

# Year in Review

**May 2003**

## UMOJA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dr. Katherine Flanagan, President**  
*School Representative*

**Michael Trotter, Vice President,**  
*Community Resident*

**Dr. Joan Forte, Treasurer**  
*Former Manley Vice-Principal*

**Sheba Jackson, Secretary**  
*Community Resident*

**Gail Nelson**  
*Community Organization Rep.*

**Rev. Charles Hamilton**  
*Community/Church Rep.*

**Albert Pratt**  
*Community/Church Rep.*

**Warren Polk**  
*College Student Rep.*

**Andres Hernandez**  
*Community Representative*

**Bill Koll**  
*Foundation/Business Rep.*

**Michael Goldberg**  
*Business Representative*

**Rochelle Moore**  
*Parent Representative*

**Donald Morgan**  
*School Representative*

**Thomas Chatman**  
*High School Student Representative*

**Joseph Gamett**  
*Business Representative*

**Carole Brown**  
*Business Representative*

## Notes from the Executive Director



*Umoja Seniors before the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial in Montgomery.*

The school year has truly flown by and we are on the verge of watching the class of 2003 walk across the stage to receive their diploma. Our seniors stroll through the halls, taller, surer, braver than they were four years ago. They are still so young, so much fear mixed with their excitement about graduation plans. We are proud to have been part of their growth, their expanded vision and sense of self over these last few years. Truly, it is an honor to know that the relationships we have built with them will continue for years...that we will walk beside them through the next phase of their life as well, whether that is college, a job, or both. Over time those relationships will become more mutual, these same young adults will come back to Manley to serve as college and career mentors for the next generation. As the more than 60% of the class of 2001 and 2002 attend colleges and universities all over the country, they helped build this college culture, so different from the reality four short years

ago. Still, we have lost some young people from the class of 2003 to jail, the streets, dead end entry-level jobs. We have come so far and we have so far to go, so much work to do, so much ground to cover.

In spite of an extremely difficult financial climate, programmatically, Umoja is thriving. We have provided services, activities, and supports to every student at Manley Academy through advisories, academic and college and career programming, and school wide events. Over 300 young people have participated in our weekly leadership programming for sophomores through seniors and our high school transition supports leadership and freshmen. In addition to more than 100 community and business partners who have shared hundreds of hours of their time with our young people, we have had a special "shadow" this year. Chicago Journalist Carol Marin has spent a year with us to create a documentary that highlights the Umoja/Manley partnership. We will keep you posted as a venue for its

release is determined.

As we had hoped, Umoja has begun to share our model throughout Chicago. With the support of Chicago Public Schools CEO, Arne Duncan, we have offered technical training to several schools and will begin a first replication effort at Gage Park High School in the fall. Much like the class of 2003, Umoja stands on the precipice of a new day, continuing our thriving partnership with Manley Academy and expanding our vision to include a new and extremely different school community. As we believe in our students' ability to negotiate change and growth, so we believe that Umoja is armed with a unique perspective giving us the integrity and vision we need to make a significant contribution to the development of students across Chicago.

Thank you for being a continued supporter of Umoja and the work we do for young people.

**-Lila Leff, Executive Director**



## Programs: As the Year Closes and Summer Takes Off

### FOCUS! Girls' Programming...

**Just Us Girls** participants created a short skit addressing dating violence. The dramatic presentation stressed the importance of being proactive and taking responsibility for one's life. The skit was presented to every freshman division at Manley.

**Project Get IT Together** prepared a presentation for 8th grade girls at Johnson Elementary School after a large group seminar examining the physical, social and emotional changes from girl to womanhood.

Check out Program Highlights for the 02-03 School Year!

**SCDC** participants compiled research on 24th Ward Aldermanic candidates in to a Voter's Education Guide distributed among 24th Ward residents before the February election. Also, members attended a Youth Summit as part of the National Community Builders Network Conference in Chicago.

**Umoja Victories!** The Columbia College Youth Media Fest reviewed 130 films this year for their annual competition and, out of 9

*SCDC participants, Tony Hooks, Jiwan Wood Jeremy Barton make final adjustments before a shoot.*



awards, **SCDC and Leadership 101** participants received two for their original films, "The Dream vs. Reality," addressing youth/police relations, and "North Lawndale Past." Thank you to Jeff McCarter and Free

Spirit Media for assisting with the production of both films.

**Flipside** meets twice a week during students' 5th period lunch and after school. Look for the students 3rd publication due June 2nd!

### Power, Pride, and Discussion...

After weekly Umoja supported activities, African American History Month culminated in a half-day event for all Manley students. With the help of 40 Umoja business and community partners, students reflected on this year's theme: Power, Politics, and Pride: From the Civil Rights Movement to the Hip Hop Movement.

*Junior Tani-sha Straughter and Community Connections volunteer and Umoja Board Member, Joe Garnett, discuss youth education*



### Looking Forward to Summer

- Umoja expects to employ 20-25 students as interns with the Umoja Community Builders (CB) Internships.
- 10 Umoja participants will be employed at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning.
- We will welcome 25 2003 Manley graduates and current college students to both reflect on the recently completed academic year and prepare for the challenges and opportunities that they will face in September.
- Umoja's Summer of Service kicks off another year. With 35 participants, ages 9-13, the camp will explore Egyptian history and art, a week of health and fitness, and create an original science project.
- Several students will head for exciting programs in Chicago and beyond. 16 students will journey to Michigan for a 2 week summer camp at Circle Pines. Junior Marvell Brickhouse will spend a month with Northwestern's Civic Education Project. Sophomore Robert Ervin will join Columbia College's Summer in the City program for artistic exploration. And Freshman Terence Kirkpatrick will embark on a month long cultural excursion to the South Carolina Sea Islands with Visions Service Adventures. Thank you to all of these amazing organizations for providing full scholarships, enabling our talented young people to have the summer of a lifetime!
- Thank you to the Enterprise Companies and the construction technology school at Manley for helping Umoja secure another house to rehabilitate over the next year. The home will be sold as affordable housing to a North Lawndale community resident.

