

Minority Report



PRESENT DAY RACIAL DISPARITIES

BY: BAYO BANKOLE



Here's a quick fact, blacks are the poorest ethnic group in America. In 2006 the median family income for a white household was \$50,673 and the median income for a

Hispanic household was \$37,781. Black households came in dead last with \$31,969 per year. Note that working minimum wage earns one \$14,872 per year. This means that the average Black family with two parents and two children is living off of less than eight thousand dollars per person each year. Note that America's GDP per capita is \$45,800. These statistics paint a bleak picture for Black Americans. However, two questions still lay unanswered; how did this happen and how can this problem be remedied?

This paper aims to spread cultural awareness of the challenges facing historically disadvantaged and ethnically underrepresented groups in the IMSA community and the world as a whole. We believe that with the proliferation of knowledge through words, we can confront the stereotypes facing these groups, and change commonly held misconceptions.



The history of Africans in America is just as long as that of America itself. The difference lays in that for 80% of America's existence as a sovereign nation Black Americans have endured substandard economic and social

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MY THREE YEARS

BY: ABE LEE

Even at this moment, I still can't believe that my IMSA career is already almost over. I can remember walking to my first math class during Excel and being so shy that I didn't ask for help at all. I still remember my table mates: one was African American and one was Hispanic. Whenever I didn't know how to do a problem, I would just stare at my work and pretend that I was writing something. One day, Dr. Porzio noticed that our table wasn't talking enough, and he told us that we had to get used to working together if we wanted to be successful. From that point forward, we began talking more and more, sometimes about math but most of the time about random things like our favorite *Family Guy* episodes or the reason why we decided to attend IMSA. Outside of the classroom, we saw *Fast and Furious 3: Tokyo Drift*, played catch, and even went to a water park together. We kept in touch over the summer, and by the time the school year came around, we were the best of friends. We quadded our junior year, and I remember times when I laughed so hard that I started to cry. I also remember the last day of school before I left for summer vacation. That day would be one of my quad mate's last day as an IMSA

student. It felt like I lost my own brother.

If you were to tell me 3 years ago that my best friends would be a Hispanic and an African American, I wouldn't believe you. Since the third grade, I went to a school where I was the only minority; everyone else was white. But my race didn't have a huge impact on my life until I reached high school. My friends started calling me simply "Asian" or "Korean", and I started to get ticked off because it was really annoying. It was then that I became aware of the Asian stereotypes. I realized that my race had an effect on how everyone viewed me and that, in turn, influenced the way people treated me. Upon attending IMSA, the nicknames stopped (well, kinda), but the stereotypes still existed. The culture shock hit me pretty hard, especially during Excel, but once I started to get to know people of different races, I became more curious about their culture.

Before I leave, I just want to give some advice to those who are coming back next year. First of all, I encourage everyone to partake in different celebrations such as Casa de Alma, Diwali, and Lunar New Year. In doing so, you will learn a lot about the different cultures, while at the same time meeting new people. Second, don't let the different stereotypes affect the way you

treat people. Instead, get to know the person before making some kind of judgment. Just like I said before, I never would've thought that my best friends would be African American and Hispanic three years ago. Lastly, I urge everyone to treat different races and ethnic groups with respect. No race or culture is superior to another; we are all equal human beings with equal rights. The Black Eyed Peas said it best:

...If you only have love for your own race

Then you only leave space to discriminate

And to discriminate only generates hate

And when you hate then you're bound to get irate.

Where's the love? I hope it's at IMSA for years to come.



(From left) Abraham Lee and his older brother, Josh Lee, on Graduation Day 2007. Soon Abraham will take the same glorious walk across the stage.

ROSA SAT...SO BARACK
COULD RUN

BY: MELCOLM RUFFIN

January 20th, 2009. It is a day that I will never forget. I remember skipping lunch so that I could watch the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first African American president in United States history. My mother drove over forty minutes so that she could share this monumental event with me at my residential high school. It meant a lot to me to hold her hand as we witnessed the historic ceremony with tear filled eyes. For me it is nearly impossible to describe all of the emotions evoked as Obama officially became President at 12am ET. I thought of all those that devoted their lives to make it possible for a man of color to become the leader of America.

