



ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE BLACK AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD

Over the past few years, the Black Affairs Advisory Board (BAAB) has revamped its emphasis and moved toward advocating on behalf of a more diverse community as Miami-Dade County has evolved. The subcommittee structure was revamped and adjusted according to those needs identified by its current members. .

These various subcommittees are charged with the responsibility of dealing with their respective subject areas and include: ***The Black Heritage Planning Committee; Education; Health Care; Housing; Economic Development; Budget and Finance; and Crisis Intervention/Respect Life.***

Activities of these subcommittees include planning for Black History Month, the Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observance; sponsorship of Village Dialogues, which deal with each of the respective committee's areas such as education health, elderly and domestic violence; health and preservation of financial resources and protection of assets. These dialogues have been held countywide and will continue to provide helpful information and access to services.

These ***Village Dialogues*** have been extremely effective in engaging the community and to address issues which impact the quality of life for all residents. Plans call for a minimum of four dialogues each fiscal year. The BAAB is currently exploring partnering with each Commissioner in order to become more effective and to further collaborative efforts to better serve the community in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Black Heritage Planning Committee annually recognizes community "Pillars" and through the "Young Pillars Scholarship" awards scholarships to postsecondary students to supplement their educationally-connected finances. Since its 2005 inception, the Young Pillars Scholarship has awarded over \$45,000 to students attending various academic institutions throughout Miami-Dade County and the United States. These scholarships are given directly to either the student or the institution—thanks to the generosity of corporate and private donors and fundraising efforts of the committee.

As part of the "***Respect Life! Initiative,***" the BAAB's Crisis ***Intervention/Respect Life*** subcommittee has partnered with various local institutions including Miami-Dade Public Schools and the State Attorney's Office. One of its most successful partnerships was with the Schools Police and the implementation of the ***Civil Citation Program.*** This process aims to issue "civil citations" to non-violent offender students instead of placing them directly into the criminal justice system—thereby giving them an opportunity to avoid arrest records.

The Respect Life! Initiative has also focused on the proliferation of guns and instituted a campaign to discourage parents from purchasing toy guns along with the State Attorney's Office. Further action is centered on addressing the lapse of the assault weapons ban by sending correspondence to President Barack Obama urging the President to renew the assault weapon ban. .

In order to properly advocate on behalf of the many immigrants who call Miami-Dade County home, the BAAB has initiated a partnership with a newly formed group—the **Haitian American Emergency Relief Committee (HAERC)**. This group has surged to the forefront in providing not just emergency relief, but ongoing communication and assistance to Haitian government officials and NGOs with an eye toward helping Haiti and its people to become self-sufficient while rebuilding its infrastructure.

On the local level, the Board has been collaborating with community members on the proposed redevelopment of the **Hampton House** and advocating for the hiring of local residents on the construction phase of the project. We have also been advocating on behalf of the former residents of the **Scott-Carver/Hope VI** Project as well as working with a new group, "U-Count" which is aimed at developing proactive responses and programs geared toward reducing violence and supporting youth.

On February 19, 2010, the Black Affairs Advisory Board presented the first of its four "Village Dialogues" this one titled: "**Unifying the African Diaspora in Miami-Dade County,**" which explored the notion of "linked fate" among the peoples of African ancestry living and working in Miami-Dade County. The conference invitees included representatives from several Caribbean consulates with offices in Miami as well as those who represent the various indigenous people and peoples of African ancestry living in South Florida. The event was televised on Miami-Dade TV, and a "Findings Report" will be generated as a result.

From April 15-19, 2010, the Board focused on providing assistance to homeowners either facing foreclosure or needing loan modifications due to excessive interest rates or predatory lending by partnering with the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA-www.naca.org) in a five-day "**Save the Dream**" tour held at the Miami Beach Convention Center. As a result of the Black Affairs Advisory Board's invitation to extend its services to Miami-Dade County, over 50,000 people attended the event and in 2011, NACA officials opened a South Florida office as part of their national initiative and has continued to extend services to residents.

During many "Village Dialogues", the Board examined ways in which violence had impacted the Miami-Dade County community. Positing that the root causes of violence has had a deleterious impact on the Black World Community, a way was sought to address this issue. A proposal was set forth to encourage collaboration between the many public, private, faith-based and other organizations to address the causes and effects of violence. The result was the development of the '**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COORDINATED RESPONSE TEAM (MD-CRT)**. MDC-CRT's goal is to help residents to either avoid or recover from community trauma by referring residents to a network of partners and provide a holistic approach to address these needs while focusing on crisis intervention. Resolution number R-746-12, formally establishing the MD-CRT was passed on **September 18, 2012**.

