



# TURNER CHAPEL

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## EDUCATION MINISTRY



<sup>11</sup> “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)



**Annual High School Graduation Worship Service is entirely devoted to youth.**

## **Description of the Ministry Purpose and Structure**

In September 2007, Mychal and Nina Wynn met with Youth Pastor Rev. Don Ezell and shared their vision of the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry having a greater role in the lives of students and families beyond the awarding of annual scholarships. Their vision was to have an impact on the social, spiritual, and cultural beliefs of church members and the wider African-American community as they relate to God's purpose pertaining to the intellectual development and educational empowerment of our children. National student performance data indicates that African-American children are disproportionately::

- Overrepresented in Special Education
- Overrepresented among students who are retained one or more grade levels
- Overrepresented among students who are least likely to be proficient in math and reading by 4th grade and 8th grade
- Overrepresented among students who are least likely to graduate from high school
- Overrepresented among students who are least likely to graduate from high school ready to attend college
- Overrepresented among students who are least likely to receive college planning guidance from high school counselors
- Underrepresented among students who are likely to be identified as academically gifted
- Underrepresented among students who are likely to be enrolled in honors, AP, IB, or dual enrollment classes during high school
- Underrepresented among students who are likely to be accepted into a selective college or university
- Underrepresented among students who are likely to receive full merit-based college scholarships

Mychal and Nina Wynn's vision for the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry was consistent with the historical role of the AME church in educating African-Americans. David Childs, in *The Black Church and African American Education: The African Methodist Episcopal Church Educating for Liberation, 1816-1893*, writes:

*"Many Americans in the nineteenth century argued for limited education for blacks—or no education at all for African Americans in the south. As a result, black churches took up the role and pushed for education as a means to liberate African Americans. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church stands as a good exemplar for a black denomination that explicitly expressed in their policies that they understood the connection of education to African American liberation."*

The Wynns reviewed the mission of the AME Church, which stated:

*"The mission of the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry is to provide communication between, and support of, students and families in expanding their primary through postsecondary educational awareness and college preparedness."*

Consistent with the mission of the AME Church, the Wynns developed a mission for the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry:

*"The Mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating gospel through word and deed."*

To fulfill its mission, the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry encourages, supports, recognizes, and celebrates the academic achievement, intellectual development, community service, and creative accomplishments of youth through a broad range of initiatives, supported by collaboration with local organizations and other ministries and programs, such as:

- Foundation for Ensuring Access and Equity
- Iron Sharpens Iron Male Mentoring
- Pathways to Academic Success
- The Next Episode



**Academic Celebration**

The Education Ministry's partners and volunteers have supported the mission/vision through a broad range of programs and initiatives:

- Academic Tutoring
- ACT Prep Club
- Annual College Fair
- Annual College Discussion Panel
- Annual College Tour
- Awarding annual scholarships based on ministry service
- Biannual Academic Celebrations

- College Planning Cohorts (high school seniors)
- College Planning Cohorts (8th - 11th grade students)
- College Planning Workshops
- Development of Small Group Leaders
- Education Ministry Youth Ambassadors (EMYAs)
- Education Ministry Facebook Page
- Establishing the Kenneth and Cassandra Marcus “Eagle Award” for Service and Academic Excellence
- Expansion of The Next Episode to include College Planning
- Georgia CRCT Prep (2011 - 2015)
- High School Graduation Celebration Worship Service
- Math Enrichment
- Posse Foundation Nominations
- SAT/ACT Prep Workshops



**Reading and Math Tutoring**

## **Description of Various Accomplishments by the Ministry**

Since 2008, the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry has had a profound impact on students and families. Elementary school students have gone on to graduate from high school and are now pursuing careers and attending undergraduate, graduate, medical, and law school programs. Students and families have avoided thousands of dollars in student loan debt. While less than half of African-American students successfully receive their college degrees (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education 2016), the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry has successfully assisted students in increasing their college readiness, making the right college choice, and acquiring the necessary scholarships and financial aid to pay for college.

The many accomplishments of the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry include:

- Over \$10 million in scholarships and institutional aid awarded, or offered to students participating in *College Planning Cohorts* since 2014
- Over 3,000 students and parents served by college planning workshops and presentations
- Over 2,000 students and parents exposed to the experiences and insight of 80 undergraduate, graduate, law school, and medical school students appearing on the *Annual College Discussion Panels*
- Over 1500 students in grades 3 - 8 served by tutoring in reading and math as preparation for Georgia CRCT testing
- Over 400 students served as part of the *Next Episode Teen Bible Study*
- Over 100 students served through Small Group Leaders in applying to colleges and for scholarships through the *College Planning Cohort Program*
- 8 years of hosting an annual high school graduation celebration worship service, celebrating over 350 high school graduates who have enrolled into 289 colleges and universities

- 8 years of awarding over \$80,000 in college scholarships and book awards based on ministry service
- 8 years of awarding 2,425 academic medallions to students in grades K - 12 who attained a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- 8 years of awarding 95 *Kenneth Marcus and Cassandra Marcus "Eagle Awards" for Service and Academic Achievement* to students in grades 6 - 12, based on leadership, service, and having the highest overall GPA among male and female students at their respective grade level
- 6 years of hosting an annual college fair, exposing over 5,000 students and parents to college and universities, financial aid, and college planning
- 6 years of hosting an annual college discussion panel, through which over 80 undergraduate, graduate, medical, and law school students (who are church members) have provided candid insight into their postsecondary experiences and institutions
- 5 students assisted in being selected as Gates Millennium Scholars
- 2 students assisted in being selected as Gates Millennium Scholar Finalists
- 2 students assisted in being selected as Posse Foundation Scholars
- 1 student assisted in being selected as a Questbridge Finalist
- 1 student assisted in being selected as a University of Maryland-Baltimore County Meyerhoff Scholar
- Published a *Faith- and Community-based Training Guide for Increasing Student Achievement*
- Developed the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry branding of table cloths, posters, popup banners, brochures, graduation programs, and signage



**Pre-College Fair College Planning Workshop**



## Over 50 Colleges and Universities are Represented at Annual College Fair

### How to get started

Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry Leaders, Mychal and Nina Wynn, have developed a Faith- and Community-based Training Guide for Increasing Student Achievement. The guide outlines a step-by-step process for beginning an Education Ministry or community-based approach to increasing educational outcomes for students. Some of the critical first steps include:

- The importance of understanding student and family demographics
- Identifying the type of student performance data to which you will be responsive, e.g., literacy, academic achievement, suspensions and expulsions, high school graduation rates, etc.
- Developing the mission/vision for your program or ministry
- Identifying your leadership team
- Planning and introducing each initiative
- Recruiting volunteers
- Identifying resources
- Delivering programs or services
- Engaging in an effective debriefing following each event of initiative

The Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry's strategy for sensitizing church members to our long-term mission/vision began by sharing education data pertaining to African-American students in the state of Georgia. We prepared a series of slides for the church's ministry cast with the caption, "Did You Know?" We then stated the facts regarding student achievement, discipline, and graduation data for African-American students in Georgia. After sensitizing church members to the student achievement problem, we wanted to change the attitude of students and families to purposely pursue higher academic achievement levels by celebrating academic achievement through biannual public recognition of academic achievement at the beginning of the worship service and a celebratory reception following worship service in September and February.