That same day I heard the song "Rosa Sat" by Amy Dixon-Kolar for the very first time. During the chorus Kolar sings "*Rosa sat so Martin could walk/ Martin walked so Barack could run/ Barack ran, he ran and he won/ So that all our children could fly.*" As her powerful words filled the background, I thought of how lucky I am to have shaken the hands of two of the people she mentioned at just 17 years of age.

"*Rosa sat, so Martin could walk.*" It was 1995 and my mother somehow discovered that Rosa Parks was in Chicago to promote the book "Rosa Parks" by Eloise Greenfield. When my mom found out that Mrs. Parks would be attending a fund raiser at a church close to our suburban



(From left) President Barack Obama, Melcolm's mother, and Melcolm Ruffin at a church visit.

home she became completely dedicated to getting my brother and me there. My mother desperately wanted my brother and me to meet Rosa Parks, but the fund raiser tickets cost over \$100 each and as a single parent my mom could not afford the tickets, however, she did not give up. We left for the church early so that she could buy some flowers for my brother and me to give to Rosa Parks. She believed that no one would deny two cute little boys with "Roses for Rosa." My brother and I were permitted to give the flowers to Mrs. Parks

and she appreciated them so much that she allowed us to stand on stage with her during most of the fund raiser.

Though I was only four years old at the time I still remember meeting Rosa Parks. She was a very delicate, caring, and gentle lady, at the same time she also demonstrated strength, courage, and confidence. Rosa Parks' refusal to move to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This successful stand sparked several other reforms during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s which battled racial discrimination. Those events also launched Martin Luther King Jr. into the country's limelight.

"*Martin walked so Obama could run.*" While Barack Obama was running for Senator of Illinois he was campaigning around my area and came to the 2nd Baptist Church of Maywood, my church home. I vividly remember that day; it was the summer of 2004 and I was twelve years old. That day Obama mesmerized the church with his captivating oratory skills and converted several skeptics. At the time meeting Barack Obama did not have the significance that it does today, however, at the time I was

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MULTICULTURAL ROOMMATE PAIRING



BY: JASMINE KWASA

IMSA is considered by some to be a diverse place in terms of our geographic, racial, and religious makeup. It is true that we have a unique school in that respect. But how do we learn from being around different types of people? How do we actually show that we care about diversity? Certainly

there are staff members like IMSA President Glenn “Max” McGee and Coordinator of Enrollment Management for Multicultural Development, Kazi Joshua, who are working on these problems. But is it really working? How about we change things up a bit around here?

ROSA SAT...SO BARACK COULD RUN

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still impressed with his demeanor and presence. I could not foresee that he would become an international role model in such a short amount of time. Somehow my mother and I managed to locate Obama before he could leave our church, and though he had several other places to visit on his campaign trail he still stopped and had a friendly conversation with my mom and me. My mother said that she had a “good feeling” about Obama because of his charisma, genuine optimism, political experience, and relative youth. That day she told me, “That man could be President of the United States in twelve years.” She was both right and wrong at the same time. It only took Barack Obama four more years to become the forty-fourth President of the United States, and an inspiration to millions of people around the world.

I believe that meeting both Rosa Parks and Barack Obama has had a tremendous effect on my life. They are two of the most influential African Americans of the past hundred years and their actions have truly impacted how my past, present, and future will be shaped. Few people can say that they’ve seen either of these people in person, let alone that they have shaken their hands. It is truly remarkable and both situations will be forever engrained in my memory. I feel that they are no longer merely faces and names in history books; instead they are now living, breathing examples of courage and dedication.

“*Barack ran, he ran and he won/ So that all our children could fly.*” Unfortunately, Rosa Parks died October 24th, 2005 and she was not able to witness Barack Obama’s groundbreaking victory. However, Obama’s election would not have been possible without the efforts of those that came before him. I believe that the sequence in Amy Dixon- Kolar’s “Rosa Sat” is very accurate. Rosa Parks refused to be pushed aside, Martin Luther King Jr. fought for equality, Barack Obama took the next leap, and now the only step left is for my generation to fly.



Courtesy of www.wikipedia.com

OBSTACLES THAT HINDER BLACK MALES FROM ATTENDING COLLEGE

BY: SHAWON JACKSON

According to the 2007 Census Bureau, there are more than three times as many blacks in prison cells as in college. Why? Honestly, who would decide to live in a cage as opposed to living on a beautiful campus?

