



MAKING A COMEBACK

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www.dvuli.org

Mile High City, Here I Come!

by Dionne Peeples

I had no plans to attend the upcoming DeVos Reunion in Denver.

The day the reunion information arrived in my mailbox, so did the phone bill, the gas bill, a photo/radar speeding ticket and a second reminder to pay the property tax on my house.

The bills landed in the "bill bowl" and the reunion information landed in the shredder.

I could not afford to fly to Denver though I really wanted to see my DeVos family. The first reunion I attended was in San Antonio in 2005 and it was refreshing. I was re-energized and rejuvenated because I had connected with my DeVos family and had gained so much insight from the workshops.

I listen to the CDs to this day. "Raising Up Young Heroes" is one of my favorites.

My life had changed a lot since I attended the San Antonio Reunion so I convinced myself that I shouldn't attend this next one. But I began to reflect on how the 2005 Reunion was like a big family reunion. During my 3 days in San Antonio, graduates spent time together long after the sessions and activities ended.

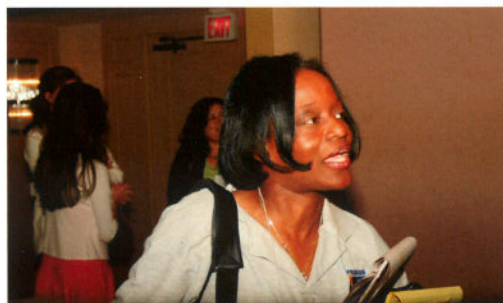
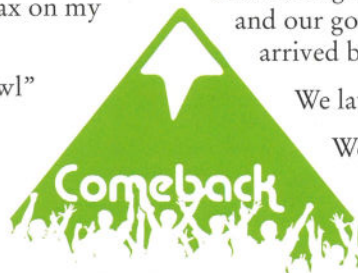
There were impromptu prayer meetings and long talks in the lobby. On the last night of the reunion, a group of us sat in the lobby. We were from every state. Somebody ordered pizza and another group found a nearby store and brought snacks and soda. We sat in the hotel lobby like it was somebody's living room reminiscing about our time in the Initiative and our goals we would achieve when we arrived back home.

We laughed.

We cried.

We ate.

We encouraged.



The late night turned to early morning, and some of us were still in the lobby. As I began to talk about my fears of entering leadership at a higher level, Scott Sangster (Denver, 2003) just listened.

When I completed my story, Scott had a story of his own to share.

He told me about a man who tried to move a huge boulder alone. The man bloodied his hands and knuckles trying to move this massive rock. The man tried for many hours each day with no success. When he gave up, disappointed and discouraged, the person who had given him the assignment said, "I never said move the rock. I told you to push against

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HERE'S MY TAKE

THE PLAYER'S PRINCIPLE

Some of the most inspiring stories of triumph have come from the world of sports. Most competing athletes are very familiar with the ABC TV Wide World of Sports phrase, "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat." But what's more thrilling are the unforgettable moments when seemingly there's no hope for a win and somehow the final score redefined courage, team, heart and ability. Many of the same qualities needed to make it in life and ministry are used every night on the playing field. The DVULI family is blessed with athletes who have competed at every level, from the high school basketball court to the NFL, and they know what it means to make a Comeback. Here's their take!

Dorian Hodge (Paterson, 2001)



As coach of the New Jersey Wolf Pack AAU Basketball team, we were playing against a team from Newark and were down 15 points at the half - the score was 25 to 10. While in the locker room I told my boys that I wanted them to switch from a zone defense to a man-to-man in the second half. I also said 'we are a much better team than they are, don't conform to their level and let's get back out there and play hard.' My guard, who was only 11-years old, came out and took control by being more vocal and getting the rest of the team involved. He passed the ball well, he helped on defense and he scored. A player on the opposing team got frustrated and wanted to fight my guard. Although there were no technical's called, it was obvious the switch to man-to-man threw them out of their game. The

guard made the rest of the team believe in themselves and they persevered against an opponent that was much bigger in size to get the win, 45 to 40. It was really a team effort! I became a better coach after that game. I learned from this that will and determination can get you a comeback and a win!

