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Special to the Telegram / Garry Hodges  
Ilyasah Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X, visited Parker Middle School to speak to seventh-graders. Her visit was part of the national HistoryMakers initiative, an education campaign about black history targeting youth in schools.

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# Malcolm X's daughter speaks to area children

By **Jim Holt**  
Friday, September 17, 2010  
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Leading a purpose-driven life was the main message Ilyasah Shabazz wanted to relay Friday to Parker Middle School seventh graders.

Her visit was part of the national HistoryMakers initiative, an education campaign about black history targeting youth in schools.

The third eldest daughter of civil rights activist Malcolm X, Shabazz said her message is simple.

"We should be able to love who we are," she said. "Every child, regardless of race, creed or gender, should be able to feel safe."

The knowledge of historical facts eliminates feelings of inferiority, she said.

Her father, Malcolm X, named her Ilyasah, or "God is present," and was a man who raised civil rights to human rights, she said.

Having traveled 544 miles to the Nash-Rocky Mount middle school from New York, Shabazz told the students they are "powerful beyond measure."

"We were not slaves," Shabazz said. "We were African men and women in bondage."

Shabazz said the most common answer coming from students when she asks them what they want to be when they grow up is "rich" ... an answer she said she deplores.

These days many students tell her they want to be doctors and lawyers not to pursue being rich in service or helping humankind but for love of money.

Shabazz also spoke of how pop culture reinforces the usage of the "N-word, B-word and H-word" in black culture.

"How many of you have been called these words before," she asked.

After several students testified to how they've experienced being the subject of these names and have felt personally offended, Shabazz denounced the students using the jargon as well.

Shabazz handed out pens, pins, shadowboxes and copies of her book "Growing Up X," to students and faculty who participated through answering questions she posed during her speech.

"It's super that she's taken the time to give back to the community and enlighten the seventh-graders," school Principal Charles Davis said. "She's given us what we need from yesterday to make the world better tomorrow."

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