

Daniel uses skills learned from BMCEP in present career

Michello Daniel remembers being first introduced to the Black Male College Explorers Program. It was through his mentor and former teacher Charles Watson from his hometown Apalachicola. He unabashedly admits, the introduction to the program in 1995 perhaps changed his entire trajectory about life.



“It changed me as a person when I was in high school because I didn’t have a lot of expectations,” Daniel said. “Being in the BMCEP, I knew the director, and others expected a lot of me. They recognized my potential. When Mr. (Tommy) Mitchell talked to you or told you something to do, you knew he was generally concerned. He expected you to do good.”

Daniel said his high school teacher and then President of FAMU, Dr. Frederick S. Humphries saw the need for young men in his hometown to discover what college life was all about.

It was a pattern of recruitment in the area, Daniel explained, to get “at-risk” black males to see all of the possibilities a college education offered.

“There are so many benefits of the program,” he said. “I was a person who was not used to discipline. This is the first thing that you are introduced to. It is a certain structure that you must follow. For example, you had to go to class on time and wake up a certain time. This structure taught you how to be disciplined.”

Likewise, Daniel said he grew fond of the coordinator, Adel Manatee, who he described as a mother figure. “She was like a mother away from home,” he said. “She gave you tough love. She made us feel like we were her sons.”

Daniel also mentioned the mentors and how their actions taught him techniques that he now uses in his present job in corrections. “The BMCEP mentors taught us how to be firm, fair and consistent,” he said.

In 1996-97, Daniel came back to the program to serve as a mentor himself. He encourages the participants to continue to be a part of BMCEP throughout high school and beyond. “There is a structure in place,” he said. “It will help you. It allows you to meet and see other people that you normally would not. You learn about different cultures, it exposes you to seeing success stories and good people.