

PABLO DAVID MEMORIAL Sunflower Planting

Harlem wide invitation for
individuals, families and

community organizations to join in
celebrating the beautiful spirit of

PABLO DAVID

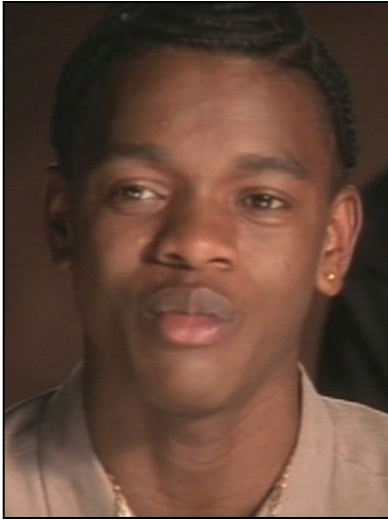
a municipal housing resident, videographer,
peacekeeper, college student and mentor to
neighborhood youth

SYMBOLIZING AND HONORING

Young people striving for a brighter future
The mentors and Organizations devoted
to

**YOUTH, GENEROSITY, JUSTICE
BEAUTY, PEACE, AND COMMUNITY**





PABLO DAVID a teenager, who was born in Honduras, raised in the St. Nicholas Projects in Harlem, was just a name and an obscure image on the wall to me. I became very curious as to who this person was, what did he look like, what was it about him, that TRUCE members held him in such high esteem?

Recently I got to see a video about Pablo at TRUCE, that featured footage of him from the age of about ten to 18 years of age. When it starts you see he is constantly looking up, observing his surroundings taking it all in and day-dreaming, I suppose. Then he narrates, I was entranced. This young man gave me the impression that he was far beyond his years. He was proud of his culture, his people and his neighborhood. He believed that “the ghetto wasn’t such a bad place if you knew your neighbors and didn’t cause any trouble”.

In this film there are excerpts of him commenting on police harassment and how he wanted to make a complaint, but it would be futile since he knew it would be the police officer’s word against his. To be socially aware at such a tender age is rare and I became a believer.

He appeared on Good Day New York and was interviewed by Lynn White, very articulately representing Reedlin (a youth organization). I could tell she was taken by him. Upon his learning about female genital mutilation in Africa, he remarked how it would affect him if his mother and sister were involved in such a ritual, he was moved to write a poem. I observed his leadership skills and sense of humor.

Pablo wanted to be a filmmaker and I have no doubt he probably would have surpassed that aspiration and made even more of a difference in the world, through his capacity to inspire the belief that anything is possible. On April 17, 2003 while home from college, he was killed in a car crash. A tragedy caused by another’s at-risk behavior (reckless drunk driving). Pablo David brought joy and pride to his family, teachers, fellow students, and his community by turning his life towards a brighter future. He was an inspiration to all who knew him.

Pablo touched all those he came in contact with. Although I didn’t know him personally, he has inspired me and taught me to respect the Sunflower, which is his favorite flower and through him I learned of the Garifuna culture. It is evident that his roots and ancestry manifested in him a consciousness about who he was and his purpose in life. To know who you are is even more astounding and rare, especially for a black child growing up in Harlem, or *anywhere*.

It is my hope that all people in Harlem and around the city, especially young black males learn about him and emulate his essence. It is said that “only the good die young,” this couldn’t be more palpable than in this instance. To think of what he could have achieved and accomplished leaves a hole in our society. Will anyone step up and take his place, among us? Probably so, I haven’t met that someone yet; but if I do I will tell them of Pablo David, a warrior angel who came for a short time to teach us all something about ourselves and the world we live in.

“A ROSE GROWS FROM THE CONCRETE”

Did you hear? Did you hear ‘bout the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete?
Proving nature’s laws wrong, it learned to walk without feet.
Funny how it seems, but by keeping it’s dreams it learned to breath fresh air.
Long live the rose that grew from the concrete when no one else even cared.

