



Reading Is Power

Newsletter of the Institute for Positive Living's Open Book Program
Fall/Winter 2004

Open Book Program Kicks Off New School Year With Visit from Author Walter Dean Myers



Shanice Brown, a 7th grader at Mayo Elementary School, 249 E. 37th St., and Author Walter Dean Myers read "Ann Carter, 32; Benjamin Bailey, 38: Switchboard Operator/ Building Maintenance," a poem from Myers' book, Here in Harlem.

More than 200 African American Open Book students got a chance to meet, perform for, and interview critically-acclaimed children's book Walter Dean Myers, author of *Here in Harlem: Poems in Many Voices*, on October 18, 2004, at the Afrocentric Bookstore, 4655 S. King Dr., in Chicago. The event officially kicked off the school year for the Institute for Positive Living's Open Book Program.

During the event, Myers, who has authored 80 books, talked about having low self-esteem as a child because he knew important people were in books and he didn't see himself in any of the books he was reading. "As a man," Myers said, "I made sure that my kids had books with pictures of my people and my community in them." Myers stated that he wrote *Here in Harlem* to create a portrait of the Black community. "The book takes place in Harlem, but it could be anywhere," he said.

A highlight of the event was a duet performance of the two-voice poem "Ann Carter, 32; Benjamin Bailey, 38; Switchboard Operator/ Building Maintenance," by Myers and Mayo student Shanice Brown. Other activities included performances by Open Book participants from Mayo and Beethoven Elementary Schools and a booksigning session.

The event was attended by Open Book participants from five Chicago Public Schools: Beethoven, 25 W. 47th St., Kohn, 10414 S. State St, Mayo, 249 E. 37th St., Jackie R. Robinson, 4225 S. Lake Park Ave., White Career Academy, 1136 W. 122nd St., and Williams Multiplex, 2710 S. Dearborn.

"Author interaction is a key ingredient in the success of the Open Book Program," states founder Marrice Coverson, president of the Institute for Positive Living and executive director of Open Book. "The talk-show format gives students the opportunity to interact with one another and to experience the books through the dramatic productions that each school has prepared."

*Students Journal About Meeting Walter Dean Myers.
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