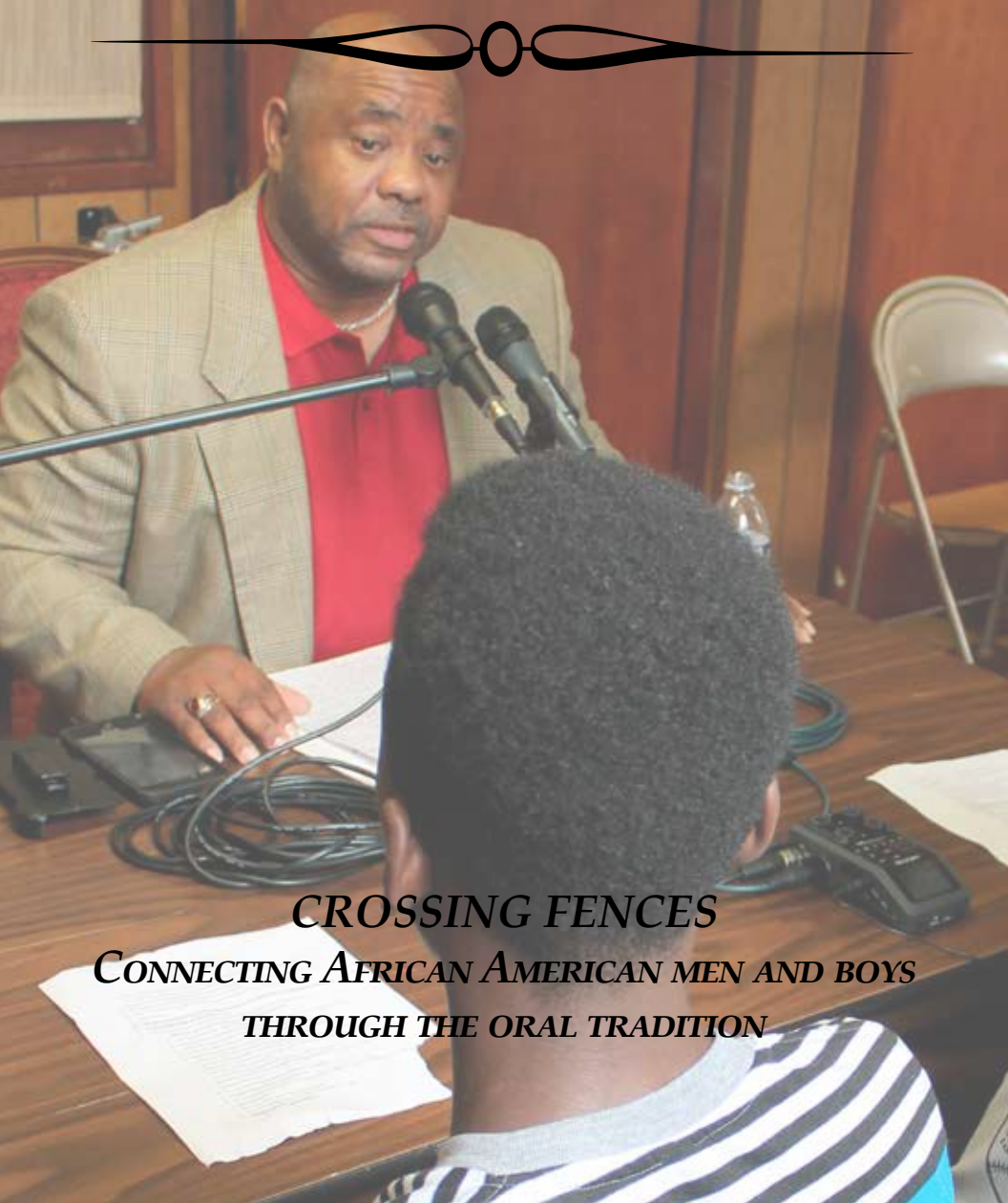


SHERADEN VOICES

A decorative horizontal line with a central oval motif, resembling a stylized pair of glasses or a flourish, positioned below the title.

CROSSING FENCES
CONNECTING AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN AND BOYS
THROUGH THE ORAL TRADITION



SHERADEN VOICES



CROSSING FENCES

*CONNECTING AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN AND BOYS
THROUGH THE ORAL TRADITION*

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Crossing Fences is a project of SLB Radio Productions, Inc.
Sheraden Voices is based on interviews collected by students at
Trinity AME Zion Church in partnership with H.O.P.E. for
Tomorrow.