Each year, new initiatives (e.g., college planning, college fairs, college planning cohorts, etc.) are introduced based on availability of resources, volunteers, and the willingness of members to assume leadership. The impact of all of the Education Ministry K - 12 initiatives are reflected in the celebration of students and families at the *Annual High School Graduation Celebration Worship Service* in May of each year

## How to ensure sustainability

Ensuring sustainability requires committed, visionary leaders who are vested in the long-term outcomes of student success beyond their own children. Historically, many volunteers commit their time and expertise only during the time that their own children are being served by the ministry or are about to graduate from high school. Sustainability requires committed, long-term leaders who believe in growth and are committed to pursuing the ministry's mission/vision. The success of the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry is the result of stability of leadership in such areas as:

- Mychal and Nina Wynn have continually served as ministry leaders since 2007
- Rev. Dr. Kenneth Marcus has continually served as Senior Pastor
- Rev. Don Ezell has continually served as Youth Pastor
- Charles and Lora Williams have continually served as ministry leaders for The Next Episode
- Tyrone Smith has continually served as ministry leader of the Annual College Tour and SAT/ACT Prep
- The Turner Chapel AME Church has continually provided facilities and financial support
- Katrina Roberts has continually served as High School Graduation Celebration Chairperson since 2008
- Kim Pope has continually served as Hospitality Chairperson since 2008
- Dawn Hoskins has continually served as College Fair Chairperson since 2010
- Carolyn Crook and Susan Wilson have continually served as Education Ministry Youth Ambassadors (EMYAs) Chairpersons since 2010
- Cassandra Smith, Ph.D., has continually provided college and scholarship essay writing assistance since 2011
- The ministry has been a Posse Foundation nominating organization since 2012, with Elisa Turner serving as chairperson
- Mychal and Nina Wynn, Rev. Don Ezell, Rev. Dr. Yolanda Davis, Elisa Turner, Kim Sackey, and Charles and Lora Williams have continually served as Small Group Leaders, providing college planning guidance and support for high school seniors and parents since 2014
- Ministry Leaders, Mychal and Nina Wynn, have written press releases and exposed the ministry to local media coverage through the Marietta Journal, Atlanta-Journal Constitution, and V103 radio station since 2014
- Rev. Dr. Yolanda Davis has actively promoted the ministry through local and national news media, such as the Christian Post, since 2014



**College Discussion Panel**

- Church members Jackie Bazy, Elisa Turner, Chares and Lora Williams, Jacqueline Jackson, Dawn and Eric Hoskin, Stacy Baron, Carolyn Crook, Yvette Ifill, Jacqueline Jackson, Chris Millett, Kim Sackey, Eric Nelums, Tyrone and Vicki Smith, and Susan Wilson are representative of a committed and consistent pool of volunteers who have continued to support the efforts of the ministry, even after their children have entered college or into their careers

## What does success look like

To measure success, it is critically important to clarify your mission/vision and measure those outcomes associated with your mission/vision. The success of the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry is reflected in such outcomes as:

- Increased support of academic achievement by parents, encouragement by church members, and intrinsic motivation of students
- Expanded college and postsecondary aspirations of students and families
- Expanded college knowledge and successful college match of students and families
- Increase in the number of students qualifying for academic recognition
- Increase in the rigor of students' course taking, i.e., honors, AP, and IB
- Increase in the number of students qualifying for college scholarships
- Increased ministry involvement, community service, and acceptance of leadership roles by students
- Increased collaboration between ministries
- Stronger connections to students who go off to college, but return to the church to serve on College Discussion Panels, as speakers at the high school graduation celebration worship service, and who are willing to mentor and support students to attend their institutions
- Increased attendance of high school juniors and seniors in The Next Episode
- Increased attendance of students at Education Ministry-sponsored events
- Increased number of guests who are invited to events
- Expanded volunteer pool
- Sustained involvement of ministry leaders and chairpersons
- Positive national and local media coverage, and community support
- Positive influence on students and families who are considering becoming members of the Turner Chapel AME Church
- Positive manner in which church members view the impact of the Education Ministry



**Blessing Youth as They Begin the Next Phase**





**Jalani Wynn, 2012 Gates Millennium Scholar (Morehouse College)**

Success is also revealed through the relationships forged with students and families, and the testimonials of parents and students:

*“The Gaines family was truly blessed by what we witnessed and experienced today at Turner Chapel. Words like, professionalism, kindness, helpful, informative, motivating, inspiring come to mind when I think of all the events of the day. From the front door, the registration and greeter personnel were friendly and kind, the college representatives, and the hospitality crew, to the fraternity and sorority organizations, everything flowed so well. Thank you for caring about us and our educational pursuits!! I pray that God will continue to bless you and the ministry to enlarge your territory and refresh you for your labors.”*

*Vatanna and Katharine Gaines & Family”*

*“You and your team have been more than a blessing to our family of five and we cannot thank you guys enough. Our lives have been transformed by following what you teach. We first met you when our eldest, Christina, was in 11th grade, 1/2013. In short, not only did you touch our hearts, but our children also believed in what you said. Like magic, we were no longer overwhelmed about our decisions because you provided a roadmap to financing and planning a college education for the girls. We did EVERYTHING you said and Christina received four full rides for college. We directly attribute that to your coaching.”*

