

Reach Society

Building Connections

Patrons: Lord Herman Ouseley & Professor Trevor Williams Report of Second Careers Conference 2013

(See the Image Gallery for Conference Photos)

By Natricia Duncan

“Focus on the positive” was the emerging theme at the annual Reach Society Careers Conference which attracted nearly 750 people - twice the amount that attended last year.

The event, which was held at the Charing Cross Hotel, Thursday, 4 April 2013, offered 10 workshops that included CV writing and interview skills and exposed black students to a range of career options.

Sixteen organisations, including the Altran UK, Black Police Association, Lloyds Banking Group, KPMG, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Welbeck College; plus community groups like Amos Bursary, ACES Youth Project and 100 BMOL were represented and 25 professional Black men were on hand to encourage, motivate and inspire the attendees.

The conference also highlighted the availability of scholarships and bursaries, such as the Lloyds Scholars programme, which helps students from lower income backgrounds to attend high value universities.

Organiser and Reach Society Chair Dr Dwain Neil said: “Our aim is to provide our young people with the tools they need to make the best use of their talents and forge successful career paths.”

Natalie Jarvis who was there with her sons, Omar 15 who wants to become a banker and Trevor 19 who is studying carpentry, said the event raised her awareness of support organisations such as the Amos Bursary that might be able to help her sons.

The Conference saw the launch of Reach Society’s new book, “Our Story, For Us, By Us – The Story of British People of African Caribbean Origin”, which was written by Dr Neil, social worker Paula Neil and education consultants Dr Keith Davidson and Dr June Alexis.

The book documents the history and achievements of British people of African Caribbean origin and addresses the issue of building cultural esteem.

Reach Society patrons Lord Herman Ouseley and chief economist Lloyds Bank Professor Trevor Williams, encouraged young people to think positively and to focus on the achievements within the community.

Professor Williams said: “We want young people to be less occupied with the negative things in their environment and more aware of the positive things they could do with their lives.”

Lord Ouseley added: “One of the inspirational features of this conference is how much talent there is within our community that many of us are not fully aware of.” He encouraged young people to work hard and persevere in the face of adversity.