

From Boys to Men: A Black Mother's Guide

A new campaign focuses on giving support to single mothers raising boys

In the summer of 1989, David Miller and his best friend were robbed at gunpoint in front of a Baltimore nightclub. That night Miller watched his best friend murdered. For the past 18 years, Miller, a former mid-

In May 2008, Miller and his partner Matthew Stevens, a counselor, freshman college adviser and the founder of Empower Today's Youth, hosted a series of focus groups and interviews across the country with single mothers rais-

ly different, mothers need to have access to men who can help them understand some of the things that boys go through in the male world."

The men wrote a book, *Raising Him Alone: Things Black Women Can Do to Raise Boys to Be Men*, and created a campaign to focus on supporting single mothers raising boys. The campaign identifies community resources, such as mentoring programs, counselors and anger management programs, and makes them accessible to single moms.

"The initiative is a combination of using grassroots, old-fashioned community forums and technology," Miller adds.

The campaign also has a heavy online presence, using a Web site, blog, Twitter and Facebook to target women who are not able to attend the conferences and workshops.

Funded by the Open Society Institute (OSI), Raising Him Alone is part of OSI's Campaign for Black Male Achievement, which was launched in June 2008 as a three-year "strategy to address Black men and boys' exclusion from economic, social, educational and political life in the United States."

"The data shows that 80 percent of Black boys are being raised by single mothers in some communities. When they approached us with this strategy, it was a no-brainer in supporting this campaign," says Shawn Dove, campaign manager for the Open Society Institute's Campaign for Black Male Achievement.

Currently, efforts are focused in Baltimore and the West Ward of Newark, N.J. The founders are seeking additional funding to bring the campaign to Chicago, New York, Detroit and Philadelphia.

"Black women have held us together for the last 60 to 70 years," Stevens says. "If they fall apart, we absolutely will fall apart."

For more information, visit their Web site:

www.raisinghimalone.com.

— Monica Utsey



Matthew Stevens and David Miller help single mothers raising boys.

dle school teacher in Baltimore, has been working to change the community where the horrible tragedy occurred. But this time the focus is not on the men and boys, but on the mothers raising them.

ing boys. They found overwhelmed, stressed-out mothers who needed help.

"It became clear that mothers needed help navigating this terrain," Miller says. "Because the terrain for boys is so fundamental-

➤ Du Bois Collection Digitized



Rare photos and writings from W.E.B. Du Bois, including personal diaries, poetry and a letter to Mahatma Gandhi, are available for the public to view online. An estimated 100,000 documents from the Du Bois collection at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst were digitized this summer.

The collection spans from the early 1870s until Du Bois' death in 1963. It includes works from Du Bois' time as a student at both Fisk and Harvard universities, writings from his time as editor of *The Crisis* and letters to and from public figures such as Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington and Albert Einstein.

"There is an incredible body of material here," says Rob Cox, head of special collections and archives for the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The Verizon Foundation provided a \$200,000 grant to the university to allow the collection to be made available to the public free of charge. It's available for teachers to use as part of their curriculum on

Verizon's Thinkfinity.org site. The collection is also available to the general public through the University of Massachusetts Amherst Web site. The documents will be posted in chronological order over a two-year period.

"Knowledge, in order to be relevant, needs to get out to a broader audience," says Patrick Gaston, Verizon Foundation President and a member of the NAACP's Special Contributions Fund Board of Trustees. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity that has come to us."

Cox says the collection is often thought of as one of the top three collections in the country for studying African American history. One of his favorite items is a menu Du Bois saved that is signed by everyone present at the first meeting of the Niagara Movement. The precursor organization to the NAACP held its first meeting at a restaurant in Ontario, Canada, because restaurants in Buffalo, N.Y., would not serve the Black leaders.

"Du Bois was one of the most eloquent, uniquely important writers and thinkers of social change and social justice," Cox says. "He was an international figure with international influences."

— Cynthia Yeldell