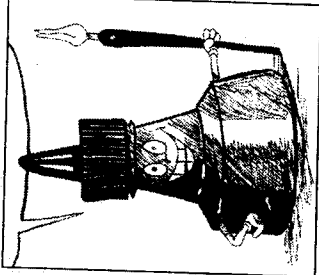




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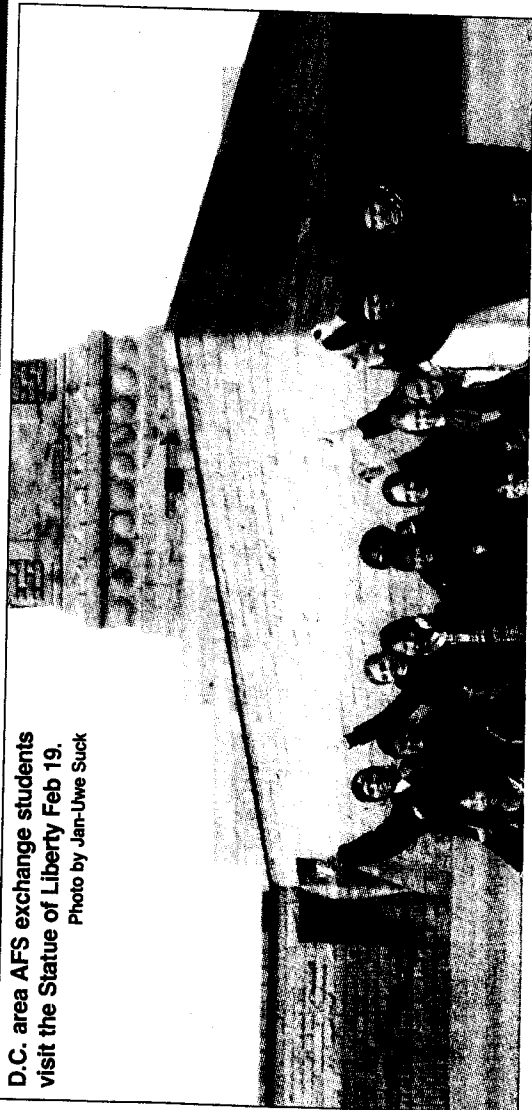
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# Young D.C.

Volume 14 • Number 7

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D.C. area AFS exchange students  
visit the Statue of Liberty Feb 19.  
Photo by Jan-Uwe Suck



## Case on News Sources Moves to Appeals Panel

Rue Khalsa  
Young D.C.

May 9 is a critical date for journalists throughout the nation. In 2004 five reporters were found in contempt after Wen Ho Lee, a nuclear physicist once suspected of spying, filed a lawsuit against the

# Teens target stereotypes, plan events

**Daverna Johnson and Quadir Ismael  
Special to Young D.C.**

You can always get something done when you put your mind to it. There are obstacles, but you just have to find a way to overcome them. We are five teens who met through Upward Bound; four of us will graduate in June. Before we go on to college, we want to alleviate stereotypes we encounter in our community.

Why is it that some youth disassociate themselves from the police? Is it because they feel the police are out to get them? Why is it that police find themselves at risk as they protect and serve the community? Why do they dismiss African American males who wear thug or gangsta clothes?

Stereotyping teens and police starts at school, at home, everywhere. The older generation holds onto problems they had with the police decades ago. They let their children develop negative feelings toward police. When the police try to help them, these children react negatively. Then the police develop attitudes toward teens. It doesn't have to be this way.

We have spent the last month planning an event to engage teens in the community. April 16 will kick off with a talent show at the Richard England Clubhouse in northeast D.C. Then teams of teens will compete in a basketball tournament. The finale of the tourney is a game between teens and police officers. After a day of building unity in the community, participants will celebrate at an after party at the YMCA at 17th Street and Rhode Island Avenue, Northwest.

