

STARLIGHT

Starlight Black Child
Mixed Heritage Group

September 2006

A newsletter for families, friends and professionals with a keen interest in issues related to black young people of mixed heritage.

Autumn update!

Welcome to the September edition of the Starlight newsletter. My name is Christine Chambers and I'm your editor this issue. I've been involved with the Black Child Group since 1994 and am currently Vice Chair.

I'm introducing a new article which we hope to make a regular feature called *Personally Speaking*. It aims to look at how people have developed their personal racial identity and how they choose to identify their racial origins. Put simply 'What box do you tick?' This is of enormous personal interest to me as my three sons (19, 17 and 8 years old) always refer to themselves as Black while my 21 year old daughter opts for the title of Mixed Race.

For this issue I asked an Oxford man of mixed parentage for his philosophy on this topic and found he had some interesting ideas and wise advice to share. I hope you'll enjoy reading it!

Also of particular interest in this issue is information about the African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust. They are actively seeking bone marrow donors to save children of mixed race. We hope some of our readers will be able to help.

A national Dual and Multiple Heritage Project is being launched in the Midlands this autumn, contact details are included in this issue.

An update on our local Black Child Mixed Heritage group is included. We are planning a Black History Family party at the end of October as well as working towards a more structured programme for the coming term.

As always, contributions from readers are welcome and we look forward to hearing from you. We are particularly interested to hear how people of mixed heritage choose to describe their racial identity.

Do you recognise this eminent scientist?



He is personally responsible for saving countless lives with his discoveries in medicine. He was instrumental in saving many soldiers lives in the Second World War. You, or someone close to you, may also have benefited through ground breaking discovery. Any ideas? Turn to page four to find out.

Inside this issue:

	1
<i>Starlight's Community Chest Children's Panel</i>	
<i>Appeal for Bone Marrow donors - ACLT</i>	2
<i>Personally Speaking</i>	2
<i>The Black Child Mixed Heritage group's news</i>	3
<i>National Dual & Multiple Heritage Project</i>	4
<i>Forthcoming Events</i>	4

Starlight Community Chest

Children from the BCMHG have been given the exciting opportunity to join a new Community Chest Children's Panel this Autumn.

The Community Chest Fund invites applications from children for financial assistance in paying for out of school play, leisure or social activities either because they are too expensive or there are transport problems. In the past these have included swimming, dance, football, horse riding among others.

In the summer, Zoe Elford, Participation Officer, from Oxfordshire's Children's Fund, came to meet us and talked through what was involved in becoming a panel member. She brought along a DVD which demonstrated the careful and sympathetic way previous children panel members had considered applications.

The panel considers each application individually and decides what

money they can offer. There will be three training sessions (children need to be at all three) at BLAP on 20th, 27th September and 4th October. Panel members will then need to be at BLAP on alternate Wednesdays, 5 - 6.30pm, throughout term time. The rewards include a big trip out (something like Drayton Manor or into London) within six months of being on the panel. They also receive a Children's Fund rucksack and T-shirt and a £25 Community Chest voucher to spend on a leisure activity of their choice. There is also a thank-you tea party with certificates.



Starlight's Community Chest Children's Panel is one of three set up across the county. They will have a collective budget of £50,000 to spend every year. The children will be responsible for managing not only their budget but also their panel meetings with each child being responsible for various roles and tasks. This includes time-keeping, recording the decisions and writing the cheques.

If your child is aged 5-13 years, is interested in getting involved and can make this commitment please contact Sue or Glen on 01865 776691. The next step is to fill in the registration form and the media consent form which Sue or Glen can provide. Remember to act quickly because you won't be able to take part without the training.



Special points of interest:

- Personally Speaking ..
- Dual Heritage Project
- Appeal from the African Caribbean Leukaemia
- Black History Family Party
- Forthcoming Events

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Please ensure any contributions/adverts arrive by 30 November 2006

Next issue: **S December 2006**

The African Caribbean Leukamia Trust

The African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust is desperately trying to increase its pool of potential bone marrow donors. Their aim is to increase the Black representation on the UK registers (Anthony Nolan Trust and the National Blood Service) from the current number of approximately 18,500 to approximately 30,000 - 40,000 potential donors. By increasing these numbers they increase the chances of finding suitable life saving matches.

