

Cuyahoga County: Speakers Bureau Brings Parental Realities to Life

By Mark Chimo

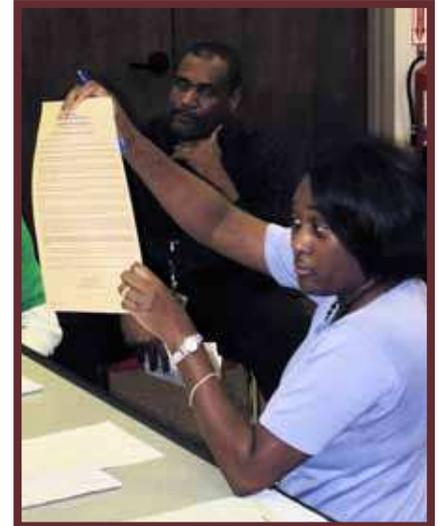
Cuyahoga County Support Enforcement Agency

Cutting-edge outreach and customer service rank high in Ohio's Cuyahoga County Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA). So does its success with the Speakers Bureau, a group of employees dedicated to educating both youth and parents on child support rules, regulations and processes.

The Speakers Bureau educates Cuyahoga residents on paternity establishment, child/medical support orders and the numerous enforcement techniques. In addition, the group opens up greater access to the agency by going out into the community to conduct workshops and Q&A sessions. Since 2007, the Speakers Bureau has presented seminars for the county's fatherhood initiative, a bar association, business groups, churches and other community organizations.

Because CSEA also emphasizes outreach to youth, the Speakers Bureau visits numerous high schools throughout the county where CSEA employees perform a skit that brings to life the reality of having a child. They select a student from the audience to be the "alleged father" of a child and walk him through the processes of genetic testing and an administrative hearing to establish a child/medical support order. This hands-on approach to involve the audience resonates with the students. Speakers Bureau members receive a variety of

Akilah Rasheed-Tinsley (right) presents during a training in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. In the photo below, Ken Robinson (front center) presents with (from left) Rasheed-Tinsley, Brandy Godfrey, Diane Tubbs and Laquita Taylor.



thoughtful and insightful questions on child support issues from both a child's and parent's perspective.

"Due to the increase in teenage pregnancies, we wanted to be able to educate our youth as to who is responsible and what happens when a child is born," says Outreach/Establishment Manager Michael Falatach, the Speakers Bureau adviser.

"Our ultimate goal is to prepare these young students for their legal and financial responsibilities as a parent."

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