*Cynthia & Doug Lucas*



**Marcus Awardees, Highest GPA in 6th - 11th Grades**

Perhaps the most significant measure of success is when initiatives rise to the level of becoming expected customs and rituals. For example, it took several years before it became a generally accepted custom that the report card deadline was firm. When this milestone was reached, parents no longer pleaded for leniency, or attempted to circumvent the process by approaching the youth or senior pastor. The same is true for the deadline for submitting high school graduation packages for participation in the annual high school graduation celebration worship service. The following initiatives have risen to the level of having become expected customs and rituals:

- Academic Celebrations
- College Fair
- College Panel Discussion
- College Planning Cohorts
- College Tour
- High School Celebration Worship Service
- Marcus Awards
- Pre-College Fair Workshop
- The Next Episode



**Alexis Ezell, Emmanuel College**

## **Hurdles/pitfalls to avoid**

There are five major hurdles or pitfalls to be avoided:

- *First: Not engaging in an immediate debriefing following the delivery of programs or services.* Engaging in an honest post-assessment is critical to evaluating the effectiveness of programs, utilization of resources, and appropriateness of leadership through chairpersons and committees.
- *Second: Repeating ineffective programs or discarding successful programs.* Not everything works. Some programs may need time, while others are not appropriate for your church or organization.
- *Three: An unwillingness of ministry leaders or chairpersons to accept constructive criticism.* Ministry leaders must focus on the service instead of themselves. In this regard, constructive criticism is focused on increasing the level of service rather than on criticizing the efforts of leaders.
- *Four: Resting on your accolades.* Unless your mission is finite, there is always room to grow and to expand the impact of your ministry on your church membership and the community at large. As technology, resources, and volunteers expand, so too, should the impact of your programs and services.
- *Five: Not preparing transitional leadership.* Volunteers must be groomed and prepared to assume leadership roles. In this regard, volunteers should work alongside leaders, until they, themselves, can assume leadership roles. The process should continue with each new group of leaders and volunteers.



**Iron Sharpens Iron Male Mentoring Book Club**

### **Additional resources and ministry contact information**

Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry Leader, Mychal Wynn, is a published author, and together with Nina Wynn, serve as educational consultants. Supplemental resources are available at the following links:

- Books, materials, and educational research: [www.mychalwynn.com/](http://www.mychalwynn.com/)
- Presentations and videos: [www.youtube.com/user/mychalwynn](http://www.youtube.com/user/mychalwynn)
- Photographs: [www.facebook.com/FoundationForEnsuringAccessAndEquity/](http://www.facebook.com/FoundationForEnsuringAccessAndEquity/)
- Educational research and scholarship blog: [www.accessandequity.org/](http://www.accessandequity.org/)
- Photos and ministry timeline since 2010: [www.facebook.com/tcceducationministry/](http://www.facebook.com/tcceducationministry/)

The following downloads are available at [www.mychalwynn.com/education-ministry](http://www.mychalwynn.com/education-ministry):

- The 2016 Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry Report
- A copy of the *Faith- and Community-based Training Guide for Increasing Student Achievement*
- Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry By-Laws



**Education Ministry Youth Ambassadors (EMYAs)**



**“The Next Episode,” Bible Study and College Planning for High School Juniors and Seniors**

## **Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry Time-line**

### **2008**

- Developed the Turner Chapel Education Ministry By-Laws to guide the work of the Education Ministry
- Developed High School Graduation Packet for high school seniors participating in the annual high school graduation celebration worship service
- First biannual academic celebration of students in grades K - 12 who attained a 3.0 semester GPA or higher
- Introduced the Kenneth and Cassandra Marcus “Eagle Award” for Service and Academic Achievement, awarded to the male and female student with the highest full year GPA in grades 6 - 12.
- First annual high school graduation celebration worship service
- Invited local superintendents, teachers, and counselors to high school graduation worship service
- Begin hosting college planning workshops

### **2010**

- Expanded Next Episode to provide college planning guidance
- Revised scholarship criteria to be awarded based on ministry service
- Established the Education Ministry Facebook Page for documenting and recording events, photos,

and providing relevant content

- First annual College Fair
- First annual College Discussion Panel

## 2011

- Hosted first annual Georgia CRCT Test Prep for reading and math
- Developed Youtube Channel for posting education ministry-related videos
- First College Fair video
- First College Discussion Panel Video
- First Gates Millennium Scholar (Brianna Moses, Howard University)



**College Planning Cohort, Modeled After 'Small Groups'**

## 2012

- Developed Education Ministry Youth Ambassador Program (EMYAs)
- Hosted Bermudian Students
- Began presenting Kenté Cloth to graduates
- Second Gates Millennium Scholar (Jalani Wynn, Morehouse College)
- Marietta Journal article, "Head of the class: Turner Chapel AME Church grooms students for success" (Marcus Howard, 6/23/12)
- Developed College Fair Promo Video
- Florence County School District 3 Superintendent of Schools, Laura Hickson, attends high school graduation worship service

## 2013

- Became a nominating organization for the Posse Foundation
- First Posse Foundation Scholar (Julian Nelums, Syracuse University)
- First annual pre-college fair workshop

## 2014

- Hosted first College Planning Cohort of high school seniors
- Gates Millennium Scholar Finalist (Arielle Crook, Xavier University of Louisiana)
- Third Gates Millennium Scholar (Brittany White, Spelman College)
- Second Posse Foundation Scholar (Jordan Fessehaie, Boston University)
- Mychal and Nina Wynn recognized as "Transformational Leaders"
- Developed *Faith- and Community-based Training Guide for Increasing Student Achievement*
- Presented the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry Program at the Sixth District AME Christian Education Conference
- Christian Post article, "Georgia Church Helps Student Members Receive \$4.3 Million in College Scholarships" (Jessica Martinez, 5/29/14)
- Atlanta Journal Constitution article, "Church helps students strike gold on scholarship search," (Eric Stirgus, 5/28/14)
- Black Christian News Network One blog posting, "Scholarship Ministry of Atlanta's Turner Chapel AME Church Helps Students to Succeed"
- V-103 Sunday Morning Praise Church of the Week...Turner Chapel AME Church
- joy105.com article, "Wow! GA Church Helps Student Members Receive 4.3 million in College Scholarships!" (Crystal Smith, 6/1/14)
- American Pastors Network article, "Georgia Church Helps Student Members Receive \$4.3 Million in College Scholarships" (Mara Joyce, 5/30/14)
- Florence County School District Three (SC) College Planning Cohort students attend college fair and College Sunday Worship Service
- Wilberforce University President, Dr. Algeania Freeman, attends College Sunday Worship Service and offers full scholarships to all graduating high school seniors with a 3.5 GPA or higher