If you are aged 18-43 and live in the UK they can consider you as a potential Bone Marrow donor (even if you have Sickle Cell Trait) but you must be willing to register as a possible bone marrow match for all patients (with a similar ethnicity/racial background) around the world awaiting possible matches. Please note that you cannot just walk into your Doctor's practice or any hospital to give a blood sample to register as a donor.



All they ask of you, especially if you are Black or Mixed Race and aged between 18-43 in relatively good health and not obese or under 8 stone, is to give up 15-30 minutes of your day at the registration clinic venue where you can hand in or complete the application form, be counselled about the donation procedures and if you are ever found to be a matched donor what your preparation would be. This is followed by a Q & A's session and finally giving 4 mls of blood (a tablespoon). The blood sample is taken to determine your bone marrow tissue type (your blood group is of no relevance) and these details with your name and location will be added on to a database of potential donors for patients awaiting matches around the world. On completion they will arm you with various bits of information and their contact details, just in case you need to speak with them in the future about anything.

They also strongly suggest that you contact the National Blood Service, which has the second largest register in the UK of potential bone marrow donors, but you have to be aged 18-44. The NBS are always in your area promoting the need for blood donation as well as the urgency for new potential bone marrow donors.

Please call them on 0845 7 711 711. Tell them you want to become a blood and bone marrow donor, they will ask what area you live or work in and can direct you to the closest donation session taking place possibly that same day. They will also post out to you information on blood registration drives in your area.

You can also go to [National Blood Service](#) to find your nearest public session. Just type in your home town or your postcode and you'll find plenty to choose from. And you don't even have to register before doing so. Just turn up on the day.

If you are willing and able to donate a unit of blood as well as joining the bone marrow register please give them a call and help Yvette Gate, Donna Benjamin and the many others. It is imperative that you must ensure to inform the NBS staff at the registration clinic that you want to also register as a potential Bone Marrow donor. (Do not presume that the NBS staff will automatically test you for Bone Marrow purposes)

You will then be asked to read and sign the necessary Bone Marrow form in addition to the standard Blood Transfusion form. When you are donating a unit of blood for transfusion purposes, a small amount will also be taken and put aside for Bone Marrow testing.

The recent deaths of Lynden David Hall and DJ Swing has highlighted the importance of increasing the number of donors. If you are white you have about a one in five chance of finding a donor but if you are from the black community it is more likely to be one in 100,000. Please do what you can to help increase the number of donors by sharing this information with as many friends and colleagues as you can. Visit their website www.aclt.org to find out more and offer your support or telephone 020 8667 1122

Personally Speaking ...

The experience of a black man of mixed parentage aged 42, growing up in Oxford

Although I grew up with a white mum and dad I realised that I was a different colour than them when I was very young. When I was much older I learned that Mum was my natural mother but my biological father was from Guyana. If I'm asked to identify myself there isn't really a box that applies to me. I usually tick *Black Other* because my Mum was Irish and it's important for me to acknowledge that. I have family living in Canada, Ireland, Guyana and Barbados. I know who I am and where I came from.

I don't remember my colour being a major issue with the kids I played with as a young child arguments were usually on a much more personal level than simply that of race. I became more aware of racism as I got older. Of course there were occasionally issues with teachers but fortunately for me I was quite academic and I think that probably saved me from a lot of problems. In my teens the National Front marched through Oxford city centre and I feel that as Young Black men we were left to fight our own corner.

As you hit your teens I believe the biggest issue is your social status. You start establishing the friendships you need for the rest of your life and that was when it became more important to have black friends around me. I've developed a network of friends and in many ways this is an insurance policy. I have friends that I don't need to stay in regular contact with to know that they'll always be there for me because we

shared things when we were young.