H.O.P.E.
for Tomorrow Inc.

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FOREWORD

Crossing Fences is a community program based on a simple, age-old process – people learning from one another through the oral tradition. There are stories, insights, perspectives and facts within all of us. And, all too often, we take little time to share them.

In Summer 2015, SLB Radio Productions, Inc. (SLB), convened a group of students at Trinity AME Zion Church in partnership with H.O.P.E. for Tomorrow. While learning about digital audio recording, the group also spent time discussing attributes of male role models and identifying African American men with a connection to Sheraden to be interviewed. With support as needed, students then arranged, conducted and edited the interviews presented in this book and CD. Each student received a netbook computer as a reward for the hard work involved in giving voice to others. Additional audio and photos are available at www.neighborhoodvoices.org/crossingfences.

Special thanks to Keysha Gomez of H.O.P.E. for Tomorrow, Pastor Joseph Lewis and Theresa Jenks of Trinity AME Zion Church, and Dana Gold of The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pa.

For copies of this book, other neighborhood oral history publications, or information about conducting a project in your own community, contact SLB Radio Productions, Inc. at slb@slbradio.org or 412.586.6300.



REV. DARNELL DREWERY

*Born 1972 — Co-Founder, The Shyne Awards; Community
Activist; Preacher, Mount Ararat Baptist Church*

Interview by Spencer Jackson & Dorrian Butler

Excerpts from Track 1

Being the fifth child of twelve children is kind of tough. The oldest child has all the authority and the youngest child gets all the attention. So being the middle child, I think that's why I'm pretty loud and out there. You had to make yourself be heard.

We had a loving mother and father. My father was a friendly man, but he was not our friend. That inspired me to understand authority, so when someone has authority over me, I respect that authority. My mother is the reason why we're so close today. The twelve of us, we're all very close.

I often tell people when they ask me what I do for a living, I say, "I do whatever God asks me to do." Even if I'm doing bad, I can help someone else that's doing worse than me.

We created an organization called The Shyne Awards to recognize and identify positive things that young people are doing. Young people are branded as negative people and we want to change that branding. We want to allow our country and our world to start looking at young people as bright lights, shining stars, great examples in our communities.

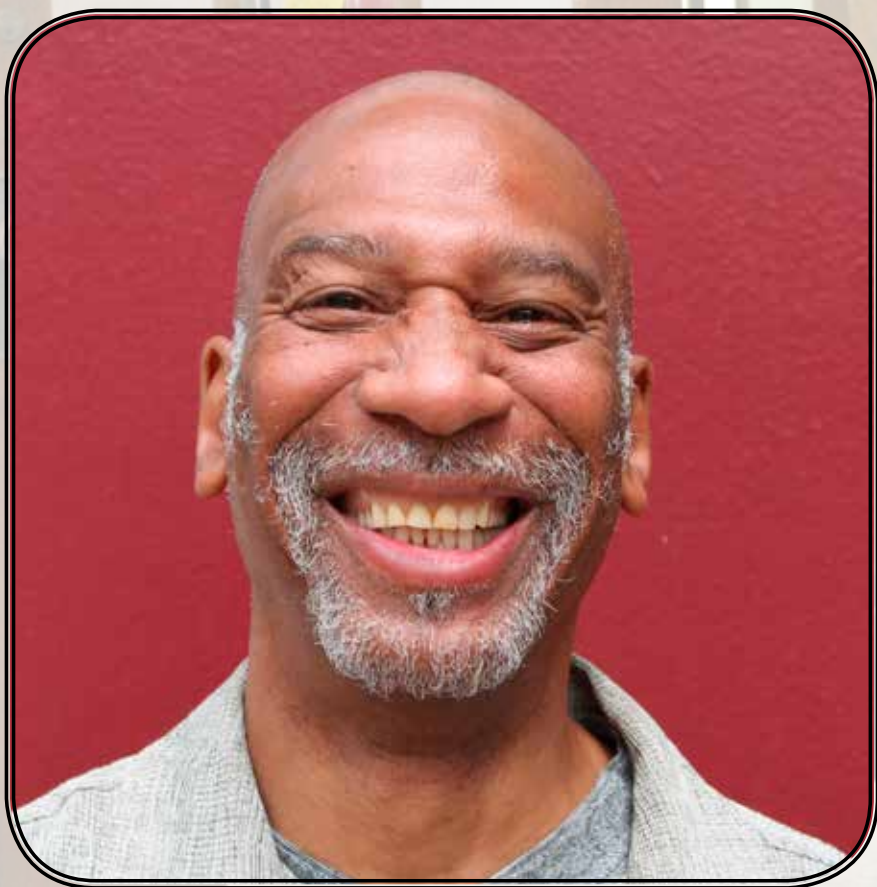
Know who you want to be. You have to really tap into what do I want to become. You want to become what God had created you to become.