I know of a sunflower that did the same. —*Marilyn Moseley CMTG*

Nikki Giovanni



Sunflowers In Harlem

When much of the daily conversations about young people are filled with negative criticisms, how can we show them that they are precious to us and how much we really need them to succeed?

“It takes a village to raise a child” - So what are we doing to our youth?

RATIONALE - Sunflowers, a native plant with positive ecological attributes, was chosen to be the living symbol of this memorial. These flowers were the favorite of the memorial’s namesake, Pablo David. In tribute to Pablo’s memory and paying homage to his love of this flower a gesture of planting them throughout Harlem to salute all inner city youth who also strive to build a brighter future; demonstrating our concern for and pride in all of our youth who are challenged daily by deceptions, deprivations, violence, and exploitation.

PURPOSE - To develop a community based floral exhibition; honoring the spirit of young people who strive to succeed in life, by committing themselves to positive choices and sacrifices and to encourage their acquisition of needed coping skills that can minimize their exposure and vulnerability to high risk behavior. The Sunflower displays what botanists call *heliotropism*. In short, the plant turns its’ flower face towards the sun to capture the light. So, for our purposes, Sunflowers, when planted throughout the community, will represent the children turning away from the unhealthy aspects of urban life, the so called “concrete jungle”; to face the challenges of building a better life for themselves. The sight of Sunflowers turning toward the Sun can well represent the promise, beauty, and value of young people striving for excellence in these trying times.





The annual Sunflower comes in a variety of sizes and colors, like our youth. They provide good nutrition; being especially valuable as a source of heart healthy cooking oil. Sunflowers can supply renewable green building materials and bio-fuel, attract beneficial pollinators and provide an attractive natural enhancement to the urban landscape. They have potential, as our young people do.

METHODOLOGY - Starting along the West wall of the Carrie McCracken TRUCE Garden, located on St. Nicholas Avenue between 117th and 118th Streets, a wide patch will again be planted with giant Sunflowers and other

compatible plants. The pathway leading back to the entry gate will also be lined with small 2x2 or 5 gallon buckets, safe planters for neighborhood toddlers; with their parents to plant smaller Sunflowers and companion plants. Sunflowers will also be planted parallel to the St. Nicholas Avenue fence. We will then seek additional sympathetic plantings at other community gardens, youth service sites, churches, businesses, and homes. Because these plants are easy to grow, anyone can participate in their dissemination throughout the community.

At the conclusion of the growing season Sunflowers will be harvested and selected seeds used for roasting, oil pressing, and future planting. Stalks will be trimmed and dried for staves and fencing in our gardens while the balance of the plant material will composted. Nothing will be wasted; just as we want no child to be discarded.

The resources needed to implement this project are accessible, affordable, and renewable towards a readily sustainable effort. All these facts put participation within the reach of all neighborhood stakeholders in the future of our youth. By providing a constant reminder of the concern of the community for their welfare and progress; we can provide positive reinforcement to our youth's achievements. Not communication based on rebuke or disgrace; which too often characterizes anonymous adult/youth interactions within our community.

This project will provide a tangible expression, that not only do we realize "it takes a village to raise a child", but also the future of "our village" depends on the emergence of wisdom, creativity, and dignity from amongst our youth.



HOW YOU AND NEIGHBORHOOD GARDENS CAN HELP

Interested parties are requested to identify possible dates and times of their availability; so that orientation, planning, and supply distribution meetings can be scheduled.

For info contact— Steve Kidd 347-557-2963 or steve@harlemgarden.org



To nourish children and raise them against odds is in any time, any place, more valuable than to fix bolts in cars or design nuclear weapons.

*Marilyn French
award winning writer and feminist*



**CARRIE MCCRACKEN TRUCE COMMUNITY GARDEN
143-145 ST NICHOLAS AVENUE @ 117TH ST
HARLEM, NEW YORK, NY 10027**