I find the term *reverse racism* insulting -it's saying people can't be aware or be proud of who they are and where they come from. Young people need to be positive- I'm not saying ignore the negatives but don't worry if you need to put something on the back burner until you can make sense of it and deal with it then. Be yourself but stay smart about it. You don't need to prove anything by talking patois in a job interview for example. Be confident in who you are as an individual and if things are difficult never be afraid to walk away and review your strategy.

Implementing Change

In many ways I think things are better than when I was growing up. At least now there are avenues to challenge racism. I believe that subliminal messages can have as much affect on the people who run our lives as our vote can. If parties are canvassing for your vote don't be afraid to actually have the conversation that tells them what you think. Make them aware of what really affects you. The power to change things lies with you.

Happy Birthday Taja Raye Mitchell

18 on the 18th

Ya Dad Luv's Ya

Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group - update from the Editor

The Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group is now meeting every Wednesday (term time only) at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground 5-6.30 so come along and join us. BLAP offers a fantastic outdoor space for the children to play as well as a comfortable indoor area for us to hold meetings.



Christine Chambers
Vice Chair & Editor

We are currently looking at our

autumn programme and are keen to invite guest speakers on relevant topics. We need to know what would be of interest and use to you so that we can include this in our programme.

In the past speakers have included representatives from the police, education, youth service and many more. Group members have been able to ask the local beat officer what racial awareness training he'd been given and to share our experiences of racism in schools with a Senior Education Officer. We've held some exciting and challenging debates on a wide range of subjects and offer a safe forum to discuss issues around racism and just to have fun.

On a personal level the group has been invaluable to me in providing information which validated my argument in challenging the racism my children faced in school. Feel-

ing alone and unsupported in confronting prejudice is exhausting, as I found out early on.

We welcome all family and friends of members too as we realise the importance of a good support network for children and families.

Please get in touch with any ideas or issues that you would like to be included in our weekly meetings.

To kick off things for the autumn in a fun and positive way we'll be holding a family fun day on Saturday 30th September from 2-5pm.

We plan to have food and refreshments available and we look forward to meeting new and existing members for a relaxing and enjoyable afternoon.

We'd also like to thank Alston Quammie, the manager of BLAP, for letting us use this great venue.



Providing a forum for families and friends with black children of mixed heritage.

Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group's

FAMILY FUN DAY

Saturday, 30 September 2006 2 - 5pm

Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground, Blackbird leys, OXFORD

Fun & Games

Music

Food

We hope you will come and join us & find out what the group may be able to offer.

For more information contact: Oxford 776691 E-mail: StarlightEnt7788@aol.com

www.starlightenterprise.co.uk

Children's book review - Letters Around the World

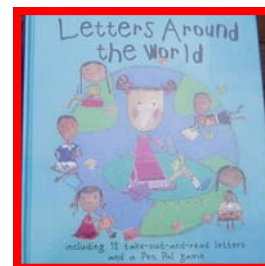
Emily sends letters to her pen pals around the world, from as far-a-field as Tanzania to New Zealand, and receives their letters in return. This is a lovely book to share (the letters can be a little tricky to get into and out of envelopes). It offers a charming and unique snapshot into the lives of children in other countries. Children reading this book can learn about how children in other countries live - their families, their favourite food, hobbies and special celebrations. For example, we share the news of a family wedding in India where the groom arrives on horseback and the birth of a baby in Tanzania whose hair is shaved so that the equivalent weight in silver can be sent to the poor. There is also a Pen Pal game at the back of the book. It is definitely worth taking time to look at!

This book is available from Letterbox Library and we would strongly recommend those of you looking for children's books which can represent our diverse society in a non-tokenistic way, log onto

www.letterboxlibrary.com. This not-for-profit organisation aims to do just that.

We are currently applying for funds to purchase the whole catalogue of books they supply so that we can offer children in the local community a chance to join a unique multicultural book and toy library. We are hopeful this will be set up before Christmas.

Anyone wishing to offer a donation toward the book and toy library or who has any ideas on fun ways to fundraise for the group, we would be pleased to hear from you.



Published by Tango Books,
price £12.99

Did you recognise the eminent scientist on the front page?

It was Charles Drew (1904- 1950). Born on 3rd of June 1904 in Washington DC, Drew graduated in 1930 with Master of Surgery and Doctor of Medicine degrees, finishing second in a class of 127 students.

