



*Creating college bound communities*

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **YOUTH EXPLORE LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **Youth Gather at UCSC for Special Retreat on College and Career Pathways and Planning for Their Future, November 10-11, 2007**

(SANTA CRUZ, CA) – African heritage youth from Santa Cruz will gather on Saturday, November 10, for a special two-day retreat on life after high school. Students, peer mentors, and workshop presenters will explore college and career pathways and how to plan for the future. The retreat is being hosted at Stevenson College at UC Santa Cruz, from 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 10 through the closing lunch ending at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 11.

“The retreat gives students time and space to dream and visualize their future and create a plan that connects to their dreams,” said Pablo Reguerin, deputy director of the UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center (EPC). “We are excited to be a partner on this special community-driven event to support students and families on the college-going pathway with rich educational and cultural activities that will inspire them and empower them to transform their lives.” Reguerin, along with Regina Hatfield, will present information on the A-G college prep course pattern, California college systems, financial aid, and the college application process in a workshop on the second day of the retreat. Many student participants have never considered higher education or may be the first in their family to go to college.

Through the University-Community Engagement initiative funded by the UC Office of the President, EPC has been collaborating with Second Saturday Network, a community-based organization with a strong network of educators, community leaders, families, and volunteers and a standing tradition of working successfully with African heritage youth in Santa Cruz County. Working together, they have developed a community-driven, university-sponsored model to build a college-going culture and prepare students for success. The partnership also includes Santa Cruz High School, Parents of African American Students, African American Student Life Resource & Cultural Center at UCSC, Black Student Union at Santa Cruz High School, Oakes and Stevenson Colleges at UCSC, and other community leaders and volunteers.

The partnership serves as a catalyst for meaningful university-community collaborations to work as equal partners in support of common goals and take action to close achievement gaps and build each other's capacity to support student success. "Through the planning process and delivery of services, our partnership has flourished through the joint realization that our impact is even greater because EPC and Second Saturday Network are working together. We learned that the university can work with a community agency and deliver real action—college prep events for students that are academically and culturally relevant and appropriate," said Carrol Moran, executive director of EPC. The Educational Partnership Center continues efforts to expand its engagement with partners and support local students and families and increase college-going rates in Santa Cruz.

The Nov. 10-11 event, "African Heritage Youth Retreat," helps students better understand themselves and find a path to fit their needs and help them reach their goals. This event builds on prior retreats as well as activities from the past year, including a bus trip to southern California colleges and universities, Young Men's and Young Women's retreats, and academic tutoring support at Santa Cruz High School. The theme of the two-day retreat is "Exploring Your Options and Planning for Your Future," focusing on life after high school. A series of fun, engaging workshops from special guest speakers and presenters will help students connect with community leaders that can mentor and support them, explore college and career options, identify their goals and personal development aspirations, and understand the steps they need to take to get to college.

Students will participate in trust and teambuilding activities, interactive writing projects, and a facilitated discussion about identity. Activities on the second day will also include a tai chi session for introspection and reflection and a workshop on how to make positive life choices, which will help motivate students to envision their future and the next steps toward making their dreams a reality. Students, parents, and special guests will enjoy a wrap-up and debrief session over lunch, ending at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday. All retreat activities will take place at Stevenson College at UC Santa Cruz. For more information about the Nov. 10-11 African Heritage Youth Retreat or other media inquiries, please contact JAIMIE VARGAS, Director of Development & Communication at (831) 459-1747 or [jevargas@ucsc.edu](mailto:jevargas@ucsc.edu).

#### **About UC Santa Cruz Educational Partnership Center**

Established in 1999, the Educational Partnership Center (EPC) coordinates new and long-standing student academic preparation efforts of UC Santa Cruz with the goal of increasing access and opportunity to higher education for students across the Monterey Bay and Silicon Valley/San Jose regions. EPC is a research- and data-driven umbrella organization for a variety of complimentary, integrated academic preparation and educational partnership programs serving students, teachers, and families from kindergarten through college. The mission of the Educational Partnership Center is to build college-bound communities that improve student learning and increase college-going rates among students from low-income and traditionally non-college-going families in collaboration with school, college, business, and community partners. An array of direct services and programs support students on the college-going pathway through tutoring, mentoring, academic planning and counseling, leadership training, test preparation, college awareness and enrichment, family involvement initiatives, transfer student support, and teacher professional development.