

Link Community School
120 Livingston Street
Newark, NJ 07103
Serving Newark's Youth for 40 Years

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR PRESS INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
Sharon Machrone, Director of Communications
973-642-5343, smachrone@linkschool.org

**TALENTED AND SUCCESSFUL WOMEN
EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION**

Newark, NJ (3/30/09) – The girls at Link Community School benefited last Thursday from the experiences and advice of a group of successful professional women, who participated in the school's "Empowering Women" program. Link trustee Margo Walter of Montclair spearheaded the program with the goal of providing the inspiration of positive role models – most of whom were African American, Latino or Asian - to show the girls the possibilities that exist for them and to motivate to seek success.

To start the event, Paula Tuffin, Esq., partner at the Newark law firm of Sills Cummis, who collaborated with Ms. Walter on the program, moderated a panel of eight women, diverse in racial/ethnic background and career, to share their successes and impart valuable advice to the girls. The women spoke to their education, their career paths and lives, including the challenges and obstacles they met along the way. The panelists included: Ms. Alexis Ellison, Dr. Kim Fenesy, Ms. Gayla Wicks Germain, Ms. Ebonee Hamilton Lewis, Ms. Anjana Patel and Ms. Robin Pistorius. Over lunch, the girls had the chance to speak with an even larger group of impressive women recruited by Ms. Tuffin AND Ms. Walter to attend the event.

After the panel Q &A, Link Principal Marnie G. McKoy summarized by reminding the girls that "...the bottom line is that today is about clarity and confidence. So no matter where you are...no matter what you are doing...you must always have clarity and confidence. You need to be clear about who you are...why you are where you

are...where you are going and what your responsibility is once you get there. Our guests are here because they are clear about their roles as professional women.”

The girls moved into workshops designed to provide them with more tips on how to prepare themselves for success through their presentation. Ms. Robbie Feeney and Ms. Charlene Edmundsun from Eileen Fisher, Westfield imparted interview tips – how to behave, how to dress and how to speak. Ms. Sahirah Johnson, professional actress/singer and drama teacher, taught the girls about the importance of poise and presence. Ms. Marie Courel from the Rutgers Agricultural Extension explained the importance of good nutrition on how one looks and feels. Ms. Leslie Mitchell, Link’s Director of Finance who is a certified aesthetician, instructed the girls in skin care techniques using easily available and affordable over-the-counter products.

At the end of the day students were excited and appreciative. Alexis Flowers stated that the women who came today were great role models”. Chinedu Okorofor said “Today’s program was a valuable learning experience including not to get discouraged when faced with challenges. I met successful women who told me I can succeed too.” Al-Jeannette Downing chimed in, “...the ladies who came really cared...they encouraged me.” Sierra Marshall said, “Today was fun and exciting. Today will help me move forward because it taught me to be more confident, work harder and not just sit back and let things pass me by. I need to go after what I want and the sky is the limit.”

Link Community School, located in the Central Ward of Newark, serves 7th and 8th grade students with a range of academic abilities from families of limited means. Beyond the rigorous academic program that Link offers, is the goal of providing exposures, such as the “Empowering Women” program, to help students with their personal growth and development into young adults. To learn more about the school, visit

www.linkschool.org.

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