Holiday Community Breakfast. The event brings the community together to honor the life of Dr. Martin Luther

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charitable causes and sharing their experiences with young children. "It keeps us motivated," says Edward.

### A legacy of courage and caring

In their cultivation of tomorrow's leaders of color, the members of the AAMG draw from the lessons and legacies provided by their own role

King, Jr. and to work toward fulfilling his vision of building a just and interconnected society.

Each year, AAMG members participate by rolling up their sleeves to cook and serve the event's namesake meal.

"They feed a significant amount of people on a low budget," explained Doug Bowen-Bailey, one of the event's organizers and owner of Digiterp Communications. "It's a big benefit to the community."

In addition to the free breakfast, the event also provides people from all walks of life with the opportunity to sit down with each other and discuss the issues they face, as well as those shared by the community.

This year's MLK breakfast will take place on Jan. 19, 2009 at First United Methodist Church, located at 230 W. Skyline Pkwy in Duluth. Breakfast service begins at 7 a.m.



Photo by Naomi Yaeger-Bischoff


**File photo January 2008:** Members of the African American Men's Group and volunteers from Woodland Hills worked in the kitchen to prepare and serve a free Breakfast on Martin Luther King Day.

Back left: Louis Hanson, Earl Ellis (white cap), Don Oliphant, Cal Harris (Youth Treatment Specialist, Woodland Hills), Aaron Gelineau, Demontrey, Tom Hanson (owner of the Duluth Grill holding award), Samie McCurley (former president of the African-American Men's Group). Kneeling: Rob and Josh.

**The Duluth African-American Men's Group meets the first Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the Duluth Grill, 18 S 27th Ave. W.**



**Donations can be sent to:**  
African-American Men's Group  
PO Box 16855  
Duluth, MN 55816  
**Membership**  
Contact Carl Crawford  
218 733-7678  
c.crawford@lsc.edu



The Community Development Committee's (CD Committee) mission is to invest Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds into community programs that help low to moderate income people by addressing basic needs, providing affordable housing, and increasing economic self-sufficiency.

**THE DATES HAVE CHANGED for the City Council's review and approval of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Community Development Block Grant Action Plan**

**January 22, 2009 CD Committee Presentation of FY 2009 Action Plan:** The CD Committee will meet and present the FY 2009 Action Plan and funding recommendations to the City Council at a Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for the evening of Thursday, January 22, 2009.

**January 26, 2009 Council Approval of FY 2009 Action Plan:** At that meeting the City Council will review the CD Committee's recommendations and the FY 2009 budget for the program. The City Council will act on those recommendations at its meeting on Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. This is a regular City Council meeting that is open to the public. Program applicants may want to be present for questions or to speak on the Council's resolutions.