He became involved in research on blood and blood transfusions. Drew discovered that by separating the plasma (the liquid part of blood) from the whole blood (in which the red cells exist) and then refrigerating them separately, they could be combined up to a week later for a blood transfusion. He also discovered that while everyone has a certain blood type (A, B, AB, O) everyone has the same type of plasma. In certain cases it was sufficient to give a plasma transfusion regardless of their blood type. He convinced Columbia University to establish a blood bank and was

asked to go to England to help set up their first blood bank.

He continued to receive awards and honorary degrees in recognition of his work in the field of medicine. He was named a Project Director for the American Red Cross but soon resigned the post after the United States War Department issued a directive that blood taken from white donors should be segregated from that of black donors.

Charles Drew died on 1st of April 1950 when his car went out of control. He suffered extensive injuries but contrary to a popular legend he was not denied a blood transfusion by an all-white hospital. He did receive a transfusion but died of his injuries.

Forthcoming Events

- ◆ Supporting Dual Heritage Workshop
- ◆ Tackling Racism in Predominantly White Areas Workshop
- ◆ Harmonisation facilitator training with relevant training pack:
 - work with young men and fathers;
 - work with young women and mothers;
 - raising the aspirations of young people of African Caribbean descent
 - building a positive self identity, self esteem and emotional literacy

Also, soon to be published

A Celebration of Black men and women's contribution to British society with an accompanying game. Age 11+

Contact us for more details of venue, dates, times, and fees

National Dual and Multiple Heritage Project: Student Agency

This two year project focuses on raising the life chances of Dual and Multiple Heritage Children and Young People. Six local authorities, Lambeth, Birmingham, Trafford, Nottingham, Leicester, Sheffield and the Multiple Heritage Project in Manchester wish to address the issues related to the achievement and well-being of their Mixed Heritage cohorts.

Each authority will draw directly on the experiences of Dual and Multiple Heritage young people and use

them to train staff from their Children and Young People's Services. Parents, carers and other voluntary organisations will be proactively involved throughout the project, culminating in the launch of a Dual and Multiple Heritage toolkit and website at a national level.

The project proposal has been written after consultation with the Regional Advisers for the Black Pupils' Achievement Programme. It is expected to complement and bolster the Social, Emotional and Behav-

iorial Skills Programme currently being delivered through the Secondary National Strategy. In addition, the student agency element of the Project will directly inform the DfES, Local Authorities and schools of how strategies and interventions need to differ from those used to impact levels of attainment for pupils of black Caribbean origin.

For more information about this project please contact Bradley Lincoln, St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green, North Ardwick, Manchester M12 6FZ



Sita, one of the original members of the youth group back in the 90's, now a mum herself - what a perfect little boy!!

Subscribe to this newsletter

The cost of subscribing to this newsletter is £20 for four issues. They will be produced in December, March, June and September. Please send us a cheque, made payable to Starlight Enterprise Limited. If you need to be invoiced please let us know and we will arrange to send it to you.

Send us your views or articles

We welcome contributions from our readers and look forward to receiving your contribution. We hope that this newsletter will provide a forum for promoting positive relations, encouraging an open debate and aiming to improve race relations in Britain today. The deadline for the next issue is November 2006.

Advertise in this Newsletter

Let us know about your events, services and situations vacant. Our rates are very reasonable.

Full page: £150

1/2 page: £85

1/4 page: £45

1/8 page: £25

Please contact us with details. The deadline for the December newsletter is 30 November 2006.

Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group

Black History Family Party

Food Music Prizes

On Saturday, 28th October we are hosting a competition for children to dress up as a famous black person either from history or today. Who will your child become?

Mary Seacole ... Martin Luther King ... Walter Tull ... ??

Age Groups: 4 - 8; 9 -13; 14+

Competition Entry Fee £1 per child - Party Tickets £6 per family

Time and Venue: 4pm - 10pm Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground

For an Entry Form and Tickets please contact: Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group
Telephone 01865 776691 or E-mail: StarlightEnt7788@aol.com