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Planning for the future: Celebrating children's lives. Really!

Urban League of Northwest Indiana Community engagement is the lesson plan! On September 19th, 2018 the Urban League of NWI joined with Infinite Scholars and offered \$4.7 Million in scholarships to deserving high school graduating seniors from 3 counties - LaPorte, Porter, and Lake. These students, who are working hard to achieve their academic goals, successfully presented themselves and were rewarded with scholarship monies that will help them cover the ever mounting costs of a post-secondary education.

Yes, students from The Region.....They had the requisite G.P.A., SAT/ACT score, and a transcript that verifies their grades, that proved their worth to compete in a global society. This takes time and energy and devotion as young scholars who intend to move on from high school to the next stage of their lives.

We applaud them. We honor them! In fact an example of student success can be



found with our 2015 Urban League Scholarship Recipient – David Lewis.

Urban League of Northwest Indiana Community engagement is the lesson plan for David Lewis and he has taken his plan to Indianapolis. Originally a Merrillville High school graduate, Lewis says being the oldest of four boys helped him learn to look for the humanity in others. “I’m truly passionate about bringing like-minded individuals together to change this world,” Lewis says. “This world should be a haven for everyone, regardless of their differences.” Throughout high

school, David used this passion to work in his family business, Sons of David, to provide housing for low-income or middle class residents of Northwest Indiana.

With a 2015 scholarship from the Urban League of Northwest Indiana, Lewis' passion for community prompted him to travel to Indianapolis to pursue his degree in public affairs at the Indiana University School of Public & Environmental Affairs (SPEA). "I was searching for a program that would give me a taste of not only the policy process, but also the interaction of individuals with nonprofits and businesses," he says. His academic plan allowed him to maintain the best of both worlds. During his time at IUPUI, Lewis served as an intern at the Indiana Statehouse. He worked with lobbyists advocating for widespread implementation of electric and utility services throughout Indiana.

Learning about the legislation process firsthand reaffirmed David's interest in legislative reform and public service. "Many of my courses in SPEA stressed the importance of civic engagement in the context of public policy and public service," Lewis said, "Whether I was in a community discussion about immigration rights or learning about Indiana's redistricting process, the experiences showed me the importance of being involved in a community."

Next fall, Lewis plans to continue his education by pursuing a legal degree. "My next challenge is to use my legal analysis skills to push for social change in various communities," David remarks. "Whether those communities include academic institutions, religious groups, or nonprofit organizations, I plan to take my experience to the next level."

Sometimes when children seem to have lost their way, we focus too much on the negative behavior, instead we could consider strengthening the good behavior and the attributes that make them successful, David's only one of many examples.

Too many times, as parents, as teachers, as counselors, etc., we become discouraged with our children – but we can't give up! Perhaps we really need to think about how we can increase the numbers of young people who believe in themselves enough to spell out that belief at school. The Urban League continues to be that organization that serves Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties.

In this regard, I ask that you pledge your support to the Urban League by making a donation in any amount so that we can continue to provide services to students that help them seek and accomplish their educational goals. If you are interested in making a donation, visit our website at www.ulofnwi.org, if you are interested in establishing a new scholarship, please contact me at 219-887-9621 and we can discuss the details.