***He told us to stay on the right path.
I think he's also a great singer.***

- Spencer Jackson, age 14

***He knows how I feel as an African
American boy growing up in Sheraden.***

- Dorrian Butler, age 13



SHARIF “MR. Z.” ZYHIER

Born 1952 — Retired Health Information Manager

Interview by Josef Burch & Gregory Lowe

Excerpts from Track 2

I was born in New York City. I had a bit of a troubled start and ended up attending five different high schools because of getting transferred or expelled. Having low self-esteem was a struggle. I didn't think I was worth much. As a result, I ended up in Spofford Youth House five times as a teenager. I've been to jail several times as well.

Things started to turn around when I started looking at myself as the person responsible for my problems. I stopped being as angry as I was.

It took a while before I decided what I wanted to be in life. When I turned 32, I said I'm going to do what I've been doing, working in the healthcare industry. I was a medical transcriptionist, but became a little tired of just typing, so I went into management. In order to do that, I had to go back to CCAC to get my certification. I became a manager of the transcriptionists.

I've been a mentor since around 1978. I see a lot of young folks who are sort of where I was. I think it's the responsibility of each of us to be a role model for the generation behind us and our peers.

I don't strive to be *good* because good has kept so many from being *great*. It all adds up to social capital and personal capital. You become wealthy — and it doesn't mean money. You become rich with character.

He talked about his troubled beginnings.

He opened my eyes.

- Gregory Lowe, age 14

He made me feel happy.

He made me want to do better in life.

- Josef Burch, age 14



PASTOR JOSEPH D. LEWIS

Born 1978 — Senior Pastor, Trinity AME Zion Church

Interview by Timmy Kihonia & Spencer Jackson

Excerpts from Track 3

My father, Reverend Robert Lewis, was my greatest mentor. He was my greatest example of a man, a husband, a father. He had, with my mother, seven children and I saw him sacrifice. I saw him be patient. I saw him be loving.

He gave us advice on how to be successful.

- Spencer Jackson, age 14

I learned that you don't have to go to parties to be cool. You can still be cool, even if you worship God.

- Timmy Kihonia, age 13

My grades were excellent all the way through to middle school. They were going to skip me a grade, but I acquired juvenile arthritis. I had to be hospitalized. I started becoming more social in high school and did not always apply myself. Howard University is where I really came out academically.

As early as I can remember, I knew that I was called to preach. I started preaching at the age of four. The greatest goal is to be who God called me to be in the place God called me to be. I feel like I'm there.

The changes we've seen in the neighborhood haven't been positive on the outside, but that doesn't mean that some great things aren't happening internally. We're seeing new life come back to Sheraden.

As you're coming into manhood, learn who you are, not what the world says you are. Learn who God says you are. If we don't know who we are first, we'll run around in circles.



ARCHIE J. KIMBROUGH III

Born 1959 — Engineer/Entrepreneur;

Owner, Train Up A Child Daycare Centers

Interview by Shaun Beasley & Dorrian Butler

Excerpts from Track 4

I was born and raised here in Pittsburgh, on the Hill. In sixth grade, we moved over to the Chartiers area. I have a brother who's a year and a half younger than me. When we were growing up, the things that my family stressed were education, church and family. My mother was a Sunday school superintendent and she would be there longer than the pastors.

We have a connection. He set his goals early, and that's inspiring because I know what I want to be when I grow up.

- Dorrian Butler, age 13

It was inspiring to me that he works with kids because I also work with kids.

- Shaun Beasley, age 14

I made up my mind to be an engineer in ninth grade. I matriculated from Langley. I got three engineering degrees from Pitt. A neighbor of mine was one of my first mentors. At a young age, he gave me the plans to his house and allowed me to review them, draw them, and learn about how to build houses.

I'm an engineer/entrepreneur and business owner. I worked in corporate America for quite a few years, initially with Westinghouse then General Motors. I got homesick and came back to Pittsburgh and wound up going to graduate school. Then I went to Allegheny Ludlum Steel and then I decided to go out on my own. We've been running these childcare and learning centers for twenty years.

