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The Official Newsletter of Ase Academy

MLK Award Sets Stage for Tenth Anniversary by Brian Peterson

It was a tremendous honor for me to represent Ase on January 23, and accept the Community Education Award as a part the University of Pennsylv-



vania's annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Commemoration. The reason why we do what we do at Ase is not to receive praise or awards, but to help young people—and ourselves—develop and grow. It is, however, nice to be recognized, and to be a part of a "good story," especially when there are so many other stories of violence and negativity happening all around us.

Through Ase, I have been blessed to be a part of intense discussions concerning many of these issues. Students and staff alike have voiced their opinions about the war in Iraq, the Presidential election, the future direction of hip-hop, the state of Philadelphia's schools, and the violence that makes us all feel unsafe in our communities. These dialogues

have shown me that young people care much more than the general public gives them credit for. As Ase embarks on its tenth year, I am extremely excited about what is to come, and the possibilities for us to turn our conversations and dreams into larger plans and ideas. I am also a bit saddened, however, because this year, several of our staff members are graduating and moving on. Many of them have been with Ase for four years. Their hours of planning, phone calls, meetings, mentoring, and teaching have made Ase an award-winning program. As we say in Ase, "I am because we are." I look forward to the many great things our seniors do in their next phase, further representing everything that Ase is and will become. Ase!



Senior Reflections Compiled by Jason Edwards

"...I guess the easiest way for me to think about Ase is the fact that it became an integral part of my Penn experience, and a definite area of personal growth. Simply put, almost all of my own personal interests – education, mentoring, music, performance – were satisfied by my role in Ase. I have been lucky enough to infuse a part of myself into the program, and Ase has in turn given me the opportunity to grow by working

with such special students."
Jason Edwards. Future plans: teaching, likely secondary English in Philadelphia.

"A large part of [what makes Ase special] is the family community feel; the bonds the mentors have between them and with the children."
Tiffany Parnell. Future plans: enrolled in the Graduate School of Education, studying educational policy.

(Continued on page 3).



Branching Out by Amber Lee

On Saturday, April 5th Ase students and staff began a new tradition by participating in a community tree planting. Early that morning, the Ase family walked from Du Bois College House to 47th and Woodland Avenue. Other area college volunteers and local residents flocked to this Southwest community for a hard day's work. Ase was immediately thrown into the mix; shovels and picks were passed out and the dig-

ging began. Hands became dirty, faces sweaty, all in the name of service and beautifying the area. To boost morale, there was a brief meet and greet with Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter. Soon after, it was back to work, digging the ground and separating the roots. Eventually, new roots were firmly planted and mulch was set. Hopefully, as our trees grow, a stronger Ase tradition of community service will also flourish from this event.



Nguzo Saba Award Winners

UMOJA (Unity) — **Bradley Harley**
 KULICHAGULIA (Self-Determination) — **Keyaira Doughty**
 UJIMA (Collective Work) — **Donte Pugh**
 UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics) — **Shaun Green**
 NIA (Purpose) — **Daniel Williams**
 KUUMBA (Creativity) — **Ameer Carter**
 IMANI (Faith) — **Keiasha Lumpkins**

ASE Award (Female) — **Arlana Brown**
 ASE Award (Male) — **Hadid Thomas**



Quotable

“I have asserted a firm conviction - a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people - that working together we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds, and that in fact we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union.”

— Barack Obama

From his “A More Perfect Union” speech in Philadelphia.

Ase's Performance Arts Night by Makeda Farley

This year's performing arts night was lively mix of music, dance, poetry, good food and great people. We saw the return of some old faces and many new ones who participated in the celebration. Like Mindz performed in what will be the last performing arts night appearance of the drummer Jason Edwards, and MC Nana Tuffuor. There was also poetry by Sister Rhaisa, Sister Alexis and long lost Brother Josh. Afri-

can Rhythms with special guest Ase drummers and dancers performed twice that night. Also, throughout the night Brother Abdi displayed some of his thought-provoking and beautiful artwork. All in all Ase's performing arts night was a party enjoyed by everyone. I personally would like to thank all the students, staff and parents that worked together to help make the evening a great success.



Senior Reflections, continued

"A lot of times we can say that we're helping students, and that's true, and there's a great feeling and sense of joy with that accomplishment, but they've also taught me to be more relaxed, and to take things as they come...They kept me on my toes to make sure I presented something interesting. If it wasn't for Ase, I wouldn't even realize that I'm interested in education, or be able to test out the ideas I have for development and creativity. It's hard to verbalize the experience, it's definitely an experience that has to be lived. You get to see the other side of learning... that learning is not only in the classroom, but happens outside in daily reality, in life. It's seeing where the future is." **Alexis McFarlane.** Future plans: possible media internship, youth initiative in Toronto, and non-

profit organization for travel to Africa.

"I think one of the things about Ase is that it attracts...like-minded people, and it kind of grows to be like a family of people concerned about similar things. It keeps me more connected to how kids in Philly grow up experiencing different things. I think one of the things Ase has allowed me to do is...establish a connection with these students." **Nana Tuffuor.** Future plans: Research involving social science, particularly Sickle Cell Disease.

"There have been times when [Ase] has kept me sane in the Penn environment...It pushed me to take teaching more seriously. I think it's changed different students' Penn experiences,

which has changed the Penn community...[Personally,] Ase is an opportunity for me to try to address issues that I'm aware of on a number of levels. There's the whole aspect of 'we wouldn't be here if we didn't have people helping us out in the past,' so there's that level of -I guess you could call it 'giving back' if you wanted to - but, just being aware." **Anand Jahi.** Future plans: In Philadelphia working for Education Law Center non-profit, continued work with Ase.

Congratulations and farewell to the rest of our seniors: **Clara Ameny, Shomari Crawford, Cecil Essien, Kwame Frimpong, Mikey Glass, Dreysha Hunt, Malika Iton, Jamaal Justice, Jenna Slaughter, Shameeke Taylor, Eboni-Rose Thompson,** and special guest, **Raheem Palmer.**

Ase Board

Markis Abraham, Chair
Brian Peterson, Executive Director
Don Hooper, Treasurer
April Stewart, Secretary
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Ase Coordinators 2007-2008

Michael Glass, REPS Coordinator
Britney Crooks, Business Activities Coordinator
Anand Jahi, Daily Operations Coordinator
Shayna Alleyne, Curriculum Coordinator

Thanks for everything!





Rest in Peace

Brother **Hasani Bakari** (May 3, 1977–February 14, 2008) was one of the earliest Ase staff members, taking on numerous teaching and leadership roles. He will be remembered as a passionate and dedicated soldier in the struggle, always willing to do whatever was necessary to get the job done.

About Ase:

Ase is an academic and cultural enrichment program linking secondary school students in Philadelphia with undergraduate students at the University of Pennsylvania. Ase provides reading, writing, and math instruction, interactive seminars, and arts education.

Through its parent organization, Lion's Story, Inc., Ase operates as a non-profit organization. To make a tax-deductible contribution, you can visit our website, or send a check, payable to "Lion's Story, Inc." to the address below.

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Summer in the City

Here are a few things going on in Philadelphia:

Odunde Festival, 24th and South Street, June 8

FREE R&B, Jazz, and Cultural Festivals, all summer long at Penn's Landing (See pennslandingcorp.com for calendar and details).

Unity Day, Ben Franklin Pkwy, August

If there's nothing exciting happening around you, you can always take a journey to a new and interesting place by reading a book. Enjoy the books Ase has given you for the summer, and challenge yourselves to read a few more of your own selections.