

REV. JESSE JACKSON VISITS LOCAL SCHOOLS WITH MESSAGE OF HOPE

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Sentinel file photo. Rev. Jesse Jackson visited Seat Pleasant Elementary and Fairmont Heights High School.

Civil rights leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. inspired students with hope and encouragement at two area schools, Fairmont Heights High School and Seat Pleasant Elementary School, last Tuesday. His visit to the county, and his attendance at a meeting with members of the Maryland Black Mayors were all well received, community leaders said.

“Students at Fairmont were exhilarated with the appearance of Rev. Jesse Jackson, a figure of national and international acclaim who took the time to invest in the student body of Fairmont Heights High School,” Principal Peggy Nicholson said.

Nicholson said Jackson’s message to the students was inspiring.

“Rev. Jackson’s pronouncements were full of hope and encouragement to students. In his signature call and response direction, the assembly of students proclaimed the confidence that they would achieve limitless possibilities,” she said.

Steven J. Smith of the RainbowPUSH Coalition said the students at the schools welcomed Jackson and he talked with them about the importance of staying in school, studying hard and rejecting the use of drugs and violence.

Eugene Grant, mayor of Seat Pleasant and president of MBM, said the mayors and other political leaders were inspired by Jackson’s enthusiasm for working together for a common cause – the betterment of communities. MBM is a non-profit corporation representing more than 700,000 citizens and residents. It was created to promote and develop program models to improve educational, economic, health and social levels in the areas it serves, Grant explained.

“Rev. Jackson talked about the impact that the MBM, as a ‘collective body,’ not as individual municipalities could make on those issues of significance and distinction to the smaller African-American municipalities, such as student loans, foreclosures and unemployment,” Grant said.

Grant said Jackson emphasized that a strong call to action by the MBM on the issues, given the city’s proximity to the nation’s Capitol, would attract the attention of the White House, Congress, the media and those who do polling work.

Grant said Jackson urged members of the MBM to break the individual survival mentality and start thinking collectively to make a true impact on communities.

“He encouraged not only the MBM to embrace this call to action, but local churches, schools and community organizations as well,” Grant said.

According to the RainbowPUSH Coalition, Jackson has been challenging America to be inclusive and establish just and human priorities for the benefit of all.

“He is known for bringing people together in common ground across lines of race, culture, class, gender and belief,” according to RPC.

In 1984, Jackson founded the National Rainbow Coalition and it was based in Washington, D.C.

In 1996, the organization merged with Operation PUSH and is headquartered in Chicago. There are affiliated offices in Washington, D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Atlanta, and other cities, according to the RPC.