

May 19, 2008



### Mentoring ... From a Mentor's Perspective

*“Mentoring and coaching is something that I am absolutely passionate about”*

It is a great privilege for me to speak about my mentoring experience. Mentoring and coaching is something that I am absolutely passionate about. In my opinion, there is nothing more rewarding than being a positive change agent in someone's life. One of the reasons that I can attest to the wonderful benefits of mentoring is because I had a strong male role model in my life as a young teen. I often refer to him as my 'Surrogate Grandfather'; his name was Isaac Howard. He took me under his wing and taught me life's valuable lessons; tenets that I live by to this very day.

*“The curriculum covered self-esteem, bullying, drugs and tobacco avoidance and problem solving”*

I contemplated getting involved in some kind of community based program over the years, but always convinced myself that the time wasn't right or that I was too busy for one reason or the other. Last year, I was here in Lansing at the Kellogg Conference Center for a Senior Military Conference and one of the guest speakers was the Michigan's First Gentleman, Dan Mulhern. He spoke about the Mentor Michigan challenge. He challenged the National Guardsmen to enlist and help take the fight to their respective communities and reach out and make a difference in a kid's life. I took that challenge to heart and told myself no more excuses. When the presentation concluded, I stopped by the Mentor Michigan booth and spoke with a representative and told her that I wanted to get involved. She took my name and about a week later, VIP Mentoring contacted me.

*“I thought to myself, I could have really benefited from this program when I was growing up”*

I jetted through the orientation and training process and enrolled in the school-based program. I must admit, I was thoroughly impressed when I reviewed the mentoring curriculum. The curriculum covered self-esteem, bullying, drugs and tobacco avoidance and problem solving. I thought to myself, I could have really benefited from this program when I was growing up. Several weeks later after completing the mentoring orientation and training program, I was sitting in the classroom working with

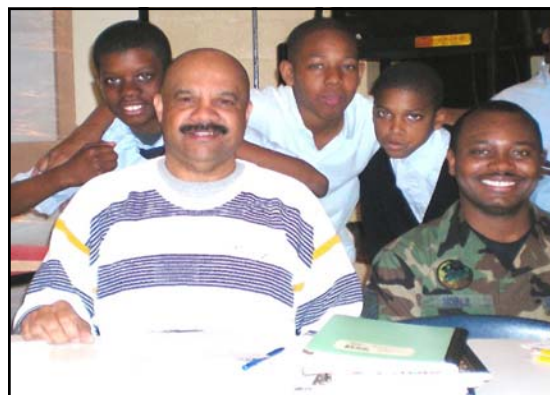
Darius, Gregory, Laronte, Timothy, Curtis and Devonte; terrific, smart and strong-willed boys. I saw a glimmer of my youth in their eyes. To my surprise, I was having fun and enjoying myself.

*“UNsung HEROES just are looking for another opportunity to serve both your communities and your country”*

I would like to personal acknowledge both the Mentor Michigan and VIP Mentoring organizations. They are our Civilian "FIELD SOLDIERS" with BOOTS on the ground and in the trenches taking the fight to the front line day after day. THANK YOU for your commitment to our communities. In closing, because someone cared enough, mentoring help to change the course of my young life.... Having a strong male role model in my life helped to architect the MAN, the SOLDIER, the HUSBAND and the FATHER that stand before you TODAY. I am a walking testament that effective coaching and mentoring change lives. From the count of all the BOOTS that are on the ground in room, I know that I am in the company of UNSUNG HEROES. UNSUNG HEROES just are looking for another opportunity to serve both your communities and your country.

Thank you for listening to my story.

**- Master Sergeant Ben Noble**



Above (F-L) Ezill Sanders and (F-R) Master Sergeant Ben Noble take a moment for a photo with three of the young men on their Mentoring team.