This raises the question: What if it's not a choice? Often times, minorities find themselves living in a cycle of poverty, a cycle where it is very difficult for them to take advantage of the plethora of opportunities available. Imagine growing up poor, going to a substandard high school, and feeling obligated to bring money into the household. Because of these various obstacles—which blacks often find themselves facing—it is very difficult for them to have aspirations of going to college. Unfortunately, they look for a fast alternative to earning money, and the solution *isn't* college.

Four years in college seems like a very long time, and when living in poverty for so long, some just don't want to wait. Some decide to take the "easy" way out. This can be done either by selling drugs, stealing, or other illegal activity. Personally, I feel that young black males are likelier to engage in such activities because they

exist in black dominant neighborhoods. If they see drug dealers making thousands of dollars weekly, they feel as if dealing may be the best option.

In my opinion, I think some blacks are hesitant to be 1st in their class, take AP courses, and aspire to go college, because they feel as if they will be "acting white." Typically, when one thinks of the best and brightest students, he or she envisions someone who is studious, outgoing, and often times white. I don't think that just because you are well educated, or want an education for that manner, makes you "act white." I think that in doing so, young blacks could abolish the stereotypes about them when it comes to education. By stepping up, they could send the message that there is nothing wrong with being smart, studying, and looking forward to attending a prestigious college.

All in all, I think there are copious reasons why there are more black men in jail instead of college. As sad as this fact may be, it's a reality. Whether it be because blacks want to take the "easy" way out, or simply because they don't want to "act white" to get an education, the fact still remains the same. The cycle of poverty African-Americans encounter hinders them from believing there is any hope in going in college. One may wonder, is there a solution?

Truthfully, only young black males can decide if there is a solution or not. Although there are obstacles they must overcome, it is imperative they realize the ultimate success that can be achieved with just four more years. The cycle of poverty and poor education can and must come to an end. A child does not have to follow the footsteps of their ancestors. Everyone is an individual and has the potential to be great. To those who can relate to this, my advice is simple: Be paired with someone whom you can have a great educational experience with, not a cell mate that will cause you to regret never taking advantage of the one thing that can't be taken away from you, knowledge.



Courtesy of www.altbrothers.com

(Continued from pg. 1) conditions. The combination of slavery, Jim Crow Laws, and segregation destroyed the financial condition of Blacks in America. Because of slavery, Blacks' rights to private property and their social mobility were highly restricted. Wealth could not be accumulated and the little currency that could be sequestered was not passed down the generations. Each generation of Black Americans was left just as destitute as the last. In addition, plantation owners reaped the benefits of at least 90% of the labor output of Black Americans and almost all of it was provided in unskilled labor. This meant that even when the thirteenth amendment was passed there was little money circulating in the Black community and the labor produced by Blacks would be cheap and of low quality. This is all before Jim Crow laws have been taken into account.

While the situation of Blacks post-slavery was dire, it would have been fixable within two to three generations had it not been for the discrimination experienced by Black Americans. While discrimination made daily life unpleasant for Black

Americans, institutionalized racism made it pitiable. Institutionalized racism made sure that Blacks were always paid less than their white counterparts and that they would always be chosen last for choice job opportunities, regardless of



Courtesy of: www.flickr.com

qualification. Needless to say, unemployment ran rampant among Black workers and wages were equally depressed. This period only recently ended, but it would be counterintuitive to say that its repercussions are insignificant.

Blacks in America have only recently received equal treatment under the law, and economic conditions have been slow to catch up. Although gains have been made since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there is still considerable inequality between Whites and Blacks. The most dangerous and probably hardest to dislodge factor contributing to the conditions of blacks in

America is the cycle of poverty. With substandard education one cannot acquire a well paying job. Without the income from a mid-range job an affordable college education is all but impossible and so on. This obviously points to better education as the main remedy to the situation.

It gets more complicated than that though. The side effects of poverty are almost as detrimental to progress as the affliction itself. Crime and drugs in addition to the already overwhelming economic baggage are tormenting entire neighborhoods. In order

to alleviate all these problems a combined effort needs to be made through public schools, a more efficient law system that promotes rehabilitation rather than incarceration, and internal reforms from the Black community. Four hundred years of oppression and economic suppression cannot be undone in a year or even a decade. However, continual hard work towards a goal can improve the situation. Building strong communities from the bottom up and putting an emphasis on education can revolutionize the situation of Blacks in America.

