

## WRITER-ACTIVIST KEVIN POWELL TALKS WITH YOUNG BLACK MALES DURING STATE TOUR



Writer and activist Kevin Powell facilitated a series of conversations with young black men on his “New Directions Tour” of eight Georgia cities, including Bainbridge. The tour, at the invitation of the University System of Georgia’s (USG) African-American Male Initiative (AAMI), provided opportunities for college, high school and middle and school students to hear him.

Powell spent the day at the Charles H. Kirbo Regional Center on the Bainbridge College campus Nov. 10 speaking at community sessions before going on to the tour’s final stop at Valdosta State University. The tour started Nov. 2 at Columbus State University and aimed to foster “New Directions” conversations and empower youth. Stops included the University of West Georgia, Augusta State University, Middle Georgia College, Waycross College, and two Atlanta area high schools that are Early College Program (ECP) sites.

The sessions in Bainbridge were planned for designated groups, some of which came from Albany. Powell first met with younger boys from Albany State University’s ECP, then meet with the AAMI and ECP leadership teams.

Editor of *The Black Male Handbook* and author of nine books, Powell offers audiences across the globe wisdom on surviving, living, and winning. He is known for his work uplifting and empowering African-American males and for addressing violence against women.

“Kevin Powell has a gift for connecting and conversing with young black men, and for getting them to discuss with him their possibilities for a better future,” said Arlethia Perry-Johnson, USG AAMI project director. “We want to inspire our students to think about ‘new directions’ for their lives, and we are looking forward to the strong impact we know Kevin will have in motivating our youth to achieve – both educationally and personally.”

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## ABOUT AAMI & ECP

The USG's AAMI initiative, housed in the External Affairs Division at Kennesaw State University, focuses on enhancing the recruitment, retention and graduation of black males from the system's 35 colleges and universities. Since the program's inception in 2002, USG enrollment of black males has increased 36%, from 17,068 students in 2002 to 23,225 in 2008. Black male graduation rates have improved significantly, and improvements in retention have been achieved.

Early Colleges, which are on USG college campuses, are innovative and highly effective schools for students who may not be well served by traditional schools and are traditionally underrepresented (low income, first-generation and minority). ECP students can earn a high school diploma with the potential to earn an associate's degree or one-two years of transferable credit toward a bachelor's degree. Each USG ECP site is a partnership between a local school system and a USG institution. All ECP schools strive to remove the financial, academic, and psychological hurdles that prevent too many students from entering and succeeding in college.

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## ABOUT THE SPEAKER

A gifted and highly sought after speaker, Powell has lectured on many topics, including multiculturalism, building corporate responsibility, American and black American history, the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, civil rights, American politics and civic engagement, sexism from a male perspective, leadership, social activism, the state of hip-hop, redefining American manhood, and being black and male in America.

He has spoken at hundreds of colleges and universities, community centers, prisons, religious institutions, conferences and festivals and in corporate settings. He routinely offers his insights on a variety of matters to broadcast and print media and Internet outlets in America and abroad.

Powell has written numerous essays, articles, and reviews through the years for publications such as *Esquire*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *Essence*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Amsterdam News* and *Vibe*, where he was a founding staff member and served as a senior writer, interviewing and profiling, among many others, General Colin Powell and the late Tupac Shakur. Powell also has been a Writing Fellow for the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, and a Phelps Stokes Fund Senior Fellow.