

## **Project Ready Students Earn a Place at National Competition**

The Urban League of Greater Hartford Youth Achievement Center is changing the way young people in Hartford see their future, and they're returning the favor. Shadae Sweeney, Zaire Porter, Phylcia Chamberlain, and Royland Sterling, all students of Weaver High School, will participate in the National Urban League's NULITES Youth Summit where they will present their program proposal for the National Urban League's Project Ready Student Case Competition. The students, along with three other finalists, are competing for a chance to put their program into action.

R.A.C.E, or Real Arts College Experience, is the students' proposed after school program that would allow middle school students of Greater Hartford to experience skill building workshops that focus on college awareness and academic achievement. With an emphasis on math, writing and performing arts, the students created a program that will allow 30 participants to work with experienced professionals who will coach them on reaching their potential in any career field they wish to pursue.

Within the proposal, the students detailed a day to day schedule that includes tutoring in math and creative writing, a workshop allowing students to "Stand Up and Stand Out" in order to be leaders in the community, and classes that offer participants the opportunity to reach their creative potential in the Arts. All of these topics come together with the emphasis on life after middle and high school. Gabriel Boyd, head of the Urban League's Youth Program says, "R.A.C.E. will provide the student participants with an opportunity to explore career choices in various Arts related fields (performing arts, animation and the music industry), as well as making college an important and necessary part of their future."

The four students established many connections with local businesses and universities, receiving endorsements from Capital Workforce Partners, Young! Studios and The Artists Collective, Inc. Going forward, these partnerships would allow students in the program to record their own music in a recording studio as well as participate in music and dance classes through The Artists Collective's tuition based program. They have discussed touring options with local universities and are ready to take the next step to show other students like them a new future.

The students will travel to Chicago, Illinois for the NULITES Youth Summit where judging will take place on July 29, 2009.

The Urban League Project Ready program is a uniquely designed curriculum to address the academic, personal and social needs of our high school youth to prepare them for post secondary and career exploration. The program provides youth from Greater Hartford and surrounding communities with a comprehensive and interactive curriculum to achieve academic preparation, age appropriate life skills, personal and global awareness toward the path of post secondary.