

More than 400 hear message: Bring 'A' game

Famous athletes and others share their advice to motivate Joliet area's black youths to stay in school

BY JAN LARSEN

For The Herald-News

JOLIET — Luck isn't what most people think it is, former NFL player Reggie

Smith told an audience of more than 400 at Joliet Job Corps on Saturday during a Bring Your "A" Game event. "Luck is when opportunity meets preparation, prepara-

tion meets opportunity," said the man who should know. He didn't give up after being cut by his high school football team.

"And if you are not prepared, that opportunity will pass you by."

"No matter what your environment is, you can take your circumstances and become what you want to be," said WGCI radio personality Tony Sculfield.

He said he went to more than a dozen schools by the time he reached his senior year in high school. Today nearly a million people tune

in to his Chicago morning radio show.

Each speaker underscored that success takes a lot of hard work and that without an education you're almost certain to fail.

While these may seem like cliches, it's a message that apparently isn't reaching many African-American males today, according to statistics that say 50 percent drop out of high school and more end up in prison than in college.

As the statistics worsen nationwide, groups like the ones who sponsored Saturday's event want to get a

dialogue started and some answers, said R. Dale Evans of Brother to Brother.

Sidney Green of the Chicago Bulls Association may have presented one answer when he asked the audience to stick a finger in their right ear.

"That is so what I am telling you doesn't go in one ear and out the other," he said.

Other words to live by from Green:

- Focus, faith and follow-through are the keys to success.
- Someone's opinion of you does not have to be your re-

ality.

■ The pain of discipline is much less than the pain of regret.

Mario Van Peebles Jr.'s documentary "Bring your 'A' Game" was shown, the audience asked questions of a panel and entertainment was offered including step dancing, a poem, a gospel choir and lock and pop dancing.

The event was sponsored by Joliet Township High School's YESS, Joliet Job Corps Student Government Association, Brother to Brother and the Joliet Region Interfaith Education Council.

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Smith
Reggie Green (left) of the NFL Players Association answers a question during Bring Your "A" Game, an event held Saturday at Joliet Job Corps. | JAN LARSEN - FOR SUN-TIMES MEDIA

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