

The East St. Louis Monitor

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Jahi Bakari Person Of The Month

Jahi means dignity, Bakari means of noble promise and when it's put together it means an African-American male who's making ends meet to reach wholesome youth.

Bakari, 28, native East St. Louisan received his education from East St. Louis Lincoln Senior High School. He holds a bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant management from the University of Houston and a masters in public administration from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

He's the founder and prime mover of "Harvesting New Generations" which is program designed to acquaint students with the transition from girlhood to womanhood and boyhood to manhood.

The program has been in operation for about seven months and according to Bakari he sees positive changes already.

As founder, Bakari finds this position challenging and rewarding.

"It's challenge everyday to serve as a mentor to those students all of whom are destined for success," stated Bakari.

He continued, "Young people ought to be able to see other positive black males who have worked hard and made a difference and I think they have entrusted me to be that person."

There are currently 32 students that keeps Bakari busy which he stated he doesn't mind. He received these students upon the referral of school officials and stated that 32 is all that he can handle right now.



JAHİ BAKARI

Bakari is involved in the student's life on a day to day basis by tutorings and mentoring.

The students attends workshops every Saturday which range from professional coming in speaking on Urban Farming, Black History, and self-preservation to name a few.

The students recently attended the Annual Black College Fair sponsored by the St. Louis Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, INC., and has plans of a big celebration for Kwanza '93 more details will be furnished at a later date.

The students that Bakari associate himself with are from Hughes Quinn/Rock and Clark Jr. High. He will see these students for a period of five years.

He became interested in the students welfare upon seeing the negative images portrayed in the news media.

Bakari is aware that he can't save all the students in East St. Louis but it is his desire to

reach one in order that they are beneficial to their peers.

The best advice Bakari has ever received was from a native East St. Louisan which was, "never bite the hand that feeds you and never bite the potential hand that feeds you."

With this in mind Bakari graduated with top honors from SIU-E and was awarded the Leo Cohen Award for Urban Management in addition to the 1993 Young Black Achievers Award from Iota Phi Lambda.

Bakari has plans to begin working on his doctorate in education. He stated he wants to have more influence on the quality of education African-American students receive.

His ultimate goal is to open a private not-for-profit school which addresses the African-American student's needs.

He stated what brings him joy is when his student bring good grades home to their parents, when they aren't involved in any fighting at school, no gang activity and when they participate in the program to improve their attitude and self-esteem.

Bakari is a member of the Association of African-American Role Model/St. Louis Chapter and the ESL Kiwanas. He has plans to join one or two more organizations but isn't revealing his intent.

The only regret Bakari has is the fact that he did not attend a predominately black institution.

"Had I attended a predominately black institution I think it would have been a more rewarding experience...the unity was not there," said Bakari.

The East St. Louis Monitor Newspaper proudly salute Jahi Bakari as its November Person of The Month. We wish you continued success in all your endeavors.

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