Student conference topic: Empowerment

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The Greater Lafayette Indiana Black Expo and the African-American Leaders of Tomorrow made several big announcements Thursday afternoon in the Lafayette Jefferson High School library.

The two groups announced their first student empowerment workshop titled “I Matter: Creating Our Story” to be held on April 15 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The conference created by AALOT, a student organization at Jeff, will be designed to discuss topics including racism and racial identity, overcoming stereotypes in the classroom and community and the impact of social media on their generation. Information on college readiness, careers without college and life skills will also be topics of discussion.

Izsys Archer, a senior at Jeff and president of AALOT, said the event is open to students from all schools and of all racial identities.

“You don’t have to even be a student or black for that matter,” Archer said. “We are encouraging everyone to come and participate.”

GLIBE president Clyde Hughes said tickets for the conference may be reserved at eventbrite.com at the price of $2 and then paid for at the door, or purchased for $5 at the door the day of the event.

Hughes said scholarships for students who attend will be available for application as well. Lafayette mayor Tony Roswarski said seeing the students come together for this event gave him immense pride.

“These topics and this info is critically important,” he said. “This really is about empowerment, because you do matter. We need people to stand up and take leadership roles, and we need young people to set the tone and direction as to where the community is going.”

Roswarski said he invites these students to visit him at city hall after the conference to share what they have learned and be a part of the community.

“I am looking forward to spending time on an individual basis,” he said.

Roswarski said it was moments like this when he reflects on the words of his father about how crucial community involvement is. “One thing he really believed in was that anyone can sit around on a couch and complain, but you need people to get out and make a difference and put boots on the ground to be a part of change,” he said. “By being involved in this conference you are taking that role of action.”

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Clyde Hughes, GLIBE president, attends a news conference announcing the workshops.

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