

# Taking Pride

## Toastmasters in Detroit

While on vacation in Michigan last week, I saw this article in the local newspaper, The Detroit Free Press.

### Learning how to speak also teaches youth to listen

**They express pain, laughter and hope**

July 22, 2007

**BY JENNIFER DIXON**

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

They practiced tongue-twisters, talked about pitch, pace, inflection and intensity, and learned the finer points of writing a speech.

Then, it was time for the 56 children and teenagers to stand before the microphone in the big room at Fellowship Chapel in Detroit and speak in public.

When it was her turn, a teen mother cradled her 3-month-old daughter and talked about herself.

Her father was killed in a shootout when she was 4. She was taken from her mother at 5. She was abused by her aunt, who forced her to sleep in the doghouse and locked her in a small room in the basement with bars on it -- like a cell.

"My life has been a living hell till now," she said. "I lost my mother at 14. The year I got to be with her, she turned around and died. The mother I never had turned around and died. That's messed up."

She was one of dozens who presented

their feelings and lives verbally Saturday at the Toastaholics Toastmasters club's daylong workshop to help youths become more confident speaking in public.

Michael Brown, 18, described how he'd always wanted to be like his big brother, a standout high school basketball player -- until his brother "murdered somebody and is now in prison. I'm not going to be like my brother. I'm not like him. I'm going to use my talents."

Organizer Annette Kinsey of Detroit said public speaking "opens up a new world of opportunity."

She's been passionate about motivational speaking since the fifth grade.

"Is it ever a rush," she said. "Through speaking, I can motivate people to become goal oriented."

And there might have been some future motivational speakers in the crowd.

Treasure Wilder, 9, wasn't nervous at all as she described her playful dog, Angel. Neither was Tasleem Joseph, 8, who said her family has 15 pets "and I'm going to keep adding more."

Bri' Shai Tankersley, 9, devoted her speech to her love of shopping, describing how she can buy something. "wear it to a party and people will say, 'I like your outfit.'"

For some, the day was an opportunity to voice inner thoughts.

"We were there to listen to them, without being judgmental," Kinsey said. "As a speaker, that's the time you become most comfortable, when you believe the audi-

ence will not judge you," she said.

The workshop drew several teen mothers from the Salvation Army Denby Center for children and teens in Detroit. Their chaperone did not want those under 18 identified.

One teen said her sister was murdered. Her grandfather fell down the stairs and died from head injuries. She was sent to a group home because of abuse and neglect. She started running away. She had her baby at 16. She's 17 now.

"Keep your head high," she said.

### From Our President

By Linda Israel, ATMG, CL

Start working on your humorous speech for the August Humorous Speech Contest. All members in good standing are eligible to enter. Need a 5 to 7 minute humorous speech. Original material, not a series of one line jokes. If you would like to contest chair in order to fulfill a CL project, please contact Linda Israel, ATMG, CL.

We will have a fun lunch during the 3rd week of August. We need 3 to 5 people willing to bring food, drinks, etc... Please contact Linda or Jeff if you would like to plan the fun lunch as another CL project, planning a special event.

Thank you to Angela Mabray and her committee for an outstanding Educational Awards Celebration.

**Thank you for being the greatest. Every member counts!**

### Upcoming Events at a Glance

- August 23rd: Fun Lunch
- August TBA: Humorous Speech Contest

## Club Online

Please visit the Club Online site to sign up for roles at the upcoming meetings:

<http://www.sandyeast.com/ser/viet/Login>

## Educational Achievement Awards Ceremony

Many members of our club came together on July 13th, at Blvd. Cafeteria to celebrate the achievements of the club and its members over the past year. The club once again attained the highest designation possible, President's Distinguished. A club cannot achieve this honor without having hard working goal seeking members. The celebration included three excellent speeches from Dianne Wigley, Keith Trolinger and Linda Israel.

A fun time was had by all who attended the celebration. We all look forward to the new year, achieving new goals and welcoming new members. Next year's celebration will once again be great. The President's Distinguished status is again within our reach with everyone's help and cooperation.

Thank you to Dianne Wigley, ATMS, CL for this update.



Governor's Toastmasters Club meets every Thursday, 11:55 am to 1:00 pm at 2501 N Stiles Ave in Oklahoma City. For more information, contact: Linda Israel 405-523-2523, or email: [LIsrael@okfb.com](mailto:LIsrael@okfb.com). Governor's Toastmasters is a part of Toastmasters International's District 16, Area K4.

If you have ideas for our newsletter, contact: Wade Deaver (405) 841-9932 or email: [wade.deaver@news9.net](mailto:wade.deaver@news9.net)