

# Having Our Say

*The newsletter of SaySo, Strong Able Youth Speaking Out*

## SAYSO ORIENTATION WEEKEND

Volume 7, Number 4

### About SaySo, Inc.

SaySo is a statewide association of youth aged 14 to 24 who are or have been in North Carolina's out-of-home care system. This includes all types of substitute care, including foster care, group homes, and mental health placements.

Our mission is to work to improve the substitute care system by educating the community, speaking out about needed changes, and providing support to youth who are or have been in substitute care.

### Become a Member!

If you are interested in joining **SaySo**, let us know! E-mail or write us with the following information: your name, age, and address (including e-mail), region and the kind of out-of-home placement you are or have been in.

### Contact Information

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### Officers

Co-chairs: Curtina K. and  
Cherish C.  
Secretary: Jackie S.  
Treasurer: Britney M.  
Sergeant-at-arms: Shelby E..

By: Muhammad Aleem

June 20th marked another day in history, but for 9 teenagers in substitute care, that day held equal significance to man's first landing on the moon. I was one of the nine brave young teens that was inaugurated on that day. The other inductees are as follows: Asia J., Brittaney C., Brittany M., Cherish C., Jackie S., Melissa R., Peaches S., and last but not least, Shelby E.. Members not in attendance include; Antwan B., Curtina K., Lakisha T., Piffanie L., Dennis S., and Demetrice.

The new board members had to complete some skill building, strategic games to establish a rock solid foundation for the future of SAYSO. The challenges ranged in levels of difficulty from mind boggling to physically exhausting. One of the challenges was to pass a bucket around the room without using our hands but thanks to a brilliant innovation by Melinda Medina, an adult supporter and founding member of SaySo, the challenge was made simpler and efficient. One of the trust building exercises was one of the board members would climb up a ladder and at its fifth rung would fall backwards to the ground where the remaining board members were there to catch her, or in my case, him. Those two exercises pale in comparison to the final exercise; we were divided into teams of three and scaled a 40 foot wall in 90 degree weather, Yours truly scaled the wall, not once but twice, what an impressive show of teamwork by the SAYSO board of directors! The challenges represented the goals that we had to accomplish as a board of directors.

We need leadership and teamwork to move SAYSO as an organization from imminent transition into independence; that is needed to grow as a healthy group of teens in substitute care. The only way we can support local chapters in need is if we get some feedback. If there is a county that does not have a local SAYSO chapter and there are dedicated, hard working, teens in need of a way to express themselves and acquire skills for life you could get in contact with us via the internet at [www.saysoinc.org](http://www.saysoinc.org). If any suggestions or questions for the editor, you can e-mail me at [martian\\_Afronaut1134@yahoo.com](mailto:martian_Afronaut1134@yahoo.com).

We are also doing Make A Difference Day Project and based on feedback from youth at this past SaySo Saturday we are going to be providing toiletries (toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.) If you are interested in Make A Difference Day Project and would like to participate or just want to know what its all about the information is posted on our website at [www.saysoinc.org](http://www.saysoinc.org)

[YOUR FEEDBACK IS APPRECIATED!! WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU !!!!!]



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## **Record Breaking LINK-Up Youth Conference!**

**WOW!!! This conference was a must attend!! And shall I say, we had attendance. This years conference was coordinated by SaySo's alumni Melinda Medina. This LINK-Up conference, which was held at Cleveland Community College in Shelby, NC, was the largest one to date! We had over 85 youths attend and 30 adults. This years LINK-Up was coordinated in cooperation with the Cleveland County LINKS youths and adult supporters. The topics discussed were healthy relationships, furthering your education, banking, and gangs and violence. If you didn't get to attend this conference be on the lookout for the next one coming in February in Lake Waccamaw! We look forward to seeing you there!**



Participants getting checked in!



SaySo Board of Directors getting check in ready!

## ***MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY PROJECT IS COMING UP!! WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU***

In the past SaySo has sponsored a Make A Difference Day Project called, "Give A Child A Smile" which was a suitcase collection. This year we took votes from foster youth across the state at the annual SaySo Saturday conference about what they needed. The majority of the youth said hygiene products. So hygiene products it is! We need to hear from YOU! Contact us if you are a foster youth or know a foster youth who is interested in receiving hygiene products. We will only send them to those we hear from. Also if you would like to donate hygiene products please contact us. We would like to have all contact information and donation my October 27, 2006. This year's Make a Difference Day is on October 28, 2006. Please contact Melinda Medina @ 1-800-820-0001 or [Melinda.medina@ilrinc.com](mailto:Melinda.medina@ilrinc.com) with your name, address, and phone number!

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