Domingo Mota (Los Angeles, 2005)



In 1990 I was playing Center Field for Cal State Fullerton. There was a major transition in the coaching staff. One of the most popular coaches in collegiate baseball had left, and the new coach came in with a new philosophy and a new staff. We had a meeting where he told our team that we were not looking good in the Big West. We were unranked since the top of the season and people didn't think much of us. That meeting made all the difference as we took the Big West and went to the regional against Texas University. UT hated Cal State so bad that when we arrived they called us all surf boys and all sorts of other names just because we were from Los Angeles. We swept the regional's beating Texas twice in a row. Amidst the hype, I can also testify that, individually, it was my worst year in baseball. I didn't put up the usual numbers, didn't have good relationships with the coaches, and I knew I was capable of more but was underutilized. Being down and thinking I didn't have much of a future, I got drafted and signed with the LA Dodgers, and was assigned to the Gulf Coast League in Florida. That year I was the MVP, missed the batting crown by just one point, and received the Dodgers'

Minor League Player of the Year Award. As a team it was our ability to believe in ourselves and pull together in the face of opposition. As a player it was having someone who supports and believes in you that provided direction to making a comeback.

Christina Fowler (DC 2009)



I was playing basketball for Rutgers and we were up by 10 points with one minute left. We thought we were about to finish it out. But that minute turned to utter disgust as Ohio State University hit a three point shot and was fouled. Then we got hit with a technical because one of my team mates got upset with the call. They're down four points and earned possession and came up the court and hit another two-point shot. We went from being up by 10 to up by two, and only 35 seconds left to run out the clock. Forced to shoot, we missed and Ohio State came back to score another three point shot putting them up by one point. With the final seconds we had one more chance to win, but could not get a shot to fall before the buzzer. Even in defeat, where there is devastation, anger and shock, I found that you can still make a comeback. Our coach didn't punish us but she sat us down and made us do some soul searching. She asked the difficult questions about our commitment so that a loss like that (39 winning minutes and falling apart in one) doesn't happen again. Sometimes the greatest comeback is in the lessons learned after a loss.

- Gerald Bell

BRIEF NEWS AND BREAKTHROUGHS



Jacqueline Williams

(Cleveland, 2009) & Shawn Payne exchanged "forever" vows on April 3, 2010 at Sacred Hearts of Jesus Church in Walton Hills, OH. With 100 guests in attendance Jacqueline said the day was "Heaven sent and blessed by God." One high point to their special day was how the officiating

Bishop had the couple to tie ropes around their wrists to illustrate a Scripture passage from Ecclesiastes 4:12. "The wedding, the weather, the location were all God's gift to us," said Jacqueline.

Kwinn Tucker (Philadelphia, 2004) gave birth to her first baby, Chase Micaiah Tucker on June 9, 2010 at approximately 12:00 noon. Weighing in at 7lbs 7oz and stretching 21 inches long, a very happy Kwinn said, "It feels great!" being a first time mom. Kwinn also said Chase' middle name came from one of the biblical prophets in I Kings, so she hopes her son "will grow to love the Lord."



Sheronia James

(New York, 2009) is the new Director of Program Design & Innovation for the New York Urban League (NYUL). She is responsible for building and implementing all programmatic components for the NYUL which include overseeing a

staff of fourteen. When learning that she was accepted for the position, Sheronia said she was "overjoyed because my graduate studies were in community development and in this position I will be able to make a serious contribution to the urban community." Since her first day on the job last April Sheronia hit the ground running and says, "I am truly grateful... God has blessed me."



Aqueelah Collier

(New York, 2009) & Sharon Michael Ligonde jumped the broom on Friday, May 28, 2010 in Ocho Rio, Jamaica. On the terrace of the Riu Resort with the beach as the

backdrop, family and friends witnessed their exchange of nuptials before three officiating pastors. Aqueelah

said her dad gave her a great speech prior to escorting her down the aisle. In addition, she sang "No One Else" by Amel Larrieux, and four of Aqueelah's DVULI fellows were in attendance. "It was a great day!" she said.



Bernetta McKindra

(Kansas City, 2003) accepted the appointment of Senior Pastor of Alder's Gate Free Methodist Church last May. For the past ten plus years Bernetta would speak at the church in the pastor's absence, hence the long standing relationship made her

a likely candidate. She said there are opportunities to connect with the local school system so the church can strengthen relationships in the community. "It's been my life-long goal to equip people," said Bernetta.



Sharod Tomlison

(New York, 2009) was recently promoted to Director of Student Development and Campus Life at Berkley College of New York. In this capacity he prepares incoming students for successful completion of their degree programs, manages

leadership training, student clubs and activities.

After being a Program Coordinator for 3 years at the school's Midtown campus he was rewarded the new opportunity at performance review time. "It's cool that they recognize how I work and my dedication," said Sharod. "I look forward to being challenged again."

Rachelle & Mark Ayala (YFC, 2009)

endured 12 hours of labor to welcome into the world their baby girl, Malia Renee on April 28, 2010. She weighed 7 lbs 9 oz and measured 20 inches long. "I was excited, confident in the doctors and my husband was a calm and fantastic coach," said Rachelle. "Once she came [the delivery] was better than I expected." As for the future of their

newborn, Rachelle says she prays that Malia will "be a strong woman of God, passionate for the Lord and in whatever gifts she has."



