

Students: Activism changes their lives

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a voter registration drive and meals-on-wheels programs this summer, they've discovered what their parents learned years before: Activism is an exhilarating but exhausting enterprise.

All of their parents are former activists, members of the NAACP and Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. They say their zeal comes from their parents, who are proud of what their children are doing, but worried all the same.

"Most of our parents realize that this is something that has to be done," said Mr. Jeffries. "They just don't want their children to be the ones who do it."

Lawrence Jeffries, 21, is a junior at Morehouse College. One of the founders of SAAE, Mr. Jeffries is working this summer for the Center for Democratic Renewal, a national clearinghouse for information about hate group activity and violence spurred by bigotry.

Mr. Jeffries was groomed for activism. He became a member of the Board of Education in Prince Georges County, Md., during his senior year in high school. He also attended the 1988 Democratic National Convention while a high school student.

"As soon as I heard something was going on in Atlanta, I knew Lawrence would have something to do with it," said his mother, Alice Harris Jeffries, 50, a middle school teacher and former SNCC member.

"My grandmother saw me arrested on CNN," said Mr. Jeffries (he was charged with marching without a permit). "And my mother saw me on the Oprah Winfrey Show saying the U.S. doesn't stand for us [black people]."

"My mother is the traditional black, Christian woman. She's always worrying, 'Is my baby in jail?' She's worried that I'm going to take it too far because she knows how I am."

"We've been going through this a couple of years now. It's raged from my objection to black men on death row to my involvement in anti-Klan activity."

Mrs. King: L.A. gangs are making progress

By Gary Pomerantz
STAFF WRITER

Coretta Scott King returned from a three-day "Stop the Violence" conference this week in Los Angeles, stressing that progress has been made in the King Center's bridge-building efforts with the L.A. gangs.

The conference, which also featured former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young and Dr. Betty Shabazz, widow of Malcolm X, included many of the same participants of a forum held last month in Atlanta at the King Center.

Mrs. King pointed to several examples of progress since last month's Atlanta conference, including a weekly newspaper that Los Angeles gang members are about to publish in hopes of enhancing communication between disparate groups. Mrs. King also noted that a handful of entrepreneurs in south-central Los Angeles plan to fund "eight

different businesses," such as a maintenance repair shop and a car wash, by paying stipends to gang members.

"Gang members are learning how the system works," Mrs. King said Friday. "What we are trying to say to them is that, as older people, we have a stake in the community too, and we can be helpful to them."

The stated goals of the "Stop the Violence" conferences are to build coalitions in the fight against poverty and injustice, and to bridge the generational divide between leaders of the civil rights movement and young blacks.

Joining the members of the Bloods and Crips gangs at the conference were law enforcement officials, area ministers and community leaders.

"There was no communication in the past," said Dr. Bernard Lafayette, a King Center staff member. "Now there is a sense of hope."

"I enjoy this [activism]. It's something that's needed. And now, it's not going solo. Now I have a group of people with at least common goals who are committed to going out there and doing something."

"I have to watch my back a little more now. The GBI has visited my rallies before, and they've knocked on my door, and my office."

(GBI spokesman John Bankhead said no GBI agents have followed any AUC students. Though GBI agents photographed SAAE members during a flag-burning rally at the state Capitol, Mr. Bankhead said the GBI photographs all political rallies at the state Capitol.)

"I try to transcend fear so it won't affect what I do," said Mr. Jeffries. "But I understand the danger."

Stacey Abrams, an 18-year-old Spelman College freshman, is one of the youngest members of SAAE. She is working this summer in the campaign of Sen. Gene Walker (D-Decatur), running for the 11th Congressional District seat.

The valedictorian of her Avondale High School class, Miss Abrams turned down scholarship offers from Yale and Harvard to attend Spelman College.

Her parents, Carolyn and Robert Abrams, both 43, are United Methodist ministers. They've ministered to the homeless and the imprisoned. Both have been members of the NAACP and SNCC.

"Stacey is not going to stop what she's doing because of other people," Mr. Abrams said, just days after his daughter received abusive phone calls because she helped lead the rally where

Georgia's flag was burned.

"It's been unsettling," Stacey Abrams said. "I got a call from one woman who said her family died in the Civil War, and the flag was a symbol of Southern heritage. She said if black people didn't like the flag, get the hell out."

"It's really strange to have someone call your house, ask for you by name, and call you a nigger."

"I'm used to stuff like that. When I was in the 10th grade, I had a police escort because my dad spoke out against the KKK. "But I have to tell my parents what we're [SAAE] going to do beforehand. I told them we were going to a demonstration, and we were going to have a rally. I kind of left out the burning flag part."

"I've been doing things on my own, but I like SAAE. Usually you have people who say, 'I want to do this,' and they're gang-ho for about three days, and then they slip off the sides."

"It's like two full-time jobs, though. I wake up in the morning, I go to work. I get a call from Kevin or Lawrence. I have to run and get this done. It's like two full-time jobs, and you have 24 hours — three hours to sleep and the rest of the time you're doing stuff."

Kevin Donalson, 21, who attends Morehouse College, comes from a family of achievers. His great-grandfather was the first black lawyer to try a case in Illinois. His second cousin is Alonzo Crim, the first black superintendent of Atlanta public schools. His mother was a college activist. She's now working on a public affairs degree in Houston.

"I think the saddest part about Kevin becoming an activist was that this is 22 years later, and he is fighting for the same things his dad and I were vocal about," said Elmer Donalson-Rogers. "I think that's a disgrace."

"My family saw me on CBS Nightly News," said Mr. Donalson. "My cousin calls my mom and said, 'Kevin is on TV, and he's fighting with the police!' Of course, when I get back to the room, there's 30 messages."

"If you have told me three months ago that I would be sitting down with Lawrence Jeffries and Stacey Abrams, and that I would spend most of my time with them every day, and have fun, I would say you're crazy."

"People ask, 'Are they [SAAE] trying to get press? Are they trying to get their names in the public eye?'"

"Do you think that I like having the GBI standing around videotaping me? Do people realize that me and Lawrence will be seniors next year? We will be trying to graduate. We're putting our education on the line."

"Yes, our lives have been changed. But when you step into a situation like this, you have to be willing to give your all."

Man beaten after Rodney King verdict leaves hospital

By David Pendered
STAFF WRITER

Fred Schuttenberg went home from the hospital Friday, almost two months after he was severely beaten during violence in Atlanta following the Rodney King verdict.

Mr. Schuttenberg, 45, said he is recovering well from a bruise on the left side of his brain that had limited his speech, hearing and movement. He hopes to return by October to his job as a computer programmer with the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta.

"I'm reasonably competent,"

Mr. Schuttenberg said. "I've carried a number of conversations in the last two to three weeks, although I have lost several hundred words. I can move reasonably well."

Mr. Schuttenberg, the most seriously injured victim of the violence in Atlanta, was attacked April 30 near the CNN Center, where he was headed to the MARTA station. He said he does not remember details of the assault and declined to discuss his thoughts on the incident or the King verdict.

"I don't want to say anything about it," he said. "It's been a dif-

ferent two months."

Mr. Schuttenberg underwent treatment and rehabilitation at Emory University Hospital. Mr. Schuttenberg said he will undergo 40 days of outpatient therapy at a rehabilitation center in north Fulton County.

A main goal for the summer is to regain his driver's license, which the state revoked because of his brain injury. "I want to be able to drive my daughter back to college in the fall," he said. Daughter Heidi, a sophomore at the University of Miami at Coral Gables, left school during her exams to be with Mr. Schuttenberg.