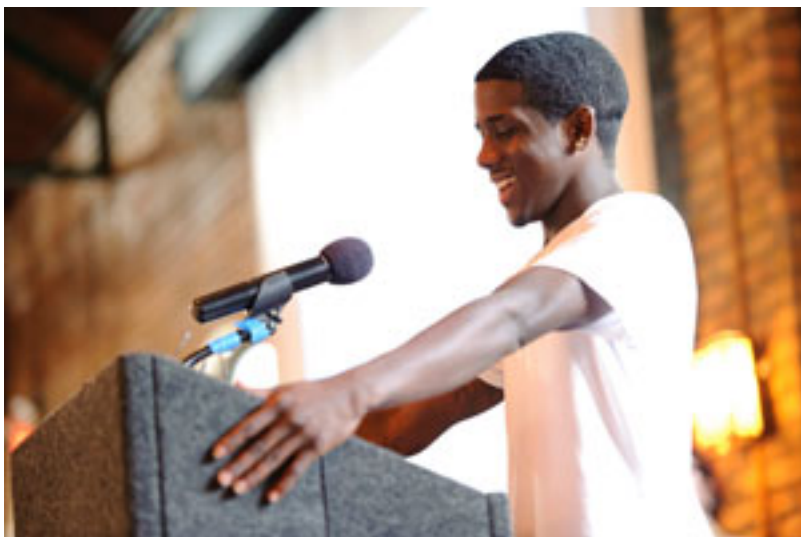


Written by
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On Tuesday, June 15, about 450 people gathered to celebrate 150 Minneapolis and Saint Paul public school students and the culmination of Destination 2010, a student achievement and scholarship initiative sponsored by The Minneapolis Foundation.

Launched in 2001, Destination 2010 enrolled 364 third-graders across seven struggling Minneapolis and St. Paul district public schools in a nine-year student achievement and scholarship initiative. "D2010" was designed to help these students, the majority of whom were low income and of color, graduate in 2010 and pursue higher education -- and to share the lessons learned along the way. As third-graders, these students were promised that if they graduated from high school and did not move out of the Minneapolis and Saint Paul school districts, they would be given a \$10,000 scholarship for a four-year college or a \$5,000 scholarship for a vocational/technical school. The celebration, which was held at the Nicollet Island Pavilion, honored the journey of these students and their families, their academic achievements and, for most, the beginning of their post-secondary education.

After the long trek through elementary, middle and high school, Tuesday's event was an apt celebration of a journey full of twists, turns, challenges and successes. Between cheers at every mention of the word "college," the event featured WCCO TV anchor and youth mentor Angela Davis as keynote speaker, special guest Nontombi Naomi Tutu, international human rights advocate and daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who offered a blessing and special message to the students, and Voices Merging, who performed an original piece created for and dedicated to the Destination 2010 students. Several students also shared their personal experiences.

"I really want to thank Destination 2010 for keeping me looking toward the future and what it will bring," said Destination 2010 student and graduate of Washburn High School, Eric Simmons, before the crowd of fellow students, families and friends, and school and community leaders. "Thanks for everything that you guys did to give us a head start in life and help build skills that we will actually use in the real world."

Destination 2010 event celebrates nine-year journey of Minneapolis and Saint Paul public school students

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