

"BECOMING A YOUNG MAN OF CHARACTER"

What is FACING FORWARD@ Janis E. Dismus Middle School?

FACING FORWARD is an initiative that was originally created for middle school students in 2011 by Principal Lamarr Thomas. This program purposefully engages male students through culturally relevant subject matter to develop integrity, self-discipline and confidence to become leaders in their school culture and community.

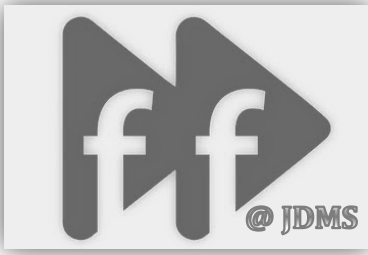
FACING FORWARD relies on deeply rooted relationships established between our host school and the surrounding community. These "Contact Points" are used to identify potential mentors; partners and sponsors who promote our goals that help our students grow into FOUR specific character traits (Maturity, Consistency, Decisiveness and Strength). This collaborative is governed by our CORE VALUES (Unconditional Love, Family, Educational/Athletic Excellence and Community) and is presented through our overarching theme of "*Becoming a Young Man of Character*".

How is this accomplished?

With the assistance of a diverse cluster of men, from all over the Tri-state area, our personalized, thematic workshops provide the platform for our moderators to share the wealth of their experiences, specific strategies and applicable tools that have contributed to their success. More importantly, *FACING FORWARD* focuses on issues that middle school students are currently facing (and/or will potentially face) in preparation for high school and beyond. This exchange allows our young men to hear from "elders" who are engaged in every aspect of our societal order and ask questions that might have otherwise gone unanswered. In doing this, the men of *FACING FORWARD* also confirm, through insightful understanding and sincere compassion that there is a strong and genuine concern for our students emanating from the men in the broader community.

How is this overseen?

FACING FORWARD is an OVERNIGHT experience sponsored and overseen by its host school. At the Janis E. Dismus Middle School Principal Lamarr Thomas and several certificated teachers (who are employed by the Englewood Board of Education) spend the night at the school. Staff members are "on watch" throughout the night and are not permitted to go asleep, even after the activities for the evening have concluded. Volunteers are dismissed at the conclusion of the workshops.



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What are the workshops topics that are usually offered?

Keynote:

Characteristics of Success: Becoming A Young Man of Character.

Law & Order: This workshop is designed to give our young men deeper insight into the ways the law impacts the world around them and "localizes" the reality of knowing their rights and the proper way to interact with the laws that govern their community.

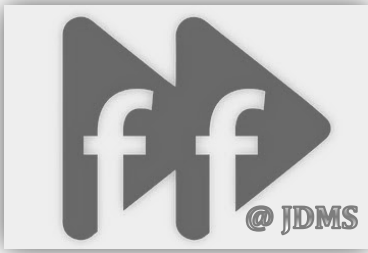
The Barber Shop: Set up as an authentic Barber Shop with real haircuts being offered by several of the Englewood's beloved Barbers, the conversations are structured in the format of the "Philosophical Chair".

Real Talk (Media Center): Controversial/stereotypical images of Black and Latino males are presented for group discussion. Students are required to think about the power of digital signage, social media and the persistence of these images in mass media, arts and entertainment. Strong emphasis will be placed on the consequential nature of poor decision making via moderators.

Business of Your Dreams: Moderated by well-known financial literacy experts & business titans, this workshop is designed to show our young men the correlation between the work ethics of successful businessmen and school success. Students are required to consider the importance of planning for success and to recognize the obstacles to reaching their goals and dreams in life.

Rap Roundtable: This workshop dissects the imagery of rap videos and lyrics of today's popular rappers. Students are challenged to think about the power of these images and the relevance the culture of Hip Hop has on the way they interact with the societal order and the way in which the world perceives and interacts with them.

Men Who Cook: Moderated by a master Chef/Baker, this workshop exposes students to the importance of proper diet, nutrients and being able to "know your way around" a kitchen. Participants will prepare a dish that they will be able to replicate in their own homes for their own families.



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Wrestling in Life: This workshop exposes students to the importance of physical fitness and balance. Participants will be exposed to how the disciplines of Wrestling can prepare you for the challenges that High School can present.

Interacting with Law Enforcement: This workshop is designed to give our young men insight into the proper ways in which to engage law enforcement and to give audience to their concerns and questions concerning law enforcement, community policing and the Police Department as a community institution. Moderated by the Chief of Police (with the assistance of the Juvenile Detectives).

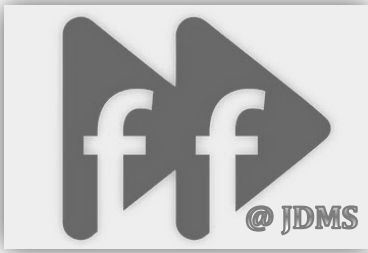
F2 Arcade: Larger than life screen sizes will be used to compete in sports games using different gaming systems (Wii, Atari 2600, PS3, etc.). Video competitions allow for informal bonding between mentors and students while gaming.

Who typically volunteers?

FACING FORWARD embraces volunteers who occupy roles in every realm of our community, which includes, but is not limited to:

- FINANCE
- FAMILY
- POLITICS
- MILITARY
- EDUCATION
- RELIGION
- MASS MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT

Due to the diverse nature of our volunteers we are fortunate to have been partnered with teachers, coaches, counselors, elected officials, business owners, authors, media personalities, politicians, investors, activists, bank executives, firemen, police officers, chefs, clergy, barbers, professional athletes, administrators, dads, brothers, uncles, grandfathers and a host of others that are not included in this list. Our *Contact Points* that also help us to "vet" the potential participants usually refer these volunteers.



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How is *FACING FORWARD* financed?

Its volunteers and the Englewood Public School District have paid for past *FACING FORWARD* events. Usage of the facilities (Gymnasium, Cafeteria, Classrooms & Media Center) and associated services are passed entirely on to the district while the program's accouterments, resources and supplies are collectively financed through donations.

How are donations made?

Checks and Money Orders can be written directly to:

Janis E. Dismus Middle School

Memo Line: Facing Forward Program

Program supplies and resource donations can be made to:

Mr. Lamarr Thomas, Mr. Andre Hampton or Mr. Eric Alleyne (as well as any authorized *FACING FORWARD* Planning Board Member)

Additional Questions?

Please contact--Principal Lamarr Thomas

Janis Dismus Middle School

325 Tryon Avenue

Englewood, New Jersey 07631

Phone: 201-862-6005 Main Office

Phone: 201-862-6293 Direct Line

Email: ltthomas@epsd.org

Please see the following links of past FF events:

<https://thepressgroup.net/rapper-d-m-c-joins-englewood-schools-character-building-initiative/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5wT94eD-c> (Facing Forward 2018: DMC)

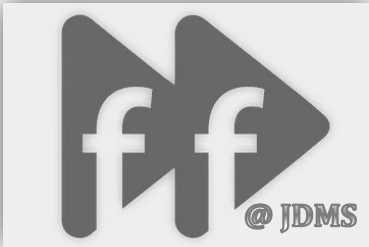
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWTorLB8AW8> (Facing Forward 2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeOA-tCmGlo&t=98s> (Facing Forward 2016: 1st Day of School)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZiBVQALEws> (February 2016- Year 5)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeOA-tCmGlo&t=98s> (February 2014- Year 3)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TlxjBv-x6s> (February 2013- Year 2)



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