## Umoja in the Community

**WWW.UMOJACORPORATION.ORG**

Umoja has always stressed the importance of life-long learning. Thanks to Graphic Designer and Umoja friend, Janet Risko and her fantastic work that produced our new, website, Umoja now pos-



*Janet Risko, Umoja's Web page Designer*

sesses a new avenue to reach its supporters and partners. Because this was Janet's first web page design assignment, we took a moment to discuss her recent life-learning experience.

**Umoja: When did you first become interested in graphic design and why?**

**JR:** After I graduated from Creighton University, I worked in retail for about three years. I was looking for a career change and took an adult education class on Adobe Illustrator at the local high school. I thought this is fun, I could do this for a living.

**U: What steps did you take to pursue your interest in graphic designs (internships, schools...etc.)?**

**JR:** Having no art background whatsoever, (I had a BA in History and English from Creighton) I decided to go back to school and get a degree in Graphic Design. Having left the world of retail, I was working for the Better Business Bureau of Chicago and Northern Illinois. While working full-time, I enrolled full-time in the graphic design program at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). It was a tough three and a half years, but ultimately worth it. I received my BFA in Graphic Design. During my time at UIC I had two internships.

The first at a promotional marketing firm and the second in the public relations department at the Illinois Institute of Technology. The second internship turned into my first "real" job as a designer.

**U: What was most rewarding about designing your first web page?**

**JR:** This was such a great experience. Aside from the fact that I was able to use my talents to help such a worthwhile organization as UMOJA, I always enjoy learning something new. This experience let me work from my print design background and through learning a different set of programs, create a visually attractive, organized, user-friendly website that I hope will help others gain a better understanding of UMOJA and its wonderful programs.

**U: What was the most challenging aspect of designing your first web page?**

**JR:** Troubleshooting the wonderful little glitches that accompany any type of computer work. Fortunately I worked with a friend and web designer, Cindy Martinez, who helped me through some of the tough spots.

## The Success of Spring Fling...

On the evening of April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Sinibar Lounge in Chicago welcomed 150 people through its doors for Umoja's first ever Young Professional's Fundraiser coordinated by friends of Umoja, Whitney Shinkle and Eric Salzman. We were thrilled to see so many faces of support, both new and familiar, laughing and conversing throughout the course of the night while learning about Umoja's mission and vision.

At the conclusion of our first happy hour fundraiser, Umoja had raised over \$8,000, funds which sent 17 juniors at Manley Career Academy High School on a week-long college trip with Umoja



*Spring Fling guest speaker and Umoja Grad, Sherri Members (Center), with Umoja Friend Jackie Kaplan (Left) and Lila Leff, Executive Director of Umoja.*

staff across the Midwest. These students had the opportunity to attend classes, meet with professors, tour campuses, and meet with social groups at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Depauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, The University of Michigan and Michigan State University. They returned with many stories, new friendships, and a greater sense of their futures as potential college students and life long learners and lead-



## Training To Transition

*Senior, Totianna Polk sharpens her interviewing skills under the guidance of volunteer, Valerie Leonard*

For a full day, 81 Manley seniors engaged in a dialogue with over 40 Umoja business and community partners through a series of morning panel discussions, one-on-one interviews, and booth-style resource fair at Manley Career Academy High

School. Most of our young people have had few networking experiences in their lives and were greatly helped by getting to know many areas of the professional world. At the end of the day, seniors had strengthened the narrative of their present so they can keep building on the foundation of their futures.

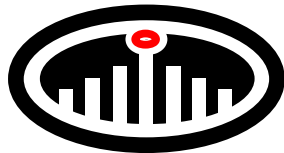
## **Umoja Student Development Corporation**

*Located within Manley Career Academy High School*

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Questions? Email: [umojasdc@yahoo.com](mailto:umojasdc@yahoo.com)**



### *Umoja's Mission and Vision...*

Umoja Student Development Corporation was formed in 1997 in response to the struggles and opportunities at Manley. Umoja's mission encourages the development of students as learners and leaders by actively engaging their participation in individual, school, and local community efforts. Umoja accomplishes its mission by utilizing and building the relationship between students, parents, community-based organizations, business partners, and the Manley school community. Umoja mobilizes community and business partners to create meaningful links with Manley and to provide students with opportunities and resources to assist in their development as well-rounded, young adults. Thus, Umoja's activities, events, and services are designed to guide students successfully through high school and to prepare students for the world beyond high school.

*Thank you for your support!*

***Umoja Student Development Corporation would like to thank the following foundations for their support...***

Steans Family Foundation  
Speh Family Foundation  
Lurie Foundation  
Polk Bros. Foundation  
Chicago Foundation for Women  
Kaplan Family Foundation  
Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust  
Generations Fund

Chicago Community Trust  
WGN Neediest Kids  
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation  
Girls Best Friend  
Houlsby Foundation  
Prince Charitable Trust  
Albert Pick, Jr. Fund  
North Lawndale Small Grants

***...And to highlight a few of our special friends whose support and generosity has played a huge part in our success...***

Whitney Shinkle  
Gary Feinerman  
Greg Darnieder  
Nora and Marty Salzman  
Diana Ferguson  
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Sam Fleischacker  
CPS, Office of the CEO  
Amy Downey  
Bill Koll

***And Thank You to all of our friends and partners. We couldn't do it without you.***