



DuPage County  
2010

ACT-SO  
Informational  
Newsletter

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## 2010 - 2011 Enrichment Session

Posted on [www.dupageact-so.org](http://www.dupageact-so.org)

### ABOUT ACT-SO

**ACT-SO is an acronym for the Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics.** ACT-SO provides career exploration in 26 different subject areas encompassed by the sciences, humanities, business and the arts. It is the NAACP's (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) principal youth initiative. Every year since 1978, ACT-SO programs are simultaneously conducted in 42 of the 50 states (187 local programs). Scores of volunteers around the country help organize, mobilize, educate and empower students in local branches across the country.

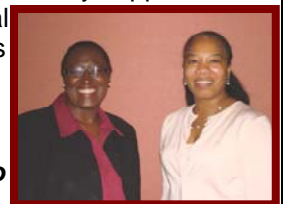
### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**NATIONALLY:** A record six DuPage County ACT-SO students earned medals at the 2010 National Competition, which was held this summer in Kansas City, Missouri. Ray Perry Jr., who graduated from Glenbard North High School, won a gold in Computer Science; Grant Hudson, a rising junior at Geneva High School won a silver in Architecture; Taaj Sims, who graduated from Neuqua Valley High School, won a silver in Drawing; Naghalia Washington, who graduated from Plainfield North High School, won a silver in Sculpture; Chinelo Agwuncha, who graduated from Proviso Math & Science Academy, won a bronze in Medicine and Health; and Michael Henderson Jr., who graduated from Bolingbrook High School, won a bronze in Business Entrepreneurship.

### **THE LOCAL ACT-SO PROGRAM:**

The DuPage County ACT-SO Chapter is the largest NAACP ACT-SO chapter in Illinois. Annually, up to 80+ students compete in the ACT-SO program. Since 1997, students in DuPage, Will, Kane and Kendall counties have been able to compete in ACT-SO's local competition co-sponsored by the DuPage County Branch of the NAACP and College of DuPage (COD). DuPage Regional Office of Education joined as a co-sponsor in 2008. In the past, students in the program have hailed from places like Bolingbrook, Naperville, Plainfield, Aurora, Romeoville, Woodridge, Oswego, Lombard, Glen Ellyn, Geneva and as far away as Elgin. The ACT-SO program is overseen by volunteer co-chairperson's Jacqueline Mayo and Dorletta Payton who have assumed the monumental task of coordinating individual mentors, monthly enrichment programs and special activities. ACT-SO's COD Liaison, Cynthia Johnson, ensures facility support in addition to overseeing the activities required to host the local competition. Each year, a core group of participants' parents (past and present) additionally volunteer their talents on various steering committees in order to reach defined goals.

**ACT-SO Co-Chairpersons  
Dorletta Payton & Jackie Mayo**



**SPONSORS:**



**Cynthia Johnson,  
College of DuPage  
ACT-SO Liaison**

ACT-SO would disappear if not for the generous support from the College of DuPage and the DuPage County Branch of the NAACP. In 2008-09, the partners welcomed a third co-sponsor, the DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE). Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, Regional Superintendent, has committed to engaging every DuPage County high school in recruiting students and faculty mentors.

**HOW ACT-SO WORKS:**

The recruiting process begins at the start of the school year in August, when African-American students in grades 9 through 12 attend an orientation. Attendees are given a presentation about the 7-month long program and how it aids in the discovery and/or cultivation of talents they may or may not have known they had. Guidance is offered through personal mentorship to demystify the pursuit of a specific career and make more informed life choices. In total, students gain a better perspective on the type of education, professional training and work required to succeed in life.

**STUDENT REQUIREMENTS:**

Students who decide to compete in ACT-SO can choose up to 3 categories from a total list of 26 encompassed within five broad areas. The five areas are Visual and Performing Arts, the Humanities, Science and Business. The 26 individual categories are architecture, biology, chemistry, computer science, dance, dramatics, drawing, earth and space science, engineering, business entrepreneurship, filmmaking, music, mathematics, medicine and health, oratory, original essay, painting, photography, physics, playwriting, poetry and sculpture. To compete in a category, students must adhere to pre-determined ACT-SO specifications. For instance, those who choose to work on a project in the Science category must select a topic, stage an experiment, write a paper (utilizing the scientific method) in addition to creating a board to support their conclusions. If this sounds intense ... IT IS! That's why each student works with an individual mentor. Working with a mentor helps students acquire the savvy to illustrate their knowledge and expertise via a project presentation or performance in front of judges and an audience and compete against their peers.