MULTICULTURAL ROOMMATE PAIRING (Continued from pg. 4)

What if every incoming sophomore roomed with an individual outside of his or her race? This is the radical idea of Chris Schreiber, the Hall Coordinator of Residence Hall 1507. A few weeks ago at community development, he noticed that the demographics at IMSA are set such that everyone on campus could possibly live with someone of a different race. He brought up the idea that by having multiracial roommate pairings, we can actively incorporate diversity awareness discussions into the Residential life curriculum, Sophomore Navigation discussions, and maybe even the academic curriculum. Even organizations such as the Peer Multicultural Educators and the cultural clubs can draw from the experiences of the integrated sophomore class for discussions.

But there are some drawbacks that many people on campus already anticipate regarding this new policy. Senior Akash Moradia claims that he knows plenty of Indian and East Asian parents who would only want their child to room with someone of the same race. This might cause

some major problems when it comes to attracting prospective students and retaining them. Even from the underrepresented minority students' perspective, oftentimes we are attracted to IMSA because there is a supportive, though small, minority population. Despite our lack of quantity, we can at least room with and be around people like us. The perception that these racial "security groups" exist might dwindle, which might negatively affect minority recruitment and retention at IMSA.

RCs around campus feel that this change will be good for diversity and inclusion initiatives at IMSA, but there may be prices to pay. They know that sophomores already have the stress of keeping their flawless GPAs from the pre-IMSA days, keeping family and friend ties from home, adjusting to living away, and the initial inevitable culture shocks. Perhaps putting in yet another culture shock is too much. What if drama in the room affects grades and students' sense of overall peace?

But seriously though, student body: How many of you all have learned something about another culture just by living in close proximity to them? For instance, I hold little

weekend "black hair care" talks in my wing for fun sometimes. Similarly, I have learned much from my Caucasian, rural, Central Illinois roommate, Emma Conover, about small class sizes and corn elevators. Having my Indian friends drag me to Diwali sophomore year ended up in me becoming a full SASA member this year.

I admit that even I, a bit of a proponent for this new program, had shaky initial reactions to the idea. After all, where you rest your head is your home court: it's your safe haven, your refuge after a long day and an impossible Molecular Cellular Biology test. As some people feel like they must be on their "best behavior" around other races, there would never be such a haven.

However, isn't this what the experience would be all about? Sharing the fact that you, as an African American female, might wrap and tie up your hair at night? Sharing the fact that you, a vegetarian since birth because of your Jain views, cannot share your roommate's grandmother's pot roast? Sharing that in China, it is perfectly acceptable to burp after a meal so your roommate does not think you're rude?

MULTICULTURAL ROOMMATE PAIRING
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These are the things that we hope that the sophomores will learn and take with them for the rest of their lives. These little issues will open up the doors of communication between the races.

The details about this new incentive are developing. Sophomore roommate pairs might be integrated as soon as next school year. However, if that doesn't happen, there might be a trial run in a few wings across campus and IMSA will collect data about it, or they might do it for orientation or EXCEL. Either way, IMSA is trying to take a stand on their diversity initiatives and this is certainly a proactive way to do so.

SHIFTING HANDS: EDITOR'S NOTE



The Minority Report began two years ago when a small group of students took their ideas to the press. They initially felt that the stories of socially disadvantaged groups of people were not being told on the IMSA campus. They met with members of the administration and, lo and behold, the Minority report was founded. Though the publication suffered a brief hiatus, it is now back and stronger than ever. For the past year, Mehmet Badur, Opeyemi Kusoro, and Pedro Aguirre served as editors. As they leave, the leadership is shifting hands. This issue is serving as a preview to what is to come next year and in the further future as the Minority Report expands and develops. The new leaders of this publication, Brandan Matthews, Malik Alim, and I, Bernice Fokum, are very excited for the future. For this issue, we have gathered a variety of articles, spanning in topic from race relations to personal reflections on the Minority IMSA student experience. We hope you enjoy this preview!

SPECIAL THANKS

Mrs. Townsend
Bob Hernandez

Any questions, comments, or concerns can be directed to IMSAMinorityReport@gmail.com.

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