



## You-Turn Spring/Summer 2009 Newsletter

### YOH Cast: Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, Honorable Leah Ward Sears



Chief Justice of the Georgia  
Supreme Court

Judge Leah Ward Sears

The Youth of Honor Foundation was thrilled to have been given the opportunity to be blessed with words of encouragement from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, the Honorable [Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears](#). In a video-taped [YOH Cast](#) interview on June 29, 2009, the eve of her stepping down (retiring) from the highest judicial position of the courts, she shared her take on GETTING YOH JUMP ON LIFE. "I was not real popular as a kid in school because I was always in my books...but I am real popular now," said Chief Justice Sears. "It's not easy being a success but it's miserable being unsuccessful so you may as well go ahead and pony up and put your cards on the table and just do it."

Chief Justice Sears is the first African-American woman to serve as Superior Court Judge in the state of Georgia. Moreover, she is the first woman to ever be elected to the Supreme Court of Georgia and she is also the youngest person (at age 36) to be appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia. Judge Sears was even mentioned as a possible nominee for the United States Supreme Court by President Barack Obama.

We hope that you will not only listen to this YOHCASST from this remarkable trailblazer, our hope is that you will share it with all of the youth that you personally know. The entire YOH team wishes Chief Justice Sears the very best with her retirement and future endeavors. We are forever grateful to her for taking time out of her exceptionally busy schedule to support Youth of Honor's cause.

## Inspiring Youth: Boy Scouts Merit Badge Madness Event in Woodstock, GA



Pictured: Scout Master Patrick Thompson with H. Ron Brashear



Over 200 young men and their parents listen as YOH President, H. Ron Brashear, shares some words.

Link: [Letter of appreciation from Boy Scout Troop 1134](#)

On May 2, 2009, Youth of Honor President, H. Ron Brashear, was invited to kick-off the 2009 Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge Madness. The purpose of this event, held at the Lifetime Fitness Center in Woodstock, Georgia, is a training day for Atlanta area Scouts to obtain knowledge and participate in discussions in particular subject areas and to earn credit for doing so with a Merit Badge. Mr. Brashear discussed the value of education and how it becomes your "driver's license for success!" While these Boy Scouts are not troubled youth per se, they are 'at-risk' for a different reason. They, like many youth, are 'at-risk' of falling prey to the negative influences that they get exposed to from some of their peer groups, the internet, television, videos, etc. Mr. Brashear stressed the importance of not allowing others to 'hate' on their involvement in Scouts to better themselves. He stated, "Beware of those who choose to 'hate' on you or to somehow make you feel as though being a Boy Scout isn't cool. You are getting educated in subjects that you have a passion about and how DARE someone who lacks the desire, try to make you feel bad about your involvement in Scouts. Not only is it cool to be a Boy Scout, you are learning first-hand about honor, teamwork, and commitment, which will take you much further on your successful journey in life."

After presenting each Scout with a Youth of Honor '[Get YOH Jump on Life](#)' wristband, Mr. Brashear also expressed to the Scouts the importance of THANKING the caring and supportive parents/guardians that have guided them into participating in such a worthwhile organization. "When I was growing up, I wish I would have gotten involved in Boy Scouts and honed in on some of the great lessons that this establishment has to offer. Perhaps I would have made better choices and would not have led such a troubled life as a youth," he said.

If you would like Youth of Honor to come speak to your school, church or civic organization, visit our [Speaking Engagement page](#) to learn more.

## Become a YOH Fan in Facebook, Twitter and YouTube



Over the past few years online social networks have grown to become powerful, internet based communities that not only share information but have the ability to transform ideas into reality. The Youth of Honor team realizes the power of these networks and the involvement of our youth within them, so we have established Youth of Honor pages on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

We encourage you to follow us online as we will be using these social sites to share the latest information about our activities as well as provide inspirational messages to help you become inspired for a better day. As we all come together and share information on ways to improve the lives of our youth, the better chance we have at creating positive change. We can't do it alone and need your help and support. **Encourage your friends to join us too.**