## 2015

- Presented the Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry Program at the Sixth District AME Conference
- First Questbridge Finalist (Mikayla Hanna)
- First Meyerhoff Scholar (Mikayla Hanna)
- Gates Millennium Scholar Finalist (Avery Johnson, Georgia State)
- Fourth Gates Millennium Scholar (Mikayla Hanna, University of Maryland-Baltimore County)
- Mychal Wynn recognized as by the Chi Gamma Gamma Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., as "Citizen of the Year"
- Iron Sharpens Iron Male Mentoring Book Club established

- eNews Channels article, *“Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry Hosts 6th Annual College Fair in Georgia”* (Christopher Simmons, 10/12/15)
- FreeNews Articles.com article, *“Church Hosts 6th Annual College Fair (GA) as part of role to close achievement gap and expand college access”*
- TippNews Daily article, *“First Lake City High School (SC) Student Selected as Gates Millennium Scholar”* (4/21/15)

## 2016

- Expanded College Planning Cohort to serve students in grades 8 - 11
- First ACT Prep Club
- Fifth Gates Millennium Scholar (Rebeca Pacheco, Coastal Carolina University)



Boarding Buses for the College Tour



## The Role of the Church

The church has accepted a longstanding role in educating African Americans, particularly the AME church. David Childs, in *The Black Church and African American Education: The African Methodist Episcopal Church Educating for Liberation, 1816-1893*, writes:

*"Many Americans in the nineteenth century argued for limited education for blacks—or no education at all for African Americans in the south. As a result, black churches took up the role and pushed for education as a means to liberate African Americans. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church stands as a good exemplar for a black denomination that explicitly expressed in their policies that they understood the connection of education to African American liberation."*

Through the leadership and support of Senior Pastor, Reverend Dr. Kenneth Edward Marcus, Co-pastor, Reverend Cassandra Marcus, Youth Pastors, Reverend Don Ezell and Reverend Yolanda Davis, and a team of dedicated volunteers, we have witnessed the growth of our sons along their respective journeys toward fulfilling God's purpose for their lives. Our older son has received his Bachelor of Arts in English from Amherst College. Our younger son, pictured here, was nurtured from his elementary school aspirations of attending Yale to being admitted into the Honors College at Morehouse College as a 2012 Gates Millennium Scholar.

However, our sons are reflective of many such successes as the result of the broad range of initiatives that encourage, support, recognize, and celebrate the academic achievement, intellectual development, community service, and creative accomplishments of our youth.

As Ministry Leaders for Education, my wife and I believe our church has developed a model that other faith-based and community organizations can replicate as they accept a role in increasing academic outcomes and postsecondary success for all children.



## Making an Impact on Students and Families

Testimonials from parents:



*"The biggest impact that the academic celebrations have had on my daughter and the students overall is something to continue to strive for. My daughter has mentioned that being recognized at church gives her a larger sense of appreciation and fulfillment than just receiving a pencil and a movie at school."*

*"There is no discussion about what God has done for our children in our children's schools. It is so important for our kids to know that they can do nothing apart from God. We are allowed to celebrate what God has done in our children's lives at the Turner Chapel celebrations. The environment is also more festive and spirit-filled."*

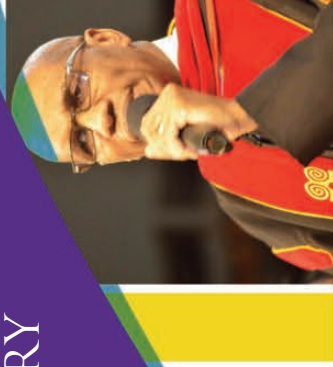


*"These ceremonies are a blessing not only to the kids but to the Adults as well. The kids are made to feel appreciated and adults are seeing their prayers manifested through the success of the children in our church. It is wonderful to see God help our children excel in the academic areas. Our family loves these celebrations and is so very thankful for the efforts of the entire Education Ministry. Excellent job!"*



*"Students are in need of guidance. Once engaged, students and parents appreciate the planning activities and resources that are shared by the Education Ministry. Accomplished students tend to want to volunteer to help other students with their planning efforts."*

# EDUCATION MINISTRY



*The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel; to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels.*

Proverbs 1:1-5



**TURNER CHAPEL**  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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## Overview

The initiatives of the Education Ministry are designed to **encourage academic achievement** during the primary grades; **provide support** for superior academic achievement through tutoring and test prep; **close the college knowledge gap** through workshops; **expose the community** to college opportunities through an annual college fair; and **support the college and career aspirations** of students through hands-on support and enrichment opportunities.

## Academic Celebrations

We encourage students to pursue **exceptional academic achievement**. Youth in grades K – 11 are recognized in September for the previous year’s semester grades and in February for first semester grades of the current school year. Students who achieve a **GPA of 3.0 or higher** are **publicly recognized** during worship service and are **celebrated** at a reception in their honor. The Kenneth Edward Marcus and Cassandra Young Marcus **Awards for Academic Excellence** are presented to the male and female students with the highest overall GPA for the school year in grades 6 – 11.



## Georgia Assessments

Georgia assessment prep sessions for grades 3 – 8 are offered in **Reading and Math**.



## Tutoring and SAT Prep

We ensure that students who are inspired to pursue academic excellence and college admissions are provided with **tutorial and SAT prep** support. Contact Phillip Norris at [pnorris57@yahoo.com](mailto:pnorris57@yahoo.com) regarding math tutoring and Tyrone Smith at [tyrone.smith81@yahoo.com](mailto:tyrone.smith81@yahoo.com) regarding SAT prep. The sessions provide **study skills, test-taking approaches**, and are designed to assist students in becoming self-directed in their approach to learning.

## College-Planning Workshops

College-planning workshops are presented throughout the year to assist students and parents in expanding their knowledge in such areas as:

- Course planning
  - Résumé writing
  - College admissions
  - Summer programs
  - Essay writing
  - Interviewing
  - Scholarships and financial aid
  - Completing the FAFSA
- (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

## College Discussion Panel

Students return during the college break to share their experiences at a broad range of institutions, e.g., Ivy League, HBCUs, public, private, liberal arts, research institutions, and Military Service Academies.