Dream big, plan big. Set some goals and work toward them. Search for people that might be doing things you think you might like to do. Be open-minded and have the flexibility to know that you don't have to get it all right, perfectly, right now. It's a process and you're growing.



LENNY L. MACKLIN, SR.

Born 1965 — Truck Driver, Allegheny County

Interview by Ben Beyer, Devontay Duell & Alonzo Kidd

Excerpts from Track 5

I grew up in the West End. My childhood was good. The neighborhood I was in on Wabash Street had a bunch of big families so it was joyful. My inspiration comes from the people around me and my family. When my son and daughter were born, it made me step up and try to be a parent like my parents.

I went to school for cabinetry. Then I went to school for heavy equipment. That led to me to get my Commercial Driver's License. When things slowed up, I was able to drive a truck. One thing led to another, to keep things afloat.

Be open-minded. Understand that whoever you are trying to get advice from, especially an older person, has probably done it already. Don't be hard-headed.

Set your goals as high as you can, but don't get too upset if you don't reach them. Start from the bottom, work your way up. Don't ever be afraid to ask for help. Everybody needs help.

If you are not taking your education seriously, that means you are not taking life seriously. If you can't take education seriously, what else can you take seriously? That's where it starts. Without education, how are you going to go forward?

***It's great that he's running for office
so kids can have more activities in the
community.***

- Alonzo Kidd, age 15

***I learned that school is just as important
as sports or any other activity.***

- Ben Beyer, age 11

***He is a great man, and I learned a lot about
his childhood.***

- Devontay Duell, age 12



ISAAC FRANKLIN

Born 1988 — Army National Guard;

Customer Service, Men's Wearhouse

Interview by Kevin Faty, Ben Beyer & Devontay Duell

Excerpts from Track 6

I was born in Chesapeake, Virginia. I went to Langley High School from 2005 to 2008. I attend Trinity AME Zion Church here in Sheraden.

When I was younger, I was very shy. I also had a lot of negative influences that would say things as if I wouldn't amount to much, I wasn't going to

graduate high school, just negative things like that. I didn't have positive reinforcement.

It's critical to have someone to look up to. I had a mentor in high school that helped me along the way. He allowed me to explore my inner self. He opened doors and provided me with books to read and breathing exercises that would allow me to take tests better in school. His name was Malcolm Thomas. My favorite mentor has to be Jesus Christ; there's no one that I would rather live a life like.

The secret to success is believing that you can achieve whatever you set your mind to. It's one thing to say, "I believe!" but when you actually face adversity and you still achieve your goal, that's a success.

Read books. When you read a book, you learn new things. It's better to have read it, than to have heard it from someone else.

***One thing he said that really touched me
was that we inspire him.***

- Kevin Faty, age 18

***He said how hard life can be and that all
people have their own problems. It's how
you choose to deal with them that matters.***

- Ben Beyer, age 11

***I was inspired when he was talking about
fighting for his country in the army.***

- Devontay Duell, age 12



DANNY WILLIAMS

Born 1977 — Owner, D-Bo's Hot Dog Shop

Interview by Spencer Jackson, Christian Beyer & Alonzo Kidd

Excerpts from Track 7

I was born in Broadhead Manor on the West End. I had a pretty good childhood. I have two brothers and two sisters. We're very close. When I was a kid, my goal was to be a football player. I didn't play football because I wasn't doing what I was supposed to in high school. I ended up having to get my GED.

It was hard for him to open his shop, but he did it. That was inspiring to me.

- Alonzo Kidd, age 15

He said that education is the key and to stay away from the wrong crowd.

- Christian Beyer, age 14

He told us to choose the right path.