## Youth of Honor supports Atlanta's Celebration of Excellence



The Georgia [Celebration of Excellence](#) is a statewide annual graduation event and scholarship program designed to recognize the academic achievements of youth in the Georgia foster care system who are graduating from high school, GED programs, vocational school, or college. This annual event was hosted in Atlanta, Georgia on June 10th to celebrate the graduation of over 300 foster care youth and the Youth of Honor team is proud to have been recognized as a Supporting Donor for this event as we were on hand to share a collection of [YOH Casts](#) to help inspire the youth to new heights in life. Ms. Chandra Bryant-Floyd, Celebration of Excellence Project Coordinator said it best when she said, *"These foster care kids have bounced through many homes and overcome challenges that are hard for anyone to imagine. We appreciate the Youth of Honor Organization for sharing their inspiring words of hope with our youth as we all come together to ensure that they succeed in life."*

In the words of one of the students: "Celebration of Excellence shows the kids that somebody actually cares. It's just human kindness, but when you've been through what we've been through, human kindness is huge." Children in



Pictured: Youth of Honor Founder, H. Ron Brashear, and YOH Executive Director, Tom Grason

Photo courtesy of Perfect Focus Photography

foster care have unique needs for educational support. On the national average only 50% of foster youth finish high school. Many have been in foster care for all or most of their lives, increasing the risk of poor outcomes due to a lack of a stable family environment that promotes education, teaches daily living skills, and encourages attendance in school. Some youth have been moved from placement to placement, often resulting in multiple school changes, a loss in credits, and a lack of educational stability. This creates an incredible emotional burden on an adolescent on top of all the educational ramifications. Despite the odds, remarkable and determined young people overcome these challenges and graduate from high school. Many have aspirations to continue on to college, but they have limited financial means to realize post-secondary education goals. Some of the most disturbing national statistics regarding youth in foster care could be remedied by a solid college education and community support from programs like Celebration of Excellence.

### Who's Who in Black Atlanta recognizes H. Ron Brashear



Pictured: C. Sunny Martin, Who's Who Publishing Founder, and H. Ron Brashear

The Youth of Honor organization is honored to have our Founder/President, Mr. H. Ron Brashear, recognized and published in the eleventh edition of [Who's Who in Black Atlanta](#), along with such prominent leaders such as: [Bishop Eddie Long](#), [Judge Penny Brown Reynolds](#) of Family Court, as well as [Michael Woodson](#) – coach of the Atlanta Hawks, to name a few. Mr. Brashear's photograph, along with his biography, are featured on page 301, under Atlanta's Community Leaders section of this publication. The Who's Who publication is the nation's largest annual directory publisher targeting influential and affluent African-Americans with a mission to create and distribute a first-class publication that documents the significant accomplishments and outstanding achievements of African-American citizens in the various communities in which they serve.

Mr. Brashear stated, "I am honored to have been selected for inclusion in this prestigious book and I hope that the work that I, along with my staff, are doing to inspire hope in the lives of today's youth will serve as a testimony that all of us are stars...it's up to each of us to decide how we choose to shine in an effort to make our communities better. I look forward to the day when some of the youth we serve are featured in future editions of this publication."

The Ritz Carlton Buckhead played host to a special



Pictured: Youth of Honor team members H. Ron Brashear and Joyace Lopez

reception and unveiling ceremony of the cover of the eleventh edition of *Who's Who in Black Atlanta* that was co-hosted by WSB Television's (Atlanta ABC affiliate) News Anchor Ms. Jovita Moore and host of V-103 Radio's *Frank and Wanda Show*, Mr. Frank Ski. Additionally, a special appearance was made by Reverend Al Sharpton. Mr. Brashear and members of his executive committee were in attendance and were able to network with other Atlanta Community Trailblazers during the event. "Lasting connections were made that will surely assist Youth of Honor in continuing to make a difference in our community, and it was certainly an honor to have been a part of history in the making," said Mr. Brashear.

