Alumni achievement

Tyrell Hughes '01 – A MODEL Mentor

To say Tyrell Hughes is busy is an understatement.

When not at his job at the Social Security Administration or working as a consultant for the conflict-resolution organization Mediation Matters, the 2001 Albany High School graduate volunteers his time as director of MODEL, a non-profit organization he helped launch.

Tyrell and four friends founded MODEL – Men Organized to Develop, Empower and Lead, Inc. – as a student group at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, N.C. "I asked myself what I could do to change the perception of young black males," he recalled.

So he created a program for young males, ages 12-18, to help develop positive individuals through mentorship and helping them per-sonally, professionally and edu-cationally.

Tyrell Hughes '01

"We like to give our kids options, teach them to think outside of the box and to be original and to be themselves," he said.

The program engages students with activities like camping, skiing, college tours and roundtable discussions on topics such as setting goals and relationships. There is also a separate program that helps students who have dropped out of school find jobs and attain a GED.

"When you're put in an environment where you don't have to compete against each other or compete for the affection of females, you have a higher tendency to focus on what is important," he said.

Tyrell's high school experience wasn't always smooth, but he kept his focus and persevered. He still keeps in touch with many of his Albany High teachers and credits them with being a positive influence.

"The extent that they were willing to go to make me better myself was a real inspiration," he said.

"It's very important to develop relationships with your teachers because they have the capability to mold you and direct you in ways that you might not see yourself. If you have enough exposure to positive avenues, it doesn't necessarily mean the results will be positive, but it definitely increases your chances of being positive."

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