



# The Times

## Trenton teens get college preview

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**BY BOBBY OLIVIER**

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EWING -- The day was about broadening horizons.

Buses full of students from the Trenton school district spent Wednesday visiting The College of New Jersey, offering youths a glimpse of the promise of secondary education.

And for TCNJ students who are involved in the college's Bonner Community Scholars program, it was a day to share their knowledge and firsthand experiences with others.

"I want to go here! Can I go to college?"

That is what Rebecca Enish, a Trenton Central High School Medical Arts Academy English teacher, said one of her slightly overwhelmed students said upon seeing his first college campus.

The TCNJ students, who receive credit for their hours of community service, organized the Youth Development Institute and acted as guides for the youths from the capital city, showing them that college is a realistic goal.

After registration, the program broke up into 45-minute workshops where topics as diverse as creative writing and racial stereotypes were discussed.

These college-style classes were not taught by professors or professional speakers, but by dozens of the college's freshmen as they satisfied their community-engaged learning requirement, a necessity to complete their first year of college.

The college students felt strongly about the workshops prepared for the 200 inner-city youths and about their contribution to the community.

"We are trying to lay out the stereotypes and what goes on in the media," business major Brian Rodey said before his workshop, titled "Does Race Matter?"

After the conclusion of "Becoming a Real Man," a workshop dealing with the stigmas attached to traditional gender roles, criminology major Nick Hvasta said, "It was a good learning experience for both us and the students. It's important to reach out to them and show that what they think is not the case."

And English professor Michael Robertson said, "It's a classic win-win situation. (The program) serves a dual purpose. It gives the (Trenton) students a taste of intellectual excitement.

"The only way to learn something well is to teach it. This program gets students excited about the topic."

The Youth Development Program truly did have a dual purpose.

In addition to offering education about social issues, the program presented the message that a higher education can be a realistic future for many would-be first-generation college freshmen.

"We are taking a step forward in improving the quality of life for students around here," junior finance major and Bonner Community Scholar Andrew Amadeo said.

Adding to the thought, fellow junior finance major Tariq Shabazz said, "It's important they open their minds and broaden their horizons."

Director of the Bonner Center Patrick Donahue summed up the program as well as the center: "As a public institution and a neighbor, we are concerned about the education of the next generation and we want to share our resources to help our Trenton colleagues to put the students on the path to success."

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