## College Fair

The annual Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry College Fair attracts **over 50 colleges**, universities, and trade schools (e.g., Morehouse, Spelman, Harvard, Stanford, University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Emory, Hampton, and the Military Service Academies). The fair is **free to the public** and offers a variety of workshops pertaining to college planning, admissions, scholarships, and financial aid.

## College Tour

An annual tour of colleges and universities in the southeast and northeast during **Spring Break** introduces students to public, private, liberal arts, and research institutions. Contact Tyrone Smith at [tyrone.smith81@yahoo.com](mailto:tyrone.smith81@yahoo.com).

## Education Ministry Youth Ambassadors

A **community service and leadership development** program for high school youth. Prepares students to serve and to qualify for competitive college scholarships and admissions.



## College-Planning Cohort

We work hands-on with high school seniors to guide them through the **college admissions, scholarship, and financial aid** processes. Students engage in **college/scholarship research, essay writing, and interviewing** with a focus on getting admitted into the right colleges and acquiring the necessary financial aid to pay for college.

## The Next Episode

A combination teen **Bible study** and **college planning** session for high school **juniors** and **seniors** is held on the second Sunday of each month during the worship service. The purpose is to assist students in navigating the challenges of high school, middle adolescence, spiritual development, and college planning.

## High School Senior Graduation Celebration

All of our programming culminates with the high school graduation of our students. The Turner Chapel AME Church graduating high school seniors are celebrated on **“Graduation Celebration Sunday,”** hosted on the **last weekend in May**. All graduating seniors and their parents are recognized in the **graduation program**; seniors qualify for **ministry awards** and **book scholarships**; each senior receives a personally engraved **Bible**; and a **reception** is hosted in their honor.

## For further information:

Visit the YPB Village at [www.turnerchapelame.org](http://www.turnerchapelame.org)  
Visit the Education Ministry Facebook® Page at [www.facebook.com/tcceducationministry](http://www.facebook.com/tcceducationministry)  
E-mail: [tcceducationministry@accessandequity.org](mailto:tcceducationministry@accessandequity.org)  
Ph (770) 518-0369 | FAX (770) 587-0862

## Head of the class: Turner Chapel AME Church grooms students for success

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by Marcus E. Howard  
 mhoward@mdjonline.com  
 06.23.12 - 12:58 am



MARIETTA — For the past several years, Turner Chapel AME Church’s education ministry has been preparing the youngest members of its flock for a brighter future.

The ministry offers students from kindergarten through 12th grade guidance to achieving academic excellence. About 250 students participate in its initiatives each

semester, some of whom are not Turner members.

On May 27, 37 Turner high school seniors participated in the church’s annual graduation recognition ceremony, wearing their individual schools’ caps and gowns. In total, the graduating seniors earned \$2.6 million in college scholarships.

The church, established by slaves in the mid-1800s, also celebrated its consecutive Gates Millennium Scholarship recipient.

After moving from California in the 1990s, Mychal and Nina Wynn joined Turner and changed the direction of the church’s education ministry when they became co-chairpersons six years ago.

“We redefined the ministry from merely presenting the students with college scholarships to accepting a role in increasing achievement, beginning in the primary grades,” said Mychal.

He said the ministry has become a supplement to public education, which has often come up short in closing the achievement gap.

“Schools have not, anywhere in the county at anytime, been able to systemically or in any sustainable way close the achievement gap,” said Mychal. “There is a huge need for faith-based institutions and community associations to accept a role in supporting, encouraging and increasing student achievement.”

Mychal said he and his wife are consultants who have worked in the education field for 30 years. They operate The Foundation for Ensuring Access and Equity and an independent publishing company, Rising Sun Publishing, which has

published Mychal's 26 educational books.

The education ministry has 17 established initiatives, including Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests prep, college fairs, college planning workshops and biannual academic achievement celebrations.

"Just providing opportunities for parents and children to really learn and understand what they need to do to be successful in K-12 schools, so that they're college ready and have access to some of the best colleges and universities in the country," Mychal said.

In the fall, the graduating seniors will be enrolling in such institutions of higher education as Kennesaw State University, Morehouse, Howard, Xavier, University of Miami and Rochester Institute of Technology.

Turner member Brianna Moses, a 2011 South Cobb High School graduate, is currently studying biology at Howard in Washington, D.C. She credited the education ministry with preparing her for college and receiving a Gates Millennium Scholarship.

"They helped me so greatly my senior year with college, having to fill out all those applications," said Moses, who plans to become a genetic counselor.

"I was also preparing for scholarships, and most importantly the Gates Millennium Scholarship, because that scholarship was so extraneous. I had over 15 essays, so I had to get them revised and edited. They had no problem helping with that process and with my resume."

Mychal said he will never forget the comments one male student from Marietta made after attending a college planning meeting, an experience that inspired him to focus more on academics.

"His comments were: 'I have never been in a room with that many smart black people,'" recalled Mychal.

"He talked about how students in the room were talking about getting into Ivy League schools, and some students having scored a 28 on the ACT were disappointed because it wasn't as high as they expected. He said he had just never experienced that."

## Georgia Church Helps Student Members Receive \$4.3 Million in College Scholarships



(Photo: Facebook/Turner Chapel AME Education Ministry)

Recent high school student members during Turner Chapel AME's graduation ceremony.

By [Jessica Martinez](#)  
May 29, 2014 | 5:01 pm

A Georgia church helped 50 of its recent high school graduates earn \$4.3 million in scholarships by mentoring and providing guidance to the students through their education ministry.

Turner Chapel AME in Marietta held a special service to honor the group, who were accepted to a combined 125 colleges and received college tuition assistance through private scholarships, institutional, merit and need-based aid.

Students come from economic backgrounds that "span the range of families with little to no financial resources to those with enough to pay some of their college costs. However, even the most affluent families find a \$60,000 annual price tag out of reach without taking out loans," Mychal Wynn, leader of the education ministry told The Christian Post.

Both Wynn and his wife, Nina, co-lead the program at Turner Chapel with the purpose of helping students within their congregation search for scholarships and equip them with the skills needed to earn financial assistance.

Prior to beginning the education ministry, the Wynn's and the church had raised \$3,000 for college scholarships. However, once they approached their senior pastor in 2007, the Rev. Kenneth Marcus, to begin the program, they saw how students benefited from their assistance after they began earning scholarships.

"Supporting students and families is the work of the church. Guiding students into college, debt free, allows families to continue to have the financial resources to support the work of the church and it's

various outreach ministries," said Wynn.

