



# DuPage County NAACP

Serving DuPage, Kane, Kendall and Will Counties  
Unit 3012

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## TWENTY-NINE HIGH SCHOOLS REPRESENTED IN ACT-SO COMPETITION Eleven Gold Medalists Advance to National Competition

(Wheaton, IL) – Students representing 29 area high schools placed in the DuPage County ACT-SO 36<sup>th</sup> annual Local Competition on Sunday, March 22. Sixty-four youth competed for top honors in Science, Business, Humanities, Performing Arts, and Visual Arts categories. ACT-SO – the Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics – is a year-long program designed to encourage high academic and cultural achievement among high school students of African descent. The program features three components: mentoring, academic enrichment, and a local competition.

“ACT-SO is not just about winning a medal,” said Dorletta Flucas Payton, DuPage County ACT-SO Chair. “It is about the journey to the competition and the knowledge learned, personal growth, and the relationships developed.”

Eleven students who won gold medals in 14 categories were acknowledged with other winners at the ACT-SO Awards Banquet. More than 600 parents, ACT-SO alumni, volunteers and program partners celebrated the hard work of the 2014-2015 ACT-SO class. The gold medal winners bound for the [ACT-SO National Competition](#) in Philadelphia in July, are:

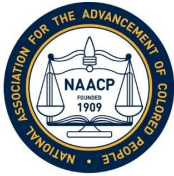
### ACT-SO Category / Student / High School / Grade

1. **Poetry – Written** Jaelyn Adams, Our Lady of Tepeyac High - 12
2. **Filmmaking/Video & Sculpture** Kelechi Agwuncha, Proviso Math & Science Academy - 12
3. **Computer Science & Photography** Whitney Ford, Plainfield East High School - 9
4. **Oratory** Kimberlee George, Streamwood High School - 12
5. **Medicine and Health** Olivia Griswold, Neuqua Valley High School - 12
6. **Music: Instrumental – Contemporary** Gabrielle Henderson, Downers Grove South High School - 11
7. **Engineering** Breanna Jackson, Oswego East High School - 11
8. **Music: Instrumental – Classical** Alexis Johnson, Rosary High School - 10
9. **Chemistry-Biochemistry & Entrepreneurship**, Tavis Reed, Illinois Math & Science Academy - 11
10. **Biology-Microbiology** Mariel Thompson, Naperville North High School - 9
11. **Drawing** Amirah Yessoufou, Neuqua Valley High School - 9

DuPage County ACT-SO is a program of the DuPage County Branch of the NAACP and is sponsored by the College of DuPage and the DuPage Regional Office of Education. This year’s program and local competition was made possible by key partners: College of DuPage, Argonne National Laboratory, JP Morgan Chase, and Northrop Grumman.

“Each of our partners contributes in a unique way to our success,” said Payton. “We so appreciate the financial investments, as well as the time and talents representatives give to ensure our Olympians perform at their highest.”

The national ACT-SO program has helped nearly 300,000 young people open new doors to learning and define career paths, since it was founded, 36 years ago. ACT-SO is the premier youth initiative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Today there are more than 200 ACT-SO chapters



around the country helping youth discover and develop academic and artistic talents. The ACT-SO competition is designed to recognize scholars in a manner often only reserved for entertainers and athletes.

In addition to celebrating the hard work of ACT-SO high school Olympians, the Awards Banquet honored middle school students who were part of DuPage County's Jr. ACT-SO program, launched during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Jr. ACT-SO focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) subjects and careers, exclusively, and challenges students to work in teams to identify and solve a real-world problem. A total of 26 students from 17 schools throughout the Chicagoland area were part of Jr. ACT-SO's inaugural class. Working together, sixth, seventh and eighth graders learned about researching, technical writing, software coding, and team building.

Results of Jr. ACT-SO's February competition were shared with participants and others anxious for the news at the 2015 DuPage County ACT-SO Awards Banquet, Sunday.

"Jr. ACT-SO was a life-changing experience for my daughter," said parent, Kerrissa Murry. "She has transformed into a young confident leader; look I forward to her growth and development through ACT-SO."

The Aqua Marines, the Jr. ACT-SO gold-medal winning team, focused on the need for clean water for all people, and the impact on kids in specific areas of Africa. Knowing that they could not solve the problem in a few months, the Aqua Marines chose to take on the challenge to raise awareness of the global issue by developing a website, in hopes that today's 13-year old will develop a clean water solution tomorrow.

The complete list of 2015 Local Competition winners and additional information about the DuPage County ACT-SO and Jr. ACT-SO programs is available at [www.dupageact-so.org](http://www.dupageact-so.org) or by call 331-462-2876.

#### **About the DuPage County Branch NAACP**

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. From the ballot box to the classroom, the thousands of dedicated workers, organizers, leaders and members who make up the NAACP continue to fight for social justice for all Americans.

The DuPage County Branch of the NAACP has been active in the County and surrounding areas including Will, Kendall and Kane Counties for more than 50 years, since it was chartered in November 1956. The Branch has grown to the second largest in the state of Illinois, raised significant funding for the Syd Finley Memorial Scholarship, and produced several National Medalists from the Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) competition.

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