CAUGHT ON CAMERA



CLEVELAND

DVULI graduation is a great time to reflect on the things that have been learned and the relationships that have been forged. It is always wonderful to see the graduates with their families, mentors, supervisors and Pastor's, celebrating their special accomplishment.

From the DeVos Family and DVULI Staff we offer our sincere congratulations and blessings to you in the future, both in your family and life in ministry.

-Rick Diaz



DALLAS



MIAMI

FOR

CONGRATULATIONS
GRADUATES!

NEW YORK CITY



WASHINGTON D.C.



YOUTH
CHRIST



COVER STORY CONTINUED

the rock. ..." Scott told me to remember to push against the rock. Don't try to move it. That would be God's job.

Nice story, I thought.

I was on a spiritual and professional high back then. Life was good. I was clear about my goals and my future in ministry.

But all that had changed.

And several years later, I learned that I don't have the power to move that rock either.

In 2008, I was unemployed and a recession statistic.

But I had a Breakthrough recently as I began to remember the words Scott Sangster spoke to me during that late-night-lobby-discussion at the reunion, "Push against the rock. ... Don't try to move the rock."

"I believe the 2010 Reunion is just what I need at this time in my life."

That is my plan. I will push against the rock and make my way to the Denver reunion so that I once again can be encouraged and inspired by my DeVos family and the vital workshops that are being offered.

I am interested in what Paul Edwards will have to say at his fund raising workshop and Dr. Ronn Elmore who I hear is great ministering to single/professionals.

I am also looking forward to more late-night impromptu sessions where we just laugh and share with each other.

I believe the 2010 Reunion is just what I need at this time in my life. And it's not as expensive as I thought. After all, I just need to get there. The air fares are pretty reasonable. Just a couple hundred will get me to the Mile High City and a \$100 refund if I can find a roommate.

It will be money well spent as I gain insight into improving myself and my ministry. I can't

believe that I once considered not attending. The cost of attending is nothing compared to the information and encouragement I will receive - that is sure to be priceless.

A good friend of mine said, "It sounds like this thing (the reunion) is CPR for the soul."

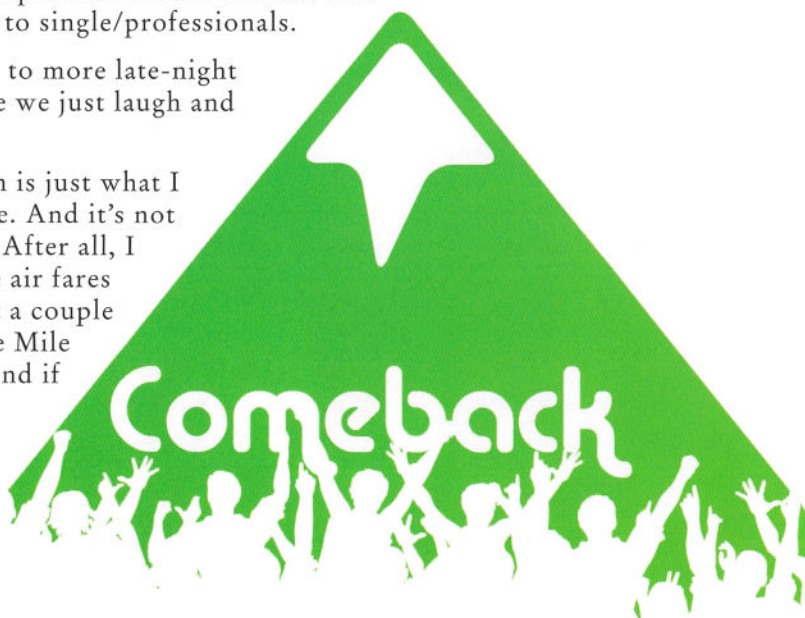
She is right.

I am looking forward to my time in Denver and I especially look forward to seeing Scott Sangster and the rest of my fellow DeVos grads!

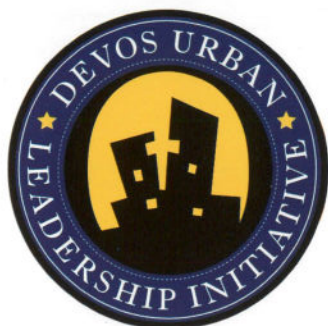


Dionne Peebles is the Outreach Coordinator for the Youth Empowered to Succeed Program, which is designed to empower youth to lead their in communities

through service and entrepreneurship. Dionne is a 2003 Portland graduate of the DVULI and is a freelance writer residing in the St. Louis area.