Joining the Wynn's in their work is youth pastor Rev. Don Ezell, who assists student members with their resumes, essay writing, tutoring and preparing for state issued standardized tests.

"We are excited to have the ability to cultivate a culture of academic excellence among our youth ... We believe that it is the responsibility of the faith community to support student achievement," Ezell told CP.

Part of that culture also includes having college church members return on their breaks to help other students, or to mentor other Turner Chapel AME students, as some are the first in their family to attend college and are oftentimes unaware of educational resources.

Aside from offering help to students because its the church's responsibility, Wynn says they do it because school counselors are often overwhelmed with the number of students they are responsible for and cannot in each case provide personalized guidance.

"Churches have a tremendous knowledge base to draw from, such as retired educators, human resource professionals, college students, counselors, and high performing students," said Wynn, whose church has 6,000 members. "All such resources can be used to assist with resumes, essays, selecting high school classes, identifying summer programs, tutoring, leadership, and performing community service."

He added, "Closing the college knowledge gap and assisting in making the right college match are continuing struggles for school districts. Our work supports the intentions of school districts, brings more families with children into the church ... and contributes to the spiritual, intellectual, and leadership development of youth."

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## HIGHER EDUCATION



Turner Chapel AME Church member Brittany White (center), here with senior pastor the Rev. Kenneth Marcus and co-pastor the Rev. Cassandra Marcus, won a Gates Millennium Scholarship. CONTRIBUTED

# Church helps students strike scholarship gold

**50 members get total of \$4.3M in offers.**

**Church gives counsel on finding, and getting, awards for college.**

**By Eric Stirgus**  
estirgus@ajc.com

The \$3,000 their church raised for the college scholarships was nice, but Mychal and Nina Wynn thought it could do more.

In 2007, the couple approached Turner Chapel AME Church senior pastor the Rev. Kenneth Marcus with the idea

of a ministry to help students search for other scholarships and, just as importantly, provide them with the skills to get those scholarships.

On Sunday the church, in Marietta, held a service for 50 church members who have been awarded scholarships. The offers totaled \$4.3 million.

Some students, like Brittany White, have earned full scholarships. White earned a Gates Millennium scholarship, which pays the entire tuition to any school the recipient attends. White's choice was Spelman College.

"It feels really great knowing they want me to succeed as much as I want to succeed,"

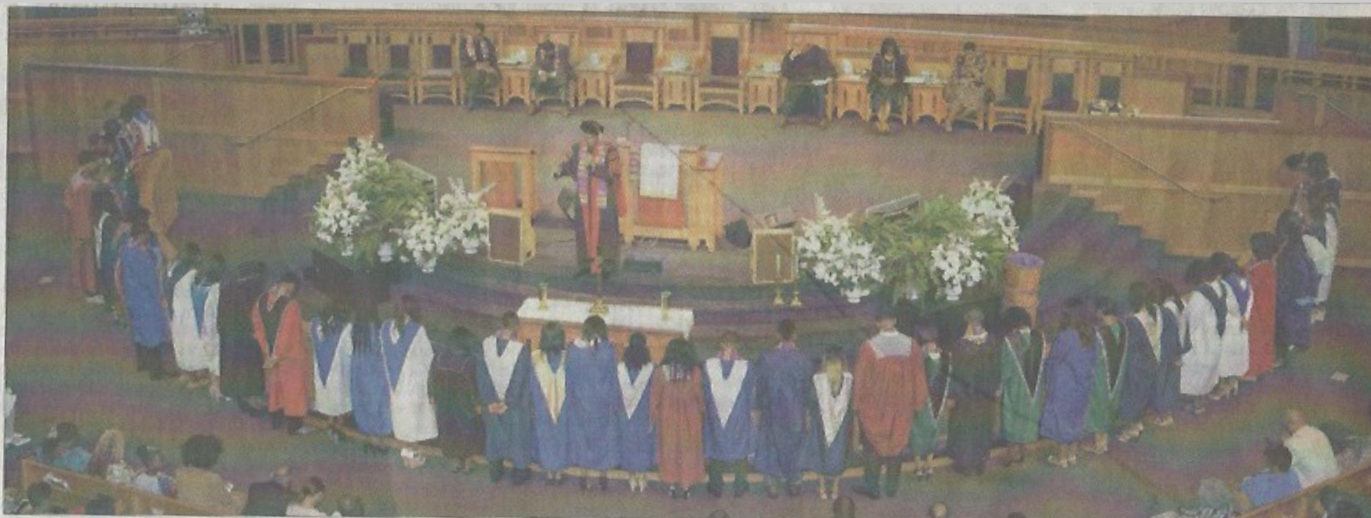
said White, 18.

Most of the students attend high schools in Cobb and Marietta, but some have graduated from schools in Cherokee, Fulton, Gwinnett and Paulding counties and Atlanta.

Community organizations and houses of worship across Georgia are getting more involved in helping aspiring college students find scholarships. Few, though, are as involved or successful as Turner Chapel AME, observers say.

Dr. Emily Lembeck, superintendent of Marietta City Schools, said, "I always enjoy attending this special service at Turner Chapel, where

Church continued on B8



Turner Chapel AME Church senior pastor the Rev. Kenneth Marcus prays for students at the church who have received scholarships. CONTRIBUTED

## Church

continued from B1

the number of graduates recognized continues to grow each year. This year MHS had a record number of graduates earning the largest amount of scholarship funds ever, and I appreciate the contribution to this success that stems from the support some of our students received from the Education Ministry."

At Turner Chapel AME, the Wynns, youth pastor the Rev. Don Ezell and others worked with student members to find scholarships that fit their academic interests. They also helped with resume and essay writing, tutoring and preparing for the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test. The

church also holds a college fair each October. Last year, about 50 colleges came, said Mychal Wynn.

Reginald Lyon, president of the Duke Black Alumni Connection, which has about 1,500 members nationwide, attended the fair and was astounded by the preparedness of the students and workshops the church had on financial aid, college interviews and other topics.

"This was the most impressive setup I've seen at a historically black church," said Lyon, who lives in Dallas, Texas.

The church began in the mid-19th century. It has about 6,000 members.

Like Jesus urging his disciples to follow him and vowing to make them fishers of men, the Wynns have traveled to

other churches to share what they are doing at Turner Chapel AME, with the inspirational message that they can do it too.

