

Open Letter to the Parents of Black Students of
Swarthmore College

Dear Friends,

We are extremely proud of you. You have graced the Swarthmore College community with some of the finest, most courageous, most intelligent young people we could ever hope to know. The writers of this letter are black Swarthmore College employees (all over 30) - parents of 13 children ranging in age from 6-26. As concerned parents to other concerned parents, we can no longer sit idly by without reassuring you that your sons' and daughters' attempts to help Swarthmore College are necessary and legitimate.

We know that you are proud to send them here. We can imagine some of you cautioning them not to "rock the boat". But, in the short while we have been here, we have come to fully understand Martin Luther King's awareness that "Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will." Your offspring are saying that lukewarm acceptance is worse than outright rejection. They are making education here a real and positive thing. They are educating us - and they will essentially contribute much toward making this a healthier, happier, much more relevant educational environment for all.

We are deeply impressed with their sincerity, their rationality, and their sense of humanity.

We went to them tonight to inform them of our support, and we came away revitalized. We could weep because they constantly have to explain the simplest needs for things that should be theirs without asking, and asking, and asking.

We take this opportunity to affirm our confidence in them and in their new counselor, David Closson. No matter what the national press or the silent majorities say about college students - black or white - these students are analyzing issues, facing problems, and trying their best to solve them.

We admire them and you.

William and Eileen Cline

Edwin and DeLois Collins

Harold Hoffman

Robert and Lee Williams

Rachel Williams

Gift of Kaze Oye, 12th mo. 1992