



Overcoming the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Young Women

By Freeman A. Hrabowski, Kenneth I. Maton, Monica L. Greene, Geoffrey L. Greif, Geoffrey Greif

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When *Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males* appeared in 1998, it was hailed as "a crucial book" (*Baltimore Sun*) and "undoubtedly one of the most important tools the African American parent can possess" (Kweisi Mfume, President NAACP).

Now, in response to enormous demand, the authors turn their attention to African American young women. Statistics indicate that African American females, as a group, fare poorly in the United States. Many live in single-parent households—either as the single-parent mother or as the daughter. Many face severe economic hurdles. Yet despite these obstacles, some are performing at exceptional levels academically. Based on interviews with many of these successful young women and their families, *Overcoming the Odds* provides a wealth of information about how and why they have succeeded—what motivates them, how their backgrounds and family relationships have shaped them, even how it feels to be a high academic achiever. They also discuss the challenges of moving into African American womanhood, from maintaining self-esteem to making the right choices about their professional and personal lives. Most important, the book offers specific and inspiring examples of the practices, attitudes, and parenting strategies that have enabled these women to persevere and triumph.

For parents, educators, policy makers, and indeed all those concerned about the education of young African American women, *Overcoming the Odds* is an invaluable guidebook on creating the conditions that lead to academic-and lifelong-success.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This volume studies female participants in the Meyerhoff Scholarship program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, for insights into the success of this select group of young black women. The Meyerhoff program targets minority students who major in math and science and provides extensive support through tutors, mentors, peers, and summer programs as well as a complete financial package. The four authors, from different departments at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Hrabowski is president) have compiled their data through questionnaires and interviews with students, parents, and others who have played key roles. The results identify common factors in these women's success. The study serves as a valuable tool for African American parents who want to help their children achieve their highest potential, as well as for counselors, teachers, and educators at all academic levels. This book is a sequel to *Beating the Odds* (Oxford Univ., 1998), which studied the male participants in this same program. Highly recommended. Kay Brodie, Chesapeake Coll., Wye Mills, MD
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From [Booklist](#)

This book follows up on *Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males* (1998), this time focusing on young black women who have successfully completed a special course of science and technology at the University of Maryland. While noting the similar problems faced by both black male and female adolescents--racism, lower incomes, fewer educational opportunities--the authors focus on the particular challenges facing young black women as they struggle to overcome the stereotypical image: high-school drop-out, unwed mother, welfare recipient. Drawing on interviews with students and parents, the authors answer the question, What does it take to succeed academically? Separate chapters allow mothers and fathers to voice their particular concerns about and approaches to raising black women, including how to exercise discipline, provide support, and keep students motivated. And the young women themselves speak about the challenges they face and how they keep themselves focused. Most of the literature on young black women focuses on problems; in welcome contrast, this book is an inspiration and a valuable resource for parents and students. *Vanessa Bush*
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Review

"A valuable tool for African American parents who want to help their children achieve their highest potential, as well as for counselors, teachers, and educators at all academic levels.... Highly recommended."--*Library Journal* (starred review)

"*Overcoming the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Young Women* is an important companion to *Beating the Odds*. It shares useful strategies Black parents have used to pass on a legacy of excellence to their daughters that can be an example for all parents."--Marian Wright Edelman, President, Children's Defense Fund

"*Overcoming the Odds* presents workable strategies for enabling young women to realize their full potential. It bears testament to the wisdom of the Meyerhoff Program in creating an environment of technical and social support in its model approach to engendering success."--Kweisi Mfume, President and CEO, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Users Review

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Thomas Llanos:

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