In October 2012, the BAAB's Heritage Planning Committee again demonstrated its commitment to providing educational opportunities by presenting "Young Pillars" scholarships to six (6) students who will pursue their education following graduation from high school in June 2013.

Also during 2013, the BAAB has worked to make the MDC-CRT a reality by introducing the concept to several law enforcement entities and initiating a "**First Responders brochure**" aimed at providing essential services to victims of violence/crime and disasters which have an impact on residents. This brochure contains useful information that those affected by violence can utilize to access services that will help in the recovery process. A website is in the process of being developed and the inclusion of Miami-Dade County's 311 information referral services is anticipated. Several Police Departments within Miami-Dade are expected to participate in the initial phase of the program.

In October 2013, the BAAB held a symposium at Florida Memorial University entitled: "Miami-Dade County's Black World Community: Our Presence and Our Future." A group of respected panelists addressed three issues relevant to the growth and development of our constituents— Education; Legal Issues and Economics. As a result, a position paper is being generated that will serve as a blueprint for ensuring the inclusion of our constituents in the economic, educational and legal aspects of our community.

In December 2013, the BAAB in collaboration with the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) produced the "**Black World Guide**" a directory of Black organizations in Miami Dade County along with a special section of Targeted Urban Area Businesses and Attractions.

And on May 7, 2014, the Board along with the Miami-Dade County Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board presented a Village Dialogue: "A Civil Discourse on Cultural Diversity, Race and Inclusion" to address intergroup tensions caused by the cultural, ethnic and racial differences in Miami-Dade County.

In September 2014, the Black Affairs Advisory Board partnered with Sabadell Bank for a groundbreaking "BAAB Homeownership Initiative" aimed at first time homebuyers. Funded by a \$2 million commitment from Sabadell Bank, the initiative's purpose is to provide economic stability to those in the African American community through homeownership.

On January 31, 2015, the Board sponsored another "Village Dialogue," centered on exploring the relationship between African Americans and Afro-Cubans. In view of President Obama's call for the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, the Board felt that a debate on the issue would spike dialogue between the two communities and explore their similarities as well as their differences.

During 2015, the Black Affairs Advisory Board pursued an agenda headed by Economic Development and Legal Issues. In December 2015, a Village Dialogue on Police Body Cameras was centered on the issue of incorporating body worn cameras by law enforcement officers in Miami-Dade County.

During Black History Month 2016, the Board's Black Heritage Planning Committee partnered with the Commission for Women to host a groundbreaking exhibit featuring approximately 50 plus African American women—***“Women of a New Tribe: Miami”*** which was housed in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clark Government Center and covered extensively by local and national media.

In March 2016, during Women's History Month, a subsequent Village Dialogue was held to examine the status and plight of women who reside in Miami-Dade County's urban core. This dialogue covered housing, the physical and mental health as well as the effects of violence in the urban core. A subsequent “White Paper” was developed as part of this discussion.

In the summer of 2016, the Board embraced as part of its Economic Development process, the **“I Support B.O.B.”** or **“I support Black Owned Businesses”** campaign to encourage and stimulate businesses owned and operated by Miami-Dade's diverse African diaspora residents. Working in conjunction with Miami-Dade County's Small Business Development Department, the BAAB will be holding an event in recognition of “Black Business Month” during August of each year.

Again in 2017, the BAAB produced a photographic exhibit honoring African American men entitled ***“Triumphant Spirits”*** which was exhibited in the Government Center. This was followed in March 2017 by a collaboration with the Commission for Women with an exhibit featuring prominent women leaders entitled ***“Vessels: Women of Substance.”***

During the month of April 2017, the BAAB was included in the second **“State of Black Miami”** symposium held on the campus of South Florida's Historically Black University-Florida Memorial University-sponsored by Commissioner Jean Monestime. This symposium seeks to examine the social, economic and civil status of Miami Dade County's multi-ethnically diverse citizens of African descent and developing strategies to improve their quality of life.

In May of 2017, once again in partnership with the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) and the addition of the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce, the **“Black World Guide for 2017”** was introduced and a PDF file was made available on the Black Affairs Advisory Board's website.

In June of 2017, the Black Heritage Planning Committee awarded its first ***“Dual Legacy Pillars Award”*** to City of Miami Commissioner Keon Hardemon, who then provided additional scholarship funds to this year's group of “Young Pillar Scholarship” recipients.

With an eye toward continuing to advocate on behalf of our constituency while keeping our Board of Commissioners abreast of the issues impacting the Black World Community, the Black Affairs Advisory Board is focused on making Miami-Dade County one of the most successful examples of positively impacting the quality of life for its residents and visitors.

For more information on the Black Affairs Advisory Board, visit our website at www.miamidade.gov/baab or call our office at (305) 375-4606.

