

Navient Foundation supports YMCA of Delaware's Black Achievers Program annual college tour

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WILMINGTON, Del., March 29, 2018 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Students of the Walnut Street YMCA Black Achievers Program are preparing to embark on a bus tour for spring break. The participants in the program, which provides college readiness and career awareness to African-American teens, will journey across state lines to visit historically black colleges and universities, as well as historic civil rights landmarks in North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia and Washington D.C.

Navient Foundation, the company-sponsored philanthropic fund, contributed \$10,000 to underwrite the college tour, including educational and enrichment activities, travel and a visit to Say-It Music, where participants produce an original song about their journey.

"The college tour will allow me to visit colleges and universities in Delaware and elsewhere," said Da'Von Wilson, a participant of the Black Achievers Program. "I'm nervous and excited about the thought of potentially leaving my family after I graduate high school, but I know college will expose me to new things and stretch me in ways I haven't been before."

The tour has been a staple of the program since 2003. This year, 19 students will participate in the spring tour, which takes place April 1 through April 6. YMCA organizers say the annual college tour is a key component in motivating students to pursue higher education. In 2017, 100 percent of the program's graduating seniors enrolled in college. In addition to the college tour, the program also visits schools in Delaware throughout the year.

"The Black Achievers Program has served as a catalyst for students to continue striving to reach their career and education goals," said Patricia Nash Christel, vice president, Navient. "We're proud to support the program and to help make a positive impact on the lives of the participants."

Each year since 2014, a Navient team member has volunteered to attend the annual spring tour and support students. This year, Bryan Lee, an Adult Black Achiever, will join students as they tour schools throughout the southeast.

"Adult Achievers like myself create a spark of interest among inner city youth to pursue higher education," said Lee. "This program supports them with the tools they need to pursue that path. The college tour gives children a meaningful experience about the type of college environment that suits their personality and learning style."

For the past 30 years, the YMCA's Black Achievers Program has inspired African-American middle and high school youth to further their education and set ambitious career goals. The free teen leadership program engages students through mentorships, workplace and college tours, SAT prep and weekly workshops on a variety of career awareness topics every Saturday morning.

For more information about the [YMCA of Delaware's Black Achievers Program](#), contact the Walnut Street YMCA at (302) 472-YMCA.

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