BEFORE YOU GO



DVULI AND FYI JOIN HANDS

College credits for DeVos participants

In 2011 DeVos Urban Leadership class participants will be able to receive graduate level credit for their work in the DVULI training. Thanks to a lot of hard work between the DVULI staff and Kara Powell, Executive Director of the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI)! This is a fantastic opportunity to begin working toward graduate level credentialing in youth ministry for future DVULI participants. FYI's Urban Youth Ministry Certificate is a logical connection because it also is delivered in a cohort model and is known for its responsiveness to the field of urban youth ministry and the individual situations of urban students.

Here's how this innovative program will work.

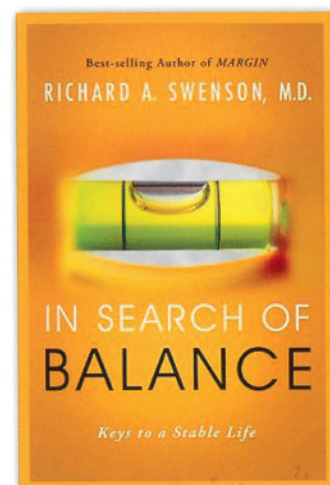
Candidates for the DVULI training program will go through the regular application and interview process conducted by the city coordinator. Upon acceptance by DVULI, if they want to work toward receiving academic credit, the participant will be required to register as a student through the Fuller Youth Institute. They have the potential to earn up to 12 credit hours while in the DVULI training and then to continue on to complete a second year of 12 credits if they desire to complete the Fuller Certificate in Urban Youth Ministry. (For more information on the Fuller certificate program see www.fulleryouthinstitute.org)

Participants will be required to pay tuition to Fuller and to incorporate some additional reading and written work into the existing DVULI curriculum. There will also be financial assistance available. Once the plan for current students is implemented, we hope to begin working on a process for DVULI alumni to also receive credit for prior participation in DVULI and to look for a partner institution to address the needs of students who do not yet have a bachelor's degree.

Your valuable feedback!

When we did our ten year evaluation, many of you said you would have been willing to pay tuition for the DVULI training if earning college credit had been an option. We want to encourage all of you not just to be lifelong learners, but to consider the achievement of a certificate or degree. More than just a piece of paper, it documents the value and credibility you bring to your work with youth in the city. We hope many of our alumni will continue with additional education and training beyond the Initiative.

—Eileen Kooreman



Undoubtedly, maintaining balance is a struggle! But it's a struggle worth fighting. In addition to being lovingly reminded by those who care about us, having good resources is a key to winning the "balance fight." That's why I highly recommend *In Search of Balance* by Dr. Richard Swenson.

Dr. Swenson is a trained physician who has a passion for helping God's people live healthy lives; spiritually, physically, and emotionally. If his name sounds familiar, Dr. Swenson has also written *Margin and The Overload Syndrome*.

In Search of Balance will remind you why maintaining balance is so important, and it will also provide you with "...practical tips for finding rest and contentment in a world that emphasizes materialism and busyness."

—Ron Carter

MESSAGE BOARD

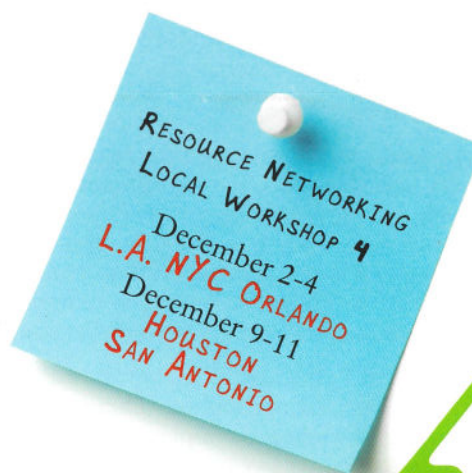
EMAIL:

Jacqueline Payne (Williams) – Cleveland 2009
Darlene Abeyta – Albuquerque 2002
Jack Golston – Denver 2005
Marge Bermann – Grand Rapids 1998

ADDRESS:

Anika Smith – Grand Rapids 2006
Henry Abeyta – Albuquerque 2002
Khary Bridgewater – Boston 2006
Zola Allen – NYC 2009
Jack Golston – Denver 2005
Chuck Harper – Albuquerque 2004
Mark Juarez – San Antonio 2001
Dwight Peace – Los Angeles 2003
Gail Spencer – Pittsburgh 2006

Complete contact information is listed at www.dvuli.org.



Reunion 2010

September 29 - October 2

Call our office for further availability!

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