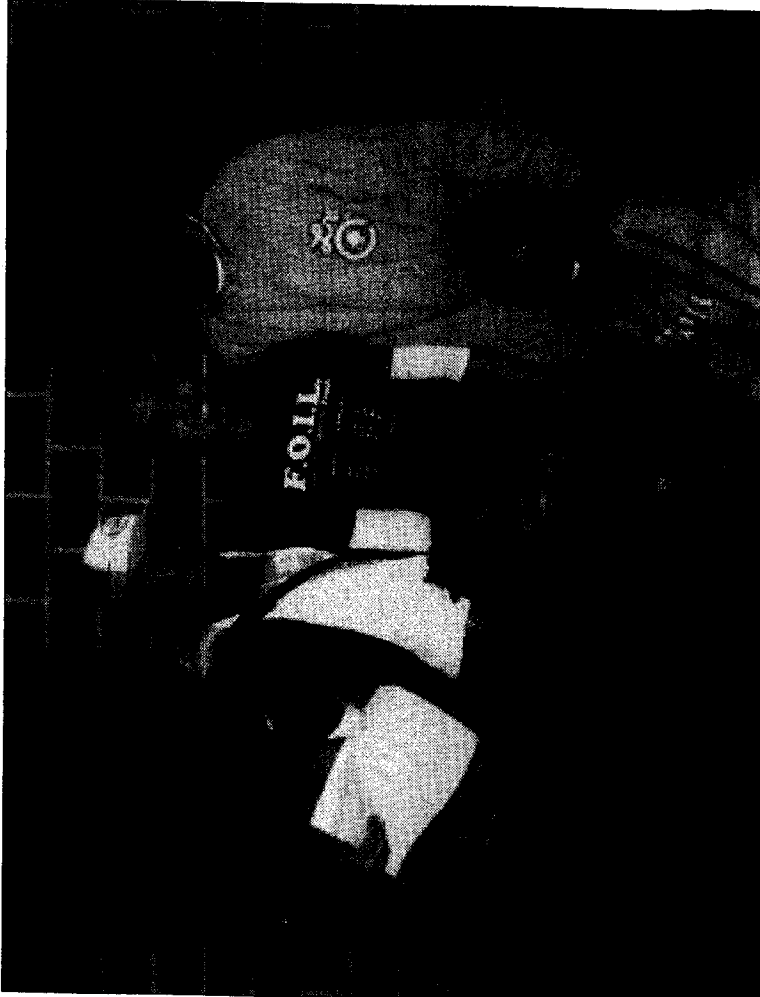
We targeted 14 high schools to recruit teens for the talent show and basketball tourney. We scheduled information meetings. We arranged security and transportation alternatives for the events.

The first warm and sunny spring day of April over a dozen teens came to the clubhouse to sign up for the basketball tournament and the talent show. It was amazing that so many teens came on a beautiful evening that could easily have been spent chilling in the extra light of daylight savings time.

This was one more amazing experience we have encountered since Nisha Sachdev helped us form Breaking the Cycle, our organization to help break negative intergenerational paths and stereotypes. She was our Spanish teacher early in our Upward Bound days. She is one busy woman—teaching special education classes by day, finishing a masters degree in public health at George Washington University, always encouraging us to prepare for college and improve our community.

If you want something done, ask a busy person. After making sure four of us completed and mailed college applications, she mentored the start of Breaking the Cycle. After she put us in touch with DC Serves, Freddie Mac agreed to help support the talent show, tournament and party. With that encouragement, we applied to Youth Ventures to sustain Breaking the Cycle. Soon we will be explaining our goals and activities to its selection panel. We are confident about this presentation because Sachdev has proven to us that developing timelines, charting responsibilities, budgeting the limited funds we have and recruiting our peers to positive activities really pays off.

We're making a change in our community. We are five teens who demonstrate that you don't need to get in trouble to have fun.



**Breaking the Cycle founders – front row, Vice President Daverna Johnson and Secretary Jasmine Boyd, back row, President Jahnin Davis, Public Relations Officer Sadia Coleman, Adult Adviser Nisha Sachdev, Treasurer Quadir Ismael – gather at Boys and Girls Clubhouse 14 in Northeast Washington to plan their Unity in the Community event.**

Photo courtesy of Breaking the Cycle

*Note: Jasmine Boyd, Sadia Coleman, Jahnin Davis and Nisha Sachdev also contributed to this article.*

*Daverna Johnson, 17, is a senior at M.M. Washington SHS, Quadir Ismael, 18, is a senior at Spingarn SHS, Jasmine Boyd, 17, is a senior at Banneker SHS, Sadia Coleman, 16, is a junior at H. D. Woodson SHS, Jahnin Davis, 17, is a senior at Spingarn SHS. These high schools are in the District of Columbia.*