

# United Way shapes future leaders

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Staff writer

So how does the Honorable Jermayne Myers sound?

Myers, 26, works in guest services at Strong Memorial Hospital.

But asked on Friday where he envisions himself in 10 or 20 years, the graduate of the United Way of Greater Rochester's African-American Leadership Development Program shot for the top.

"I could see myself being mayor of our city," said Myers, who delivered the class address Thursday at the program's 20th annual commencement luncheon at the Hyatt Regency.

"There are a lot of things to believe in about our city, and first you have to believe in the people and their willingness to come together, sit down and work things out. If you have that, then you can come up with solutions to positively



**Strong Hospital employee Chris Arcara, left, chats with Jermayne Myers, who delivered the class address at the commencement luncheon on Thursday for the United Way's African-American Leadership Development Program.** CARLOS ORTIZ/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

change our community."

Thirty-four others who went through the intensive 10-session program share Myers' belief that Rochester's future depends on strong, passionate leaders.

Since 1992, AALDP has identified, trained and promoted placement of African Americans in policy-making positions.

"This is how we feed the future of Rochester leadership," said Dr. Frederick Jefferson Jr., steering committee chairman.

Honored with the Howard Wilson Coles community leadership award was

Rev. James L. Cherry Sr., 77, pastor of Aeonon Missionary Baptist Church.

AALDP students received skills training in communication, decision-making and conflict resolution. "It's about learning what it means to be a leader and how to use our leadership skills and abilities for betterment of the community," Myers said.

Myers hopes to start work soon on a degree in economics at the University of Rochester, a degree that would come in handy dealing with city budgets as mayor.

Cherry was recognized for his community service: he's a frequent speaker at schools and he serves on the boards of several not-for-profits. He has done ministry work for 50 years, the past 30 in Rochester.

"An event like this shows the strength of our community and I would also say the love and concern we have," Cherry said. "These graduates, the community has come together to help them improve themselves and that in turn helps the community." □

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