**STUDENT PREPARATION:**

One Saturday a month for 7-months, participants are required to attend group enrichment sessions (that generally last around 3 hours) in addition to meeting with an individual mentor on a bi-weekly basis. Monthly enrichment sessions are held on the Glen Ellyn campus of the College of DuPage. The first hour is highly interactive, designed to engage the entire group. To prepare for subsequent sessions, students are encouraged to watch the news, read newspapers and stay current on local, regional, national and global issues. The group then disperses to rooms according to the four broad areas (Sciences, Humanities, Business and the Arts). There they participate in workshops and receive competition requirements for their specific category.



**COMPETITION DAY:**

The College of DuPage (COD) literally offers carte blanche to ACT-SO program participants at its Glen Ellyn campus (generally the third Saturday in March). Past competitions have used the Mainstage lobby for Visual Arts entries, the Little Theater for vocal entries, several large performance classrooms for instrumentals and dance entries, a lecture hall for filmmaking and business entries and smaller rooms for Humanities entries. In 2011, the competition will move to the newly renovated Student Resource Center conference room and the new Health & Science Center. Organization is the key to smooth operation. In total, more than 100 volunteers will work seamlessly, staffing the registration table and complimentary breakfast and lunch buffet, offering directions, snapping pictures for posterity, recording video, monitoring doors to insure performances and presentations aren't interrupted and acting as room timers to keep students within their showcase limit.

**JUDGING:**

The most unenviable task belongs to the 90 or so volunteer judges (generally a quarter of the judges are COD instructors) who are charged with evaluating entries. Each student is allowed 3 to 5 minutes to present, followed by an optional question and answer period (depending on the category). Judging panels consist of 3 to 4 professionals who either work or instruct in one of the 25 subject areas. Students earn a score from 1 to 100 based on their ability to translate their experience in the form of a project or performance. A score of 95-100 gets a gold medal, 94-90 a silver medal, 85-89 a bronze medal and 84-80 an honorable mention.

**CULMINATION:**

Students learn how they fared with judges in a lavish awards ceremony. An estimated 500 attendees, including parents, friends and ACT-SO supporters, fill an elegantly adorned formal banquet room. Upon arrival, everyone receives a souvenir program book containing biographies for each student, pictures capturing activities held over the year and other pertinent information. As a parting gift, each ACT-SO competitor receives a bag filled to the brim with goodies. While waiting for dinner to begin, patrons are treated to a slide show documenting the 7-month journey of participants. Even though every student will not win a medal, all students are celebrated and receive a commemoration of the occasion. As the evening draws to a close, excitement mounts as the DuPage County NAACP President Reverend Theresa Dear and Second Vice President Mario Lambert present medals. It is important to note that regardless if a student earns a medal or not, every student in attendance walks away a winner. It also speaks volumes about the integrity of ACT-SO participants that there are never any sour grapes and all the students extend winners extreme courtesy with thunderous applause, cheers and hugs all around.



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We're on the Web!  
Visit us at:

[www.dupageact-so.org](http://www.dupageact-so.org)

### **THE NEXT LEVEL:**

Competitors put all their energy into each project because the ACT-SO program gold medal winners automatically advance to the national competition (with all expenses except food paid by the DuPage County Chapter) which moves from city to city each year and is hosted somewhere inside the continental United States. In 2008, the national competition was hosted on the grounds of Disney in Orlando Florida. In 2009, it was held in New York City in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the NAACP. In 2010, nationals were held in Kansas City, Missouri. In 2011, the national competition will be held in Los Angeles, California. Students who earn gold medals are eligible to compete against an estimated 700 other gold medal winners representing the "best of the best" in almost every state in the union.

### **PLEASE JOIN US!**

Student registration packets for the 2010 – 2011 local ACT-SO program are available now. Please share this information with other African American high school students and encourage them to visit the ACT-SO website at [www.dupageact-so.org](http://www.dupageact-so.org) to obtain more information about the program.

### **MISSION**

The mission of ACT-SO is to encourage academic and cultural excellence among African American youth.

[ACT-SO: Today's Youth... Tomorrow's Legends!](#)