## Youth of Honor Partners with B-AWARE Foundation



Pictured: The Youth of Honor booth at the A-Town event

The Youth of Honor team was out in full-force and effect at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual A-Town Day [Spring] Festival and Health Awareness Fair on March 21, 2009. Sponsored by the B-AWARE Foundation, [A-Town Day](#) was a fun-filled family event that was held at Atlanta's home of the Braves, Turner Field. YOH's President and Founder H. Ron Brashear, Executive Director Tom Grason, and Communications Director Joyace Lopez, along with several volunteers, including Pediatrician, Cindy Gartmond, M.D., addressed the patrons on how a combination of having the right support in every aspect of a young person's life will help shape their world and give them a good start in life. While Dr. Gartmond provided individual health screenings, Mr. Brashear, Mr. Grason and Ms. Lopez discussed the importance of a well-rounded support system. Mr. Grason stated 'It is amazing the impact that can be done when we all combine our efforts, talents and passion in a common direction, our future leaders and achievers in Atlanta and beyond - our youth.' Copies of Ron's book ['Bouncing back... living life the right way'](#) were on hand in print and audio. Informational brochures about the Youth of Honor Foundation were also available.

"Not only was it beneficial to YOH to partner with the B-AWARE Foundation whose goal is to educate families on healthy living and preventative medicine, it was important to allow parents to share with the YOH team what some of the affects that poor decision-making has made on their families both individually and collectively," stated Ms. Lopez. "Sadly enough, as the economy has continued to take a downturn, the direct affect on many youth being health issues and depression, turning to acts of violence, rebellion against their caretakers and even worse, it was apparent to all of us who participated that day that the efforts of the YOH Foundation are only beginning to permeate the masses," she continued. This is where you

can help. [Corporate and individual sponsorship is available and needed](#). Your corporate dollars are tax-deductible and will go directly to purchasing books and materials to assist our troubled youth. It is our desire to be able to provide copies of these books to those who really need encouragement in their lives. As did the individuals at the A-Town Day event, we hope that you, too, will see the value in reaching out to our youth all over the globe by donating to our efforts so we can get copies of ['Bouncing back'](#) into the hands of the many youth who need to be inspired by H. Ron Brashear's words. Please [contact us](#) today and lend us your support.

## Youth Statistics: Children of Substance Abusers

Alcoholism and drug addiction is taking a toll on the American family. As a result, 8.3 million children in the United States, approximately 11 percent, live with at least one parent who is in need of treatment for alcohol or drug dependency. One in four children under the age of 18 is living in a home where alcoholism or alcohol abuse is a fact of daily life. Countless others are exposed to illegal drug use in their families.

The toll addiction takes on these children can be substantial. Children of addiction or (COAs) are at significantly greater risk for:

- mental illness or emotional problems such as depression or anxiety
- physical health problems; and
- learning problems, including difficulty with cognitive and verbal skills, conceptual reasoning and abstract thinking

In addition, children whose parents abuse alcohol or drugs are almost three times more likely to be verbally, physically or sexually abused; and four times more likely than other children to be neglected. Strong scientific evidence also suggests that addiction tends to run in families. Children of alcoholics are four times more likely than non-COAs to develop alcoholism or other drug problems.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. [You Can Help: A Guide for Caring Adults Working with Young People Experiencing Addiction in the Family](#) (PHD878, (SMA) 01-3544) Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.



**Corporate Partner:**

[Meridian Diamond Company](#) is a Georgia based company that specializes in the online sales of diamonds and fine jewelry. Meridian Diamond Company is backed by a family that has been in the diamond and jewelry business for over 38 years. Their passion and enthusiasm has now flowed over into the age of e-commerce, making what was once only available to nearby residents, now attainable to the entire United States by just a few clicks of the mouse.

Through our partnership with Meridian Diamond Company they have provided Youth of Honor a special promotional code (YOH) where any order placed with them using this code will result in Meridian providing a portion of the sale to the Youth of Honor '[Give the Gift of Bouncing Back Campaign](#)'. So, if you are looking to purchase a special piece of jewelry for yourself or a loved one we encourage you to contact Meridian Diamond Company today.

If you would like to learn more about the Meridian Diamond Company or speak to one of their expert sales team members about a special piece you are looking for, call them at 770-642-1112.