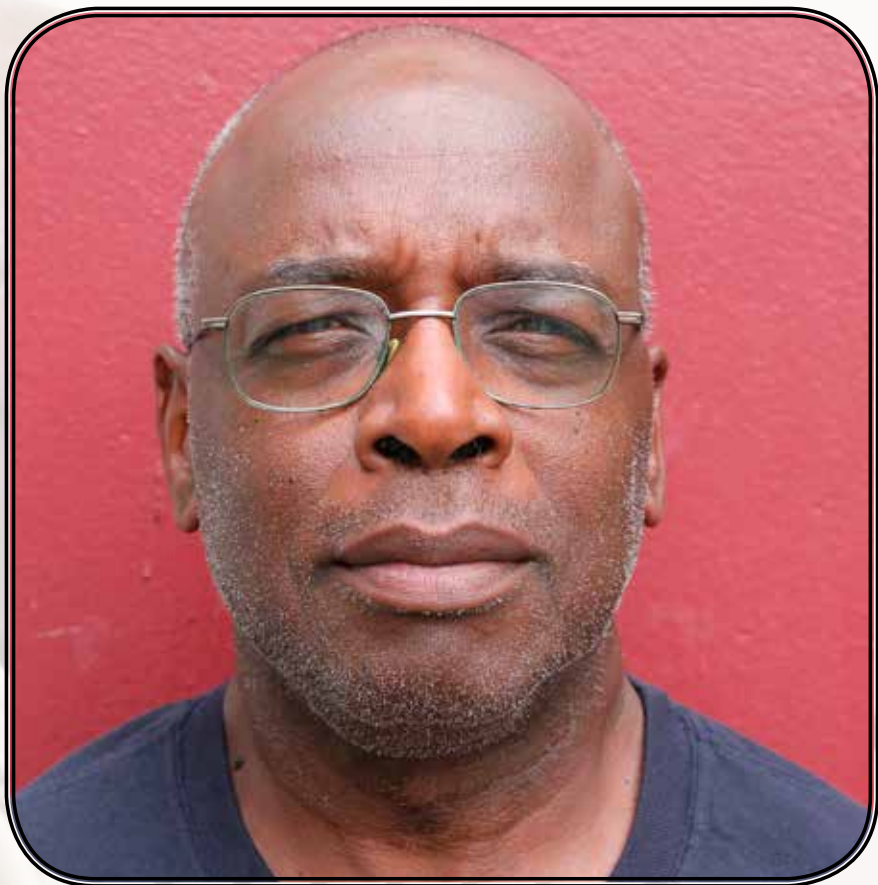
- Spencer Jackson, age 14

The worst day of my life was when my best friend got killed. His name was William White; we called him B.J. It made me appreciate family and friends more. You think someone is going to always be around. So now, I keep my circle and my family really close.

The first day I opened was the best day of my life. I felt successful. When I started working, I wanted to do my own thing. It inspired me to get my own business. I had to work and save to buy everything I needed. People told me that when you first open a business it takes two to five years before you really see anything. It ended up being that way.

My mom inspires me. She has always been my backbone. When I thought this wasn't going to make it, she kept letting me know to stick with it. I stuck with it and it's making it.

Stay in school. It was a little harder for me because I didn't. Don't give up. Just keep trying. Nothing comes easy. Nothing good comes easy.



MARVIN P. WALLACE

Born 1955 — Retired State Trooper; School Bus Driver

Interview by Christian Beyer, Alonzo Kidd & Josef Burch

Excerpts from Track 8

Because I had four brothers and a sister, and my mother and father were in the home, I had a pretty wholesome childhood. I had a lot of men in my life who inspired me with their work ethic and character.

I went to IUP. With the degree I got in criminology, I was able to pursue a career in law enforcement.

I'm semi-retired; I drive a school bus now, but my primary goal is to serve God. My role is mentoring. That's what God requires of me as a Christian man. Sometimes it's tough for me to relate to a younger person, but whatever God puts in my heart to say to that person is what I'll do.

There's something about sports that helps develop character. When you play sports, you have to play with other people and listen to instructions. Sports are not for everyone, but there are so many other things a person can get into. For instance, learning how to play an instrument in a band.

There are times in your life when you have to separate yourself from people who don't mean you any good. What you do now affects what you will be in life later on. Make sure you get close to people who want the best for you. There are people you can reach out to who are willing and want to help you.

He told us even little things make a big difference and that life is precious.

- Christian Beyer, age 14

He's a good man. I'm nervous about college and he made me feel more confident.

- Alonzo Kidd, age 15

I learned a lot from him. He inspired me to do better in life.

- Josef Burch, age 14



CALVIN "COACH CAL" MURPHY

Born 1968 — Case Manager, Vision Quest

Interview by Gregory Lowe & Christian Beyer

Excerpts from Track 9

It was a hard transition coming from a southern background. Now I look back and it was valuable.

I love my family. I'm the oldest. I have two brothers and two sisters. I didn't have the best relationship with my father. For a long time I thought I didn't need him. It wasn't until I got older that I realized that there are some aspects of a dad that you do need.

