

COMMUNITY

AACEAINC Kicks-off Black History Month Celebrating Iconic Figures and The Big Debate

The African-American/Caribbean Education Association Inc. (AACEAINC), under the auspices of President Rosalind O'Neal, uniquely presented a comprehensive black history month program featuring past iconic figure and great debater, Frederick Douglass; present day iconic figures Bryan Stevenson of "Just Mercy" fame, motivational speaker and exceptional educator, Dr. Laura Holder-Gibbs, and the Big Debate showcasing Part II (Debate) of AACEAINC's Speech and Debate Series.

The phenomenal event was held on Saturday, February 1, 2020 at the St. Matthew's A.M.E. Community Church of Hollis where Rev. Dr. Andrea M. Hargett serves as senior pastor.

The Program addressed the question: "What does Black History Month mean to you?" The adept audience gave outstanding responses that focused on the African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan, vigilance in our community getting out to vote, the statues of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman that appear in Harlem, NY, knowing our history, black youth seeking excellence in education, the importance of giving back within our community, the importance of our young people engaging in speech and debate activities and other highly credentialed academic activities, and more. President O'Neal brought to the fore a synopsis of present day icon, Bryan Stevenson, who recently got a major U.S. Supreme Court ruling that deems unconstitutional the mandatory life-without-parole sentences of

all children under the age of 17. Direction was focused on his mission as an activist and public-interest lawyer, who has

protections to children going through the criminal justice system, Shirley Phipps presented a compelling chronicle on

his letter to Harriet Tubman and his lecture (manifesto) on "What shall be done with the Negro?" that was the presage to the future of the 13th Amendment. Special Guest of Honor Dr. Laura Holder-Gibbs, the founder of the High School for Civil Rights was exceptional, brilliant, and uplifting. Her message was one of educational excellence, justice, having a vision and fulfilling one's dream.

The Big Debate followed in the Public Fo-

rum style, with the topic, Black Youth and Video Games. After the two teams were determined in pro or con position, the resolution then took the form of Resolved: The Black Community should weigh the effects of video games on black youth and the impact on their growth and development. The students competed in the Grade 5-8 division and came from middle school I.S. 192Q, Success Academy Charter School, Queens Collegiate: A College Board School, and the Greater Allen Cathedral Sunday School. Teammates Koreen Melbourne, age 11 in the 6th grade and Najwa Waysome,

age 11 in the 6th grade, Dr. Holder-Gibbs's directive, the discussions on Bryan Stevenson and Frederick Douglass, by design focused on applying one's gifts and talents and utilizing the art of oratory and debate. Without question, communication is the primary tool of succeeding that our young people must master. The iconic figures exemplified this notion to the fierce debaters.

AACEAINC proudly salutes the Judges: Rev. Stephanie Betts-Coleman, Juliette Bowers, Harriette Diaz, Betty Leon, Ayanna Mays, and Judith Tyler, each of whom have a background in English Language Arts, Speech Pathology, Education Administration, and the Law; the Coaches:

Kerryann Burke, Linda Gouridine-Hunt, and Sandra Street; the Host: St. Matthew's A.M.E. Church of Hollis, Rev. Dr. Andrea M. Hargett, Pastor; the Special Guest of Honor: Dr. Laura Holder-Gibbs; the Photographer: Jeany Persaud; the Promoters: Harriett Diaz, Shirley Phipps, Aura Quinones-Moody, Joyce Samber; the Refreshments Contributor: Shirley Phipps; the Sponsors: Valerie Crawford, Palmer Cleaners of Cambria Heights, NY, Harriett Diaz, Lady Francine Jarvis, Rosalind O'Neal, Ridgewood Savings Bank, Maureen Thompson Assistant Vice-President, and Joyce Samber; and The Team: Commander Leroy Barnes, Shawneequa Callicer, Harriett Diaz, Yolanda Johnson, Xiomara Laleye, Ayanna Mays, Jeany Persaud, Shirley Phipps, Aura Quinones-Moody, Joyce Samber, Hon. Ernestine Washington, and Ret. Sergeant Major Jackie Wilson.

AACEAINC's scholarship applications will post by the end of this month. High school students who have given over 300 hours of community service and high-performing academic graduating high school seniors, should apply. Please visit www.aaceainc.com to get details and download applications for the community, math, science, and medicine scholarships.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Debate Team Champions finishing in first Place: Koreen Melbourne and Najwa Waysome; President O'Neal (center); second Place finishers: Oluwatimilehin Adigun and Omari Francois.

been in the fight for the exoneration of innocent prisoners on death row, the abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and the need for greater

Frederick Douglass, our greatest orator/debater. Her adaptation spoke to his fight for the equality of blacks in bondage in America. Highlights were

rum style, with the topic, Black Youth and Video Games. After the two teams were determined in pro or con position, the resolution then took the

age 13 in the 8th grade emerged the champions, and they were challenged by teammates Oluwatimilehin Adigun, age 10 in the 6th grade and Omari

GUYANA

Russian Owned Bauxite Company Dismisses More Than 300 Workers

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Feb 3, CMC – The Russian-owned aluminium company, RUSAL Monday dismissed all the 326 employees at the Bauxite Company of Guyana Inc. (BCGI) citing industrial unrest and damage to property. "The suspension of BCGI will have no

impact on the Company's overall performance, as the expected decline in the overall bauxite supply from Guyana will be substituted with raw material from other mines," the company said in a statement.

But the government said that it has not been officially notified of the dismissal of the workers.

Labour Minister Keith Scott and Social Protection Minister said that company officials held talks Monday with officials from the Labour Department where the termination announcement was made.

They said it was clear that RUSAL did not attend the meeting to seek an end to the impasse.

Scott said there was not notice to the Labour Department that the company was moving to terminate the workers. The RUSAL company officials also informed the meeting that the union representing the workers had also not been informed.

"You are coming here this morning and saying

that over 300 gone home and still there is no notice to us", Scott said, adding the company's position is unacceptable.

The Guyana Bauxite and General Workers Union (GBGWU) confirmed it had not received any communication on the matters.