

OAK PARK AND RIVER FOREST HIGH SCHOOL

201 NORTH SCOVILLE AVENUE • OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60302-2296

November 13, 2012

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you regarding the recent volunteer services -in- kind provided by Spoken Word artist Ted Weissberg. Just a month ago Ted Weissberg joined other young adult artists and community members on the stage at a kick- off recruitment event on behalf of my not-for- profit organization, **ACTSO**, which was held in the South cafeteria of Oak Park and River Forest High School on Saturday, September 29, 2012. **ACTSO, the African American Cultural Technological and Scholastic Olympics**, is a yearly competition program for High School age students of color sponsored all over this country by local branches of the **NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**. We are associated locally with the Chicago Westside NAACP. The NAACP ACTSO program encourages High school aged minorities to work all year to prepare themselves to excel in an area of the performing arts, humanities, visual arts and sciences.

The ACTSO program challenges students to complete a performance piece, do artwork or finish a paper in one of 26 different events, which are judged in a local competition in the Spring. If the students score high enough to be finalists, they will be able to continue on to a national competition in the summer, in Orlando FL, where they compete for prizes of up to \$2000.00 and computer equipment. The National ACTSO Competition is the first activity of the National NAACP Convention every year. It is televised and attended by hundreds of High School aged contestants -- as well as thousands of the NAACP freedom fighters from around the country. Whether it is one of our Chicago area students who wins the top prize money or not, it stimulates their interest in pursuing highest achievement in the arts and sciences, provides the potential for national exposure of their talents and interests to colleges and media scouts, and introduces them to the work of the oldest civil rights organization in the nation, the NAACP.

When Ted performed for us he was part of the group of ACTSO adults who mobilize to help our children understand that being a rap artist or giving in to the lure of the streets is not their only option. He and several other young Spoken Word performers, vocalists and even a Male Praise dance troop performed and talked a little about being artists, at the ACTSO kick-off event. Volunteers such as Ted often continue to support the ACTSO students as their individual coaches, as ACTSO competition organizers and ACTSO judges.

It is with our lasting gratitude, and appreciation that we want to acknowledge the intelligent humor and entertainment of Ted's writing. We greatly enjoyed his work. He shared a piece about his walk through the South side neighborhoods of this great city, knowingly as a bit of an anomaly, a white male traveling around segregated neighborhoods, an artist without concern for anyone else's categories for him, limits or stereotypes. He was a perfect model for our High school audience of the courage and vision that their art, or their walk in general as achievers, will require from them, too.

Respectfully submitted,



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(Certified School Psychologist, Oak Park and River Forest High School)

ACTSO Club Sponsor/ ACTSO Local School Recruiter

Chicago Westside NAACP Executive Board, Chicago Westside NAACP Youth Council Advisor