

DC Non-Profit “Promoting Smiles” For DC Top Graduates- LAPTOPS FOR COLLEGE!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 27, 2011

Washington, DC--Total Sunshine Inc held their *3rd Annual School Grade Rewards Ceremony* to “reward” and support DC Valedictorians and Salutatorians with laptop computers (donated by First Time Computers, Inc.) for college. The event was held at the *Anacostia Community Museum on Thursday, June 23, 2011*. The aim of this event is to equip the hardest working students from our Nation’s Capital with tools necessary for continuing their education. *This ceremony not only provides a platform for supporting them educationally, but also gives a chance for city officials and others to encourage and congratulate the “crème of the crop” of DC’s students.*

The 2011 ceremony was well attended, including: **US Department of Education Representative Robert Gomez (on behalf of US Secretary of Education-Arnie Duncan)** who **quoted Ben Franklin pertaining to “investments in knowledge have the best return”**...also congratulated the top graduates stating they, **“have earned applause...despite challenges,”** **DC State Board of Education Members Patrick Mara, Dorothy Douglass, Trayon White, and Mary Lord all gave encouragement and positive advice to honorees. Quotes from W.E.B. Dubois, Malcolm X, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were abundant. DC City Council Members Orange** (gave congratulatory letters to honorees) and **Barry sent representatives** who had equally encouraging messages for DC’s top graduates, also other leaders from the community.

The ceremony was especially poignant, as the James Maurice Perkins Memorial Fund was introduced. James Perkins was the 14 year old 2009 Salutatorian of Johnson Middle School in DC. He was also the recipient of a myriad of awards in many subjects including English, Science and French, yet excelled in mathematics. In 2008, he received many awards in mathematics, including the Apangea Mathematics Award in which he became National Champion for District of Columbia Public Schools. He was tragically killed in a motor vehicle-pedestrian collision on June 13, 2009. “Lil James” was to be honored and “rewarded” at the TS Ceremony in 2009, instead was remembered with a musical tribute. Two years after the tragic death of their son, his parents James Jackson and Patricia Perkins are steadfast as ever to support youth in their academic endeavors. They’ve shown this dedication by conducting outreach for Total Sunshine, Inc. for donations and support. They facilitated a sizeable donation towards the JMP Memorial Fund, which supports the Annual TSI School Grade Rewards Ceremony.

Unveiled for the parents and family in attendance at the ceremony was a colorful banner to be carried alongside the main TSI banner at events, the design for the JMPMF web page, bookmarks for dissemination containing relevant information, and a full informational page in the ceremony programme.

Many of the DC Valedictorians, Salutatorians, and parents personally thanked the TSI President and Board Members for recognizing their academic achievement, and for providing them a much needed laptop computer for college.

The long-term goal of TSI for this ceremony is to make it a nationwide annual event. *“I am so happy to be able to have a part in assisting Top Graduates on their road to success! The need was there, and we have filled it. We are really promoting smiles now! I love this!”* – Marilyn Holmes, TSI President/Founder

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“Promoting Smiles in ANY Community”

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