I'm very outspoken as it relates to men who don't do what they're supposed to do. I'm very outspoken with young men and women who put poison in our communities. Growing up the way we grew up, we saw a lot of people die. We didn't have people giving us realistic goals. I didn't have anything to aspire to.

I felt like the things that I didn't get in my life, I needed to share with kids. A very good friend of mine asked me to mentor and coach in an alternative school here in the Pittsburgh area that took a lot of troubled kids. It opened the door to things I hadn't been to college for. My current position is a juvenile probation case manager for an aftercare program. I'm also on the board of Voices Against Violence in the South Hills.

You have to give everybody a chance. Set goals and motivate yourself to get to those goals. At the end of the day, the biggest "well done" has to come from yourself.

I learned that you should follow your own path to success because you are your own person and you create your own destiny.

- Christian Beyer, age 14

He taught me not to be a follower and to make the best out of every situation.

- Gregory Lowe, age 14



PASTOR VINCE MOYE

Born 1971 — Corporate Banker; Pastor, Pneuma Center

Interview by Shaun Beasley & Samuel Jere

Excerpts from Track 10

I was born in Aliquippa and have lived in this region pretty much all my life. I was one of eight children. It was hard for my parents to keep track of us, but miraculously they did it. They did a good job of exposing me to alternatives outside of my everyday life. So I've always had aspirations to improve my life and have my life be helpful to others.

***He made me believe the gift I have was
given to me for a reason and I can be
whatever I set out to be.***

- Samuel Jere, age 16

***He inspired me by telling me I can do
everything I want in life.***

- Shaun Beasley, age 14

I knew I wanted to help children and families. I didn't know that I would be doing that through the banking arena or the church arena, but the whole goal was to help people better their lives. The goal I set as a child was to go to college and to have a professional job. I put a plan together to achieve that goal. Any dream or vision without a plan is just a wish.

You don't have to settle for what you see or the environment that you live in. I had mentors, I had teachers. My grandmother prayed for me and told me to let nothing stop me. It's people like that who have impacted my life.

If you want to learn how to be the best, you've got to learn from the best. Find examples that will inspire you and give you hope; that will motivate you to never give up. It's never going to be easy. You and I are always going to face resistance, challenges, naysayers. You've got to look at each opposition as an opportunity to keep on going. Don't allow drama in life to stop you from achieving your goal.



RAFAEL “2R.T.” TEJADA

Born 1989 — Recording Artist, Daycare worker

Interview by Kevin Faty, Timmy Kihonia, Samuel Jere,

Shaun Beasley & Dorrian Butler

Excerpts from Track 11

I grew up military — traveling every two to three years. I had tons of cross-cultural experiences and enjoyed moving and seeing different places all the time. I grew up with my mother, three siblings, and my stepfather. Moving different places every so often, you learn to make friends pretty quickly.

We discussed how being an older family member gives you more responsibilities.

- Timmy Kihonia, age 13

He told us to not give up on your gifts.

- Samuel Jere, age 16

I have one daughter who I love so much. When she came into my life, it made me get my head on straight to move forward in life instead of just standing still.

I've never been able to find out who wrote this: "Nothing is as strong as true gentleness and nothing is as gentle as true strength." It takes strength to keep yourself in check; to not let things escalate.

You expect people to respect you, but you also have to respect other people. You can't see yourself as better than anybody else just because you feel that you deserve that. It boils down to the golden rule — treat people the way you want to be treated. And if everybody did that, what a different world we would be living in.

He inspired me to become anything I want.

- Shaun Beasley, age 14

He taught us that the little things we do in life have a big impact on people.

- Kevin Faty, age 18

He said that it's an honor to give back to the community.

- Dorrian Butler, age 13

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The opinions expressed herein are solely those of the individuals represented and do not necessarily reflect those of The Heinz Endowments, H.O.P.E. for Tomorrow, Trinity AME Zion Church, or any other collaborating organization.

TRACK LISTING

1. REV. DARNELL DREWERY
2. SHARIF "MR. Z." ZYHIER
3. PASTOR JOSEPH D. LEWIS
4. ARCHIE J. KIMBROUGH III
5. LENNY L. MACKLIN, SR.
6. ISAAC FRANKLIN
7. DANNY WILLIAMS
8. MARVIN P. WALLACE
9. CALVIN "COACH CAL" MURPHY
10. PASTOR VINCE MOYE
11. RAFAEL "2R.T." TEJADA

YOUTH REFLECTIONS APPEAR ON TRACKS 12-22.



