



November 13, 2009

'Gifted Hands' hold Medical Mall's community awards program

Jackson, MS- Dr. Benjamin Carson, best-selling author and director of pediatric neurosurgery at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, encouraged everyone at the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation's 13th Annual Community Reinvestment Awards (CRA) banquet to THINK BIG, his personal philosophy for self-actualization.

The acronym THINK BIG stands for Talent, Hope, Insight, being Nice, Knowledge, Books, In-depth learning, and God, and was the title of his 1996 book release. It is also his formula for success and his philosophy for promoting outstanding academic achievement and dedication to helping others.

"The *T* in THINK BIG actually stands for talent and time, recognize them as gifts," Dr. Carson said during his speech at CRA. "The *H* means hope for good things and be honest. *I* means get insight from people and good books. You should always be nice to people because I find that when you are nice to others, they are nice to you. That's what *N* stands for. *K* is for knowledge, recognizing that it is the key to living. *B* stands for books...read them. *I* is for developing in-depth learning skills. And, *G* is for God. Everyone has their own beliefs, but I believe in God," said Dr. Carson.

Dr. Carson is best known for being the first neurosurgeon to successfully separate conjoined twins. His remarkable story of perseverance and determination was recently featured in a made for television movie about his life on TNT entitled Gifted Hands: the Ben Carson Story.

More than 800 people sat in attendance, listening to Dr. Carson's inspirational words. His amazing story of overcoming obstacles and working diligently served as motivation to continue the good works displayed by this year's CRA Grand Award Recipients.

Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children, Jackson Roadmap to Health Equity Project, Marietta Reading Center, and Operation Shoestring each received a nearly \$6,000 check as a recipient, funds raised during CRA.

"This year's recipients are truly making a difference in the City of Jackson and beyond," said Primus Wheeler, executive director of the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation. "The Foundation's new purpose for CRA includes recognizing those who are eagerly working to promote education and health in children. All of the 2009 recipients are doing that each and every day."

Sowing the Seeds for a Brighter Future was the theme for the program and represented the importance of reinvesting in your community in a way that uplifts, empowers, and inspires the lives of those who need it most – our children.

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In addition, the Foundation also recognized three others who are significantly contributing community and economic development to the Jackson Medical Mall District. Dr. William “Bill” Cooley, founder and CEO of Systems Consultant, is this year’s *Outstanding Individual* for his wealth of experience and guidance as a member of the Jackson Medical Mall Business Association.

COHA, or Community Outreach for Health Awareness, received the *Outstanding Non-Profit* award for the work it is doing to promote healthy living throughout the State of Mississippi. Founded by Dr. Samuel Okoye, COHA hosts Mississippi Health Awareness Day on the third Thursday of January each year. The Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center is the central site for Health Awareness Day.

The 2009 *Outstanding Business* is new neighbor and community bank, Liberty Bank. Mr. Carlton Stephen, Vice President and Senior Officer of the Mississippi Region, received the award on the bank’s behalf.

Four Jackson Public School seniors were also honored with the Dr. Aaron Shirley Scholarship Award to help continue their education in a health-related profession. They are Asia Bass of Jim Hill High School, Shaniqua Love of Provine High School, and Vateria Mannie of Bailey Magnet High School. All recipients will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Janez Young of Bailey Magnet High School won the Dr. Aaron Shirley Courage Award and will receive a \$500 scholarship.

The scholarship is named after the founder and chairman of the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Dr. Aaron Shirley. The requirements include the following: students must be a graduating senior enrolled in the Jackson Public School District with an overall grade point average of 3.0 or better. The student must also display leadership skills and community service. Along with an official transcript and two letters of recommendation, they must also submit a written essay on what receiving the scholarship means to them. Following graduation, the students must attend either Jackson State University or Tougaloo College with the ultimate goal of entering the field of medicine or a health-related profession.

Jeff Good, co-owner/managing partner of Mangia Bene, Inc. Restaurant Management Group, served as Master of Ceremony and Auctioneer. Two items were auctioned off during the auction, including a 3-day, 2-night stay at the Bluffs in St. Francisville, Louisiana and a shadow-box portrait of a woman statue from Elim’s Art Concepts and Decorative Designs, located inside the Jackson Medical Mall. Mississippi Boychoir delivered delightful sounds during the entertainment portion of the program.

CRA 2010 is Thursday, November 4th. For more information about the awards ceremony, log onto www.jacksonmedicalmall.org or call Zakiya Summers at 601.982.8467.

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Dr. Aaron Shirley and Dr. Benjamin Carson talk with others during the CRA 2009 Reception at the Jackson Medical Mall.



Ms. Beneta Burt, director of Jackson Roadmap to Health Equity Project and a 2009 CRA Grand Award Recipient, poses with Dr. Bill Cooley, CRA 2009 Outstanding Individual.



Ms. Regina Quinn May and Dr. Shirley, members of the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation Board of Directors, recite Pledge of Allegiance with Dr. Carson and wife, Candie.



Mississippi Boychoir gives a selection during CRA 2009.



Dr. Carson delivers a powerful speech encouraging everyone to **THINK BIG** at the sold-out event.





Mr. Carlton Stephen receives the award for Outstanding Business on behalf of Liberty Bank. The bank branch located near the Jackson Medical Mall is scheduled to open in January 2010.



Dr. Owen B. Evans, professor and chair of pediatrics at UMC, accepts a large check in the amount of \$5,650 on behalf of Blair E. Baton Children's Hospital as a CRA 2009

Grand Award Recipients. He stands with Dr. Carson, Mr. Primus Wheeler, Mr. Jimmie Robinson, and Dr. Shirley (l-r).



Ms. Mary Sutton, director of the Marietta Reading Center, was also a Grand Award Recipient, receiving a large check.



Operation Shoestring director Mr. Robert Langford receives a large check as Grand Award Recipient.



Ms. May, Mr. Wheeler, Ms. Kelli Sharpe, Dr. Carson, Dr. Shirley, Master of Ceremony Jeff Good, Cade Chapel M.B. Church Pastor Reginald Buckley, and Ms. Lori Greer were all smiles after the banquet.



CRA 2009 Co-chair and Public Relations Manager Zakiya Summers gets a snapshot with guest speaker, Dr. Carson.



The 2009 Dr. Aaron Shirley Scholars receive a certificate of recognition. They are Ms. Asia Bass of Jim Hill High School, Ms. Shaniqua Love of Provine High School, and Ms. Vateria Mannie and Ms. Janez Young of Bailey Magnet High School.

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