"We have created a scholarly culture and a culture of service," said Mychal Wynn.

That culture of service includes requiring church members in college to return on their breaks to help other students, or to mentor other Turner Chapel AME students once they arrive on campus. Many students are the first in their family to attend college and were unaware many of these scholarships exist. Some students say their guidance counselors, swamped with the hundreds of students seeking their attention, don't always have time to help.

Linette Andrea, whose daughter, Jordan Fessehaie, 17,

will attend Boston University this fall, echoes the thoughts of many parents. A blessing, the mom called it.

"Jordan had a clear vision of her goals since the 10th grade, and working with the Wynns allowed both of us to be more focused and acquire information that was not at school or in the community," Andrea said.

For Kyla Baron, 17, the long hours of prep work in the ministry have resulted in a full scholarship from Xavier University in New Orleans, where she wants to study biology. Baron, who graduated from Kennesaw Mountain High School, said she's received other scholarships that will help her pay for books, her dorm room and transportation to school "so my parents don't have to pay for that."

## Education and Schools News

## PRESS RELEASE:

## Georgia-based author and educational consultant, Mychal Wynn, focuses on expanding college access for lower income and first generation students

Mon, 30 Nov 2015, 20:41:48 ET

ROSWELL, Ga., Nov. 30, 2015 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) -- Georgia-based author and educational consultant, Mychal Wynn, is working to expand college access for lower income and first generation students. Wynn notes, "As students nationally apply to college over the coming months, students who will be the first in their family to attend college and those from low-income families, will be particularly at risk of making the wrong college choice."

Wynn adds, "Even those students who have successfully navigated their way into their final year of high school, studies show that such students will experience multiple challenges from identifying the right colleges and financial resources, to fully completing and submitting college applications, filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), meeting financial aid deadlines, submitting enrollment deposits, and actually enrolling in college in the fall following high school."



Wynn says that while policymakers are discussing how to respond the plethora of research pertaining to these challenges, he has developed a means of providing immediate support for such students. "I have written a collection of quick guides and over 50 downloadable activities that parents, teachers, mentors, and support organizations can use to provide guidance and assist students in overcoming these challenges. Self-motivated students can use the activities to navigate their way through each part of the college admissions and financial aid processes."

Rev. Don Ezell, parent and Youth Pastor of the Turner Chapel AME Church in Marietta, Georgia notes, "The downloadable activities that Mychal has created represent an easy to use curricula that anyone interested in assisting students in navigating the college admissions and financial aid processes can use. I used the activities in assisting my own children, who are now

both enrolled in college, and our church's Education Ministry, where Mr. and Mrs. Wynn serve as the Ministry Leaders, have used the activities to assist students in navigating their way into top colleges and high dollar scholarships like the Gates Millennium Scholars program for several years. The ability to use a \$1.95 activity to save hundreds of dollars in fees or to earn thousands of dollars in scholarships is an unimaginable return on investment."

Mychal Wynn's website ( <http://mychalwynn.com/> ) outlines the complete scope of his work, while the Rising Sun Publishing website ( <http://rspublishing.com/> ) provides a full range of Mr. Wynn's college planning resources and activities.

Rising Sun Publishing, P.O. Box 70906, Marietta, GA 30007.

\*Photo Caption: Wynn is pictured with Lake City High School (SC) student and 2015 Gates Millennium Scholar, Mikayla Hanna, who was offered over \$1 million in scholarships and financial aid.



■ **PLANS** Author and motivational speaker visits island to show students how to create educational goals

# Help young rise to potential

Nadia Arandjelovic

**M**ichael Wynn grew up in poverty on Chicago's South Side. No one in his family had graduated from college and the odds were stacked against him doing so either: the dropout rate at his high school was nearly 90 per cent; only 15 of the 500 students who started with him in the ninth grade continued on to university.

It's a story he shares with young people in hopes of motivating them towards higher education, something he's done since he graduated from Northeastern University in 1979.

The 59-year-old author spoke with students at the Berkeley Institute and CedarBridge Academy this week.

He was invited down by the leadership of Sandys 360, the community sports club that closed its doors to the public more than two years ago. Mr Wynn was an instrumental part of the organisation's mentoring programme that continues to help 25 teenage boys thanks to sponsorship from Lancashire Insurance Company Ltd.

"Parents often have this long-term conversation with their children about what they want to do when they grow up, but what we need to do is the planning around that," he told Lifestyle.

"I've met seniors in high school who said they wanted to become a doctor in primary school but they've been failing math and science. No one helped them align those goals with their actions."

Children should be encouraged to work toward their potential, no matter where their strength lies, he said.

"We know children are gifted in so many different ways and we fail to recognise it and hone those gifts."

"Parents can play a key role with this in a child's early stages, but eventually young people have to take ownership for their own college path. What I tell young people is I can support them, but it's their race to run. I can give them suggestions on which high school courses to take, but you have to do the work to succeed in class."

He only made it to university "by chance", Mr Wynn said.



Photograph by Akil Simmons

**On a mission:** Mychal Wynn is an American author and motivational speaker who is passionate about helping young people get to college. He spoke with students at CedarBridge Academy and the Berkeley Institute

"There was no guidance in my high school to get to college. I attended a conference one day. I went there to take photographs. A guy called me over to his table and he presented me with an application form to fill in for Northeastern. I went back to my high school and didn't tell anyone and I completed the application, sent it off and received a conditional acceptance."

He had to take a calculus and physics class to get accepted. Mr Wynn spent an extra semester getting the credits at a community college, working for the US Postal Service on the side.

"I was focused on my studies because I knew that was a way out," he said. "From a young age, before I even started school, although neither of my parents

graduated from high school, my father always affirmed I was going to college. He knew a college education was the way out of poverty."

"In the end I passed both the physics and math class and started at Northeastern on January 19, 1975. I graduated from the engineering programme in 1979."

He was recruited by IBM immediately after graduation.

To have full-time employment, get to drive his own car and have his own money was "an unimaginable experience" for him but the corporate world wasn't the right fit. He returned to his childhood passion of writing poetry. It eventually got him a job teaching middle school students.

"I realised working with young people was my passion," Mr Wynn said. "I started looking into the black male crisis in the United States and have been involved with the education crisis for over 30 years now."

"We've seen students move from primary school into colleges and universities across the country. Two are in law school, another one is in medical school at Morehouse, another is in graduate school and there's one young man studying mechatronics engineering."

