



ASHLEY STEWART EMPOWERS BLACK GIRLS: Clothing store teams with National Council of Negro Women for campaign.

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*Ashley Stewart stores have teamed with the National Council of Negro Women to begin an initiative that fosters mentorships between African American women and girls, reports BlackEnterprise.com.

Every Tuesday, in all 217 Ashley Stewart stores nationwide, black women and girls join together to discuss topics ranging from domestic violence to education and cancer prevention.

Dorothy L. Height, 96, president emeritus of the NCNW, says she cherished her mentor, civil rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune, and believes black girls can benefit from mentorship.

“We have to work harder at intergenerational sharing and giving,” Height said after a press conference this week announcing the benefits of the program. “I think older people have a responsibility not only for sharing our history, but also recognizing the new changes and the new things to which we have to adapt and move forward.”

Some 1,800 women of all races have paid the \$30 membership fee to join the NCNW through Ashley Stewart stores. This week the ASSCF presented Height and the NCNW with a check representing funds raised through the end of Dec. 2008. Customers who join the NCNW receive a one-time 20% discount and a 10% discount for one year on all purchases at Ashley Stewart Stores.

The intent of the campaign is to shed unflattering perceptions that are heaped on black women by society and even themselves, and help melt disparities that disproportionately affect black women.

Ashley Stewart began their celebration of women’s empowerment four months ahead of National Women’s History Month, when they announced the “We are Listening” campaign last October. Sponsored by the Ashley Stewart Stores Community Foundation, the effort was created to provide “safe spaces” for young women under 35 and older women in the African American community.