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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CORNELL BLACK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION HELPS FIRST TIME AUTHORS WITH A LITERARY GRANT

June 15, 2014 - NEW YORK, NY – Cornell Black Alumni Association (CBAA) announces its first recipient of the recently created Literary Grant.

Dionne M. Benjamin, Esq, a graduate of the School of Hotel Administration, Class of 2000, is CBAA's first recipient of a monetary grant to aid first time authors beginning the process of publishing. Dionne's submission *City Kids - White Chocolate*, one of a series of books, chronicles the experience of a young African American boy's education about his heritage. Her inspiration for this book is her son and the challenging situations they have experienced together.

Ms. Benjamin has developed *City Kids* as a series of books to stimulate conversation between parents and children, promote safety, and garner an appreciation for the urban areas in which we live. Her *City Kids* series addresses topics such as racial identity, racial profiling, homosexuality, intercourse/conception, gangs, hip-hop culture, drugs, alcohol abuse, absent parents, homelessness and African-American vernacular. She plans to use the grant to help offset the fees associated with publishing such as illustration.

The CBAA literary grant was developed to support CBAA alumni in their goals of publishing a book. The initial cost of publishing a book can be a hindrance to an author. CBAA's intent is to remove that hindrance our alumni encounter by providing financial support with this grant. Fundraising for the grant has and will continue to come from our own alumni and CBAA's efforts.

In order to support our alumni membership, the board committed to developing grant guidelines and raising funds over the last 6-8 months. We will continue our efforts with the hopes that this grant will be a yearly award. The hope is that we can support our alumni realize their dreams and inspire many others to write the novels, poems or plays that are living inside of them.

Founded in 1976, the Cornell Black Alumni Association (CBAA) was conceived as an organization devoted to providing a communication network for Black alumni. Over the years, CBAA's mission and scope of activities has expanded, resulting in myriad programs that have a direct and significant impact on alumni and future Cornell students. As CBAA's membership has grown, regional chapters have sponsored cultural, social, and professional activities throughout the country to achieve CBAA's mission. CBAA's mailings reach over 3,000 alumni. Our mission is not accomplished without sacrifice, both personal and financial. Yet, through concerted efforts, we can achieve even greater success.

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If you'd like more information about this topic, please contact Chimene Liburd '92, VP of Fundraising at 240-417-9756 or email Chimene at che5md@aol.com. To learn more about CBAA, please visit <http://www.cbaa1976.com>.