

The OCBI Tipping Point

“The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire.”

Malcolm Gladwell



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Welcome to “The OCBI Tipping Point.”

We hope that you find it very informative as we explore all possibilities to keep our constituency and the general public informed about all matters that affect Black folk in the state of Iowa.

Greater Burlington and the Ongoing Covenant with Black Iowa (OCBI)

Good things are happening around the state in Black communities all over, and one of those places that warrants mentioning is the greater Burlington area. **Ms. Sivon Ellis-Williams** is currently one of our Project Coordinators (PC) there in the area, and she is doing some tremendous work to move the OCBI Initiative along in the greater Burlington region. She brings a keen intellect, great organizational skills, a wonderful personality, and a passion for the work. She has refused to accept the options of a sour cynicism, political apathy, or cultural escapism; instead, she chooses to engage in a vibrant and robust democracy, where the citizens’ voice matters. This is the leadership necessary to realize the fundamental change we expect to see in our state.

Please review and enjoy Sivon’s notes below. The work continues.

Meeting Summary

November 20, 2007

Summary

Members of the OCBI – Greater Burlington met at the Burlington City Hall – City Council Chambers. The event, slated as a town hall meeting was an open invitation to the community leadership and elected officials in the Burlington, West Burlington, Ft. Madison, Keokuk, and Mt. Pleasant areas. There were 22 Individuals in attendance including area Clergy, representatives from the Human Rights Commission, local business owners, Physicians and Health advocacy professionals, School administrators, students, and concerned citizens.



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During this third meeting of the Greater Burlington OCBI, we were able to (1) introduce the covenant to new attendees; (2) discuss the opportunities available through the covenant; (3) discuss issues affecting Blacks in the Greater Burlington area; (4) establish our Regional Steering Committee and (5) Secure community endorsement of the initiative.

The next meeting, slated for Tuesday, January 8th will identify the focus groups and focus group facilitators. A survey will be mailed to members of the Steering Committee prior to this date to identify in which task force their particular skills, contacts and interests would be best suited. Additionally, all task force members will receive copies of the OCBI manual no later than November 29.

Several great ideas were proposed during the meeting, many of them consistent with the determinations made during our second meeting which centered around a focus on education & youth (advocacy, mentoring, tutoring); Economic Development (Blacks In Business [networking community], cooperative economics, and partnerships with area businesses); and Political Involvement. Another issue discussed consistently was that surrounding healthcare.

Reiterated was the fact that it would counter-productive to “reinvent the wheel” will regards to addressing the most urgent needs in the area which are (1) the need for community-based tutoring of the area’s minority students in an effort to decrease disparities in education; (2) the development of a student to student mentorship program to increase self-esteem and encourage stewardship in our youth; (3) the development of a parental advocacy program to represent and provide assistance to parents and students in the schools with disciplinary and academic issues.

Next Steps

- ? Project Coordinator with speak with Pastor Manson to discuss the OCBI-GB’s role in supporting/promoting its existing tutoring program.
- ? The Project Coordinator has been in touch with publishers regarding a regional directory for African American owned businesses and Business seeking African American customers. (This was prompted by Taj Allen’s idea about BIB and may serve as a fundraiser for the OCBI- Greater Burlington. *Preliminary plans are that ad space would be sold and the publication distributed for free or for a nominal fee during Black History Month and Juneteenth events/ceremonies. If successful as a fund-raiser the monies would be used to establish the OCBI- Greater Burlington as a 501(c)(3) NFP organization. This has not yet been discussed with or endorsed by the steering committee.)
- ? The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 8, 2008, 6:00 pm in the Burlington City Hall’s – Council Chambers.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.