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Mpls cop goes beyond traditional policing

September 17, 2015 - by Dwight Hobbes



His motivational speaking aims to educate, inspire



Anthijuan Beeks

Free your mind, it's said, and the rest of you will follow. Accordingly, [Face2Face](#) works toward enlightening and inspiring individuals to realize their potential in empowering and uplifting the community as a whole.

While [Face2Face](#) is something of a fledgling endeavor, going on its second year, it has functioned, in the form of founder-director Anthijuan Beeks, Sr., for quite some time. Educational facilitator Beeks, born and raised in the Minneapolis inner city, having lived on both

the North and South sides, delivers a message he has learned firsthand over his lifetime and career.

A graduate of Minneapolis Public Schools, Beeks joined the Minneapolis Police Department in 2004. In addition to serving on patrol, he has been a school resources officer and worked with the Police

Activity League (PAL).

“I was doing the same service, motivational [and] educational speaking, for years. I’ve found there is a strong need and therefore took it to the next level.”

He had seen what he describes as “a lot of issues occurring in the community. Young men growing up without fathers, the poverty, people being homeless, crime — just a whole ton of issues. My goal in life was to follow in my mother’s footsteps and become a law enforcement officer in order to try to change the world, so to speak.”

Without question, the world of which he speaks historically has been in need of changing. Beeks links his mother to an issue the community continues to face and he addresses through his motivational speaking — domestic violence. During his tenure with the MPD and through connections his mom had made over the course of her 11 years on the force, he was able to interface with and help members of the community “find opportunities for jobs, education, things of that nature.”

He states that as a police officer he could see the community’s “trials and tribulations from the other side of the fence. I felt there was something I could do other than just [being] an African American officer. That’s how I got into the whole motivational and educational speaking piece.”

He adds, stating what hardly is news, “In the African American community, they do not look upon law enforcement highly. However, I knew I had the experience, knowledge.” In this regard, he was able to incorporate in Face2Face a component that includes, among other aspects, addressing matters of parental custody from a “law enforcement perspective.”

On the website there are lists of topics with which the community is greatly concerned, such as gangs, drugs, and truancy from school. “I have a diverse background with much to offer.” The crux of it all, he states, is “what I’ve learned from growing up a male in the community put together with my experience as an officer.” Indeed a significant combination, putting his 12 years with the MPD together with his entire life in the community.

Today, [Face2Face](#) effects outreach to, he notes, “various organizations, whether it’s schools, churches, programs.” Beeks isn’t doing it all by himself. His wife, Syrina Beeks (Syrina Jackson on the website), is director of administration for Face2Face. He considers her “the backbone and brains of the operation [who] spends many hours on the curriculum, making sure it’s solid with all the necessary information.”

Via email, Syrina Beeks comments, “Face2Face is designed by [someone] who has grown up in the same communities in which he later served as a law enforcement officer. I had the opportunity to meet him about four years ago, and I have always known him to care about others.

“He consistently spoke to me about community-orientated policing. He became frustrated when certain opportunities weren’t granted to him and other opportunities were opposed within his previous organization.

“He came to me with this idea to reach communities abroad, and this is when Face2Face came to life,” she continues. “I knew with his loyalty, dedication and passion he would have a huge impact on communities.

“I believe the unique thing about this entire program is what he teaches, and how he teaches has a profound impact on lives because he has overcome a lot of those same concerns others face daily. And in today’s society, there are way too many caught in a cycle that can be very unforgiving, and the last person one would expect to get valuable information from is from a peace officer.”

“There is,”Anthijuan Beeks emphasizes, “a huge need for this service.” No argument there.

Dwight Hobbes welcomes reader responses to P.O. Box 50357, Mpls., 55403.

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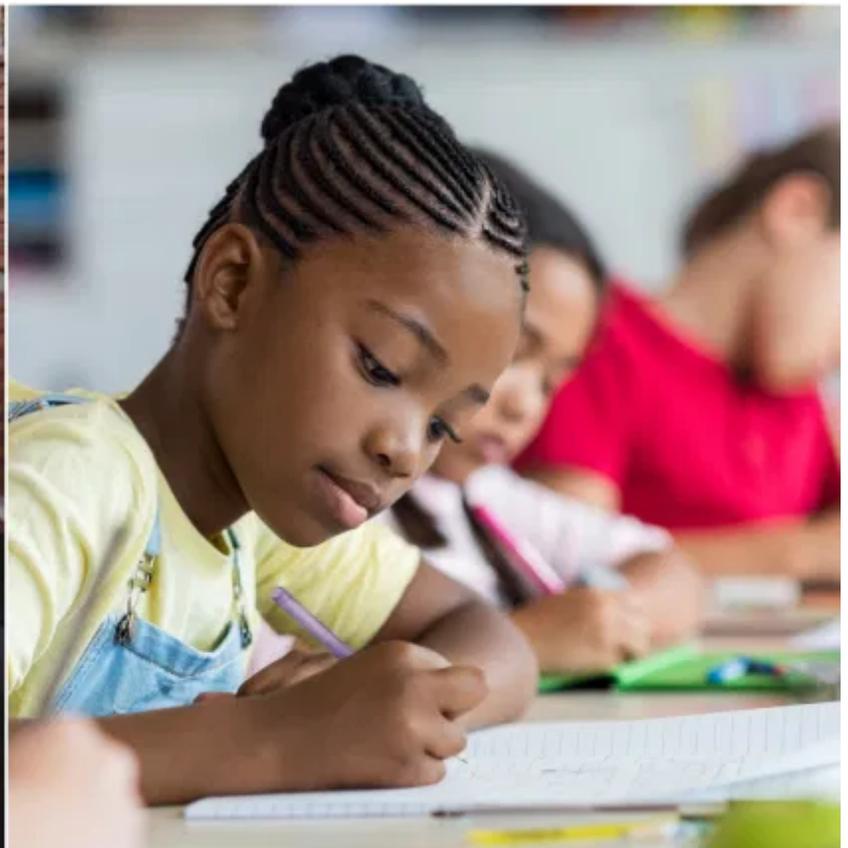
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