

### On the Scene

## Inspiration theme in honor of King



Olympic swimmer Cullen Jones (center) with children and staff at the Greater Hollywood YMCA Family Center's pool.

**T**he YMCA of Broward County recently hosted its fifth annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Inspirational Breakfast. The event was highlighted by a presentation given by keynote speaker and Olympic gold medalist, Cullen Jones. Jones, who shared the podium with Michael Phelps and other members of the 2008 U.S. Olympic team for the freestyle relay, is the first African-American to hold or share a world record in swimming. Emceeding the breakfast with humor and grace was WPLG Channel 10 news anchor Calvin Hughes. The opening act, a performance by Plantation High's award-winning Step Team, was the start to a truly inspiring event.

More than 400 people, ranging from YMCA members to city and county officials to donors, supporters and friends of the Y, listened to Jones' tale of perseverance and success in reaching his goal of being an Olympic swimmer. In addition, Benjamin J. Williams, School Board Member/District 5, was honored for his many years of service to Broward County.

"It was a thrill and a delight to hear Cullen Jones speak about his journey to Olympic Gold," said Sheryl Woods, CEO of the YMCA of Broward County. "While we celebrate 65 years of service to the community this year, it is good to be reminded about the basic principles of

dedication and perseverance, and Cullen Jones expressed those eloquently and enthusiastically, and the attendees responded similarly." Woods added that the YMCA has been an influential force in impacting the lives of more than 250,000 of the county's diverse population. Jones is the third African-American to make the US Olympic swimming team. He told the crowd that he learned to swim after nearly drowning at a water park when he was five. His anecdote underscores the YMCA's year-long goal to reduce childhood drowning through swim lessons and education.

Event honoree Benjamin J. Williams has been a resident of Broward County for more than 40 years. He is a board member of the L.A. Lee Family YMCA; former chairperson of the Fort Lauderdale Northwest Redevelopment Council; board member of the United Way of Broward; chairperson of *Sun Sentinel* Diversity Venture Fund; and board member of Urban League of Broward.

"It was a great privilege to have Cullen Jones with us, to honor Benjamin Williams, and to have Calvin Hughes preside over the event. These men are true role models and real heroes, embodying the spirit that we embrace in memory of Martin Luther King, Jr." said Woods.

For more information, visit [www.ymcabroward.org](http://www.ymcabroward.org). ■