Cortland's Urban Recruitment of Educators

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Reflection

My City School

By Sheena Asibey

on my experiences at school and Jonothan Kozol's book *Our America*

Sheena is a junior P.E. major and a first year C.U.R.E. Student. She is part of the volleyball team and recently won the athelete of the week award.

There is a pattern that I am beginning to see when it comes to schools with a higher percentage of Blacks and Hispanics enrolled; the minority schools are less stable in the way they are run. They have fewer resources to provide quality education and unqualified teachers. Massive chaos occurs and it becomes uncontrollable. How is that even fair to the teachers or the students? When we walked into class and saw that I had a substitute teacher, my classmates and I knew that we could do whatever we wanted. We would not learn the lesson that day and sometimes we would even give them a hard time. I had a math teacher who had a lot of personal issues at home and she called out for half of the semester meanwhile we had a state exam coming up. At first it was fun and games because we didn't have any work to do; soon after, it became an issue. We were fed up because this wasn't fair to us. We weren't being taught the material in an adequate way at all.

Ultimately, no one in the class did well on the test; many even failed. I, on the other hand, was able to learn something out of the horrible experience and barely passed. What does the state expect from these inner-city students who go through thirteen teachers, or have never had a permanent teacher since kindergarten? And then they wonder why African Americans and Latinos in eighth grade are reading at a second grade level. That is not the child's fault at all. They have no control over issues like that. No one cares enough to do something about it. It seems to me that the system is just trying to drive minorities out of school. Unstable teachers create madness and an unhealthy learning environment.

In his book Jonathan Kozol pointed out that the white parents from a Seattle neighborhood, where 95 percent of the students of the public school in town, Thurgood Marshall Elementary, were Black, Hispanic, Native American, or Asian origin. A teacher one day said that she would see white parents at a bus stop around the corner from the school taking their children to what she believed to be a predominantly white school. My question is: are the white families afraid of what goes on in predominantly minority schools? Are minorities giving whites any other reason to think otherwise about their schools? When there are shootings and fights in a place of learning, I would not want my own child around that. My school had a bad reputation for being dangerous, but the people in the town didn't give other people any choice but to believe what they were hearing. There was a fight every day, maybe three periods out of 8, shootings all over the news in the local parks; the list goes on and on. I know a handful of people who have passed away for reasons that could have been avoided. My mother, along with many other parents in inner-city schools, wants us to move but we don't have the funding to leave. All things considered, I believe that minorities add to the stereotypes already given to them. Instead of wondering why the white people are sending their kids to another school and being bitter about it, let's reform ourselves. We should start with better, more qualified teachers, then resources, and then facilities. Just one step at a time towards change will make a difference.

"Everyone who remembers his own education remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The teacher is the heart of the educational system."
-Sidney Hook

C.U.R.E. Graduates:
Where are they now?

Tameka Stephenson ('07) teaches fourth grade at P.S. 135 in Brooklyn. At a school where 84 percent of students are eligible for free lunch, Tameka's students recently all passed their state math and reading examinations. Tameka is respected and well-liked by her students. She notes: "I take great pride in knowing that my students love being around me and that they know I genuinely care for each and every one of them." and adds that "I can truly say that I love what I do. The beauty about teaching is that each day is new. There is never a dull moment. I have had my ups and downs but I have used those moments as my stepping stones to continue to learn. There is nothing else that I would rather do than teach." Tameka attributes much of her success to her experiences in the C.U.R.E. program. She credits C.U.R.E. coursework as "great preparation for reaching out to students from different cultures and backgrounds."

C.U.R.E. Student Profile:
New to C.U.R.E.

Name: Julia Tuttle
Major: Childhood Education
Hometown: Penfield, NY (Near Rochester)
Favorite Class: History and the FSA Lab in Syracuse

What excites you about being a teacher? Being involved with the students lives, helping them learn and grow.

Favorite Teacher growing up: Senora Pippen, my Spanish teacher. She was always very friendly and outgoing; she related to her students lives.

One thing you most want to change about schools: The relationship between students and teachers.

What you like most about being in C.U.R.E: C.U.R.E. allows you to go to urban schools and observe the classes. It has been a really great experience getting to know the students.

What surprised you most about Cortland: What surprised me the most about Cortland was how many gentlemen hold the doors open for you. Chivalry is not dead!

	OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
FRIDAY	1	15 Fall Break				
SATURDAY	2	16				
SUNDAY	3	17				
MONDAY	4	18 Second Quarter Begins	1	15		
TUESDAY	5	19	2	16		
WEDNESDAY	6	20	3	17	1	15
THURSDAY	7 All C.U.R.E Meeting	21	4	18 All C.U.R.E Meeting	2	16
FRIDAY	8	22	5	19	3	17 Fall Semester Ends
SATURDAY	9	23	6	20	4	18
SUNDAY	10	24	7	21	5	19
MONDAY	11	25	8	22	6	20
TUESDAY	12	26	9	23	7	21
WEDNESDAY	13	27	10	24 Thanksgiving break begins	8	22
THURSDAY	14 First Quarter Ends	28	11	25	9	23
FRIDAY		29	12	26	10 Last day of classes	24
SATURDAY		30	13	27	11	25
SUNDAY		31	14	28	12	26
MONDAY				29 Classes Resume	13 Exam week begins	27
TUESDAY				30	14	28
WEDNESDAY						29
THURSDAY						30
FRIDAY						31