One of the biggest challenges he's encountered over the years is what he calls the "college knowledge gap"; students don't know what is needed to get into the college of their choice or even how to go about applying.

"There's an inequitable counsellor ratio in the States, meaning a lot of children don't get the support they need early enough," he said. "And with college admissions being so competitive and college tuition being so costly, students are likely to make the wrong college choices. There are students who are very bright and should be applying to schools they are academically qualified for. Instead they apply for more basic schools thinking they will get a scholarship, but those schools have more competitive financial aid policies."

Instead of lecturing students, Mr Wynn tries to get them engaged in plotting their own path. "Students research their own colleges and are able to conceptualise their own plans," he said.

## Get your children into college

Nadia Arandjelovic

Mychal Wynn suggests three steps for getting children ready for college:

1. Constantly observe your child's interests, skills and passions.
2. As your child reveals their interests, make sure to provide them with enrichment opportunities in those areas.

Whether it's in their school curriculum, summer programmes or after school provide them with opportunities to grow in those areas, Mr Wynn said. Sometimes children change their minds about a certain hobby or activity as they get older, but you can always adapt their extracurricular around that.

**3. Start planning.** Mr Wynn calls it "backward mapping" — whereby you start by looking at the type of interests your child has, then start researching which universities or degree programmes they might enjoy doing. Look at what types of students get into those universities and receive full scholarships — and set goals around that.

"Parents need to start taking into account what kind of education their child may need and how it will get paid for," he said.

Education and Schools News

PRESS RELEASE:

## Church Hosts 5th Annual FREE College Discussion Panel (GA) on Saturday, December 19, 2015, from 10 a.m. - Noon

Tue, 01 Dec 2015, 08:00:27 ET

MARIETTA, Ga., Dec. 1, 2015 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) -- The Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry (Marietta, Ga.), hosts its 5th Annual College Discussion Panel, on Saturday, December 19, 2015, from 10 a.m. - Noon. Appearing on the panel will be students representing 13 public, private, HBCU, community college, graduate school, law school, and medical school programs. Panelists are members of the Turner Chapel AME Church who return in December each year from their respective campuses to sit in one of the coveted college discussion panel seats.

Education Ministry Leader, Mychal Wynn, notes, "Via text messages, our Facebook page, and through their parents, we remain connected

to our students after they go off to college. For the past five years, our students have candidly shared their experiences as a means of assisting current high school students in making well-informed college choices."

Wynn adds, "Three of our panelists, Brianna Moses (2011 Gates Millennium Scholar, Howard 2015 BS Biology), Jameson Sackey (Vanderbilt 2012 BA Political Science), and Anya Bazzell (Boston University 2011 BS Biology), first appeared on the panel as undergraduate students and now return as graduate, law, and medical school students. Another panelist, Tahri Turner, who appeared on the panel as an undergraduate student at Southern Polytechnic State University has received his BS in Mechatronics Engineering and has entered the workforce.

"Our panelists will provide great insight into all aspects of their college experience, including if they made the right college choice. Our panelists are so candid in answering questions that we have had high school seniors finalize their college choice as a result of what they learned from the panel discussion. We will also host a reception immediately following where parents



Send2Press® Newswire

PRESS RELEASE :

## Church Hosts 6th Annual College Fair (GA) as part of role to close achievement gap and expand college access

Mon, 12 Oct 2015, 18:10:32 ET

MARIETTA, Ga., Oct. 12, 2015 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) -- The Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry (Marietta, Ga.), hosts its 6th annual college fair, beginning with a pre-college fair workshop by author and education ministry leader, Mychal Wynn, based on his new book, "Show Me the Money: A Comprehensive Guide to Scholarships, Financial Aid, and Making the Right College Choice," from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. The college fair runs from Noon to 3 p.m., Oct. 24, and is FREE to the public.

The 50 participating colleges, including Harvard, MIT, Duke, Purdue, and Syracuse, represent HBCUs, public and private institutions, military service academies, and technical colleges.

The fair will offer workshops and resources, such as the Gates Millennium Scholars Program, Questbridge Program, Posse Foundation Program, and Georgia Finance Commission.

The Turner Chapel AME Church, a 5,000-member congregation in Marietta, Georgia, led by Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Marcus (Senior Pastor) and Rev. Cassandra Y. Marcus (Co-Pastor), has received national acclaim for serving as a model of how faith-based institutions can support academic achievement, close the college knowledge gap, expand college access, and guide students into earning millions of dollars in scholarships. The church boasts of having 5 Gates Millennium Scholars, 3 Posse Foundation Scholars, and students admitted into America's most selective colleges and universities.

Youth pastor, Rev. Don Ezell, notes, "Our annual college fair is part of a comprehensive approach to inspiring, supporting, informing, and preparing students for college and careers. In 2014, students participating in our annual college planning cohort were offered over \$4.3 million in scholarships and financial aid from over 125 colleges and universities-including such highly



# PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Church Hosts 6th Annual College Fair (GA) on Saturday, October 24, 2015, as part of role to close achievement gap and expand college access

MARIETTA, GA October 12, 2015 (Turner Chapel AME Church) -- The Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry (Marietta, GA), hosts its 6th annual college fair, on Saturday, October 24, 2015, beginning with a pre-college fair workshop by author and education ministry leader, Mychal Wynn, based on his new book, "Show Me the Money: A Comprehensive Guide to Scholarships, Financial Aid, and Making the Right College Choice," from 10:30 am - 11:30 am. The college fair runs from Noon to 3:00 pm, and is FREE to the public.

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Youth pastor, Rev. Don Ezell, notes, "Our annual college fair is part of a comprehensive approach to inspiring, supporting, informing, and preparing students for college and careers. In 2014, students participating in our annual college planning cohort were offered over \$4.3 million in scholarships and financial aid from over 125 colleges and universities—including such highly selective colleges as Cornell, Spelman, Morehouse, Xavier University (LA), Pomona College, Williams College, Wake Forest, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, Boston University, and Syracuse University."

Emmy award-winning poet, Hank Stewart, whose foundation ([The Stewart Foundation](#)) is a partner, says, "The Turner Chapel AME Church Education Ministry is a national leader in establishing a clear role for faith-based institutions to encourage and support academic achievement for students from underrepresented and marginalized communities. Mychal and Nina Wynn, are providing tremendous leadership through their example of what the clergy and community-based organizations can do to supplement and support local schools."