

Committed to community

Investor sees power in opportunity

The most potent advice Mike Weaver gives to his educators — a trio of teenage boys who once a week get up before their squirming peers and talk about things like AIDS and syphilis — is to be real. Phillip Washington, 17, does it with a “Whuzzup?!”

Weaver does it by announcing to the group, “I was a virgin until I was 19.” He waits for the shuffling and giggling to subside. “And I was able to go to college. And go to grad school. And get a very well-paying job.”

That, and no doubt his confidence and crisp suit, struck a nerve.

Weaver is matter-of-fact about his financial success. He spent his early years in an Aiken, S.C. public housing community; his teen years stealing cars, then scraping for his Morehouse tuition. Now he's a savvy investor.

But he says it's power — the ability to “pick up the phone and get something done” — that he really values. “With T.A.R.G.E.T. PREVENTION we have the support of many non-profits in the community. With that reputation, we can reach more kids.”

So far, influence isn't bringing his hour count down. When the mayor's office asked him to pitch a Freaknik alternative, he worked up the proposal on his own time. He's also putting together, with local filmmaker Aki Spicer, a video series of the boys' health lectures and an Internet home page.

But Weaver insists, as many Partners



RICH MAHAN / Staff

Mike Weaver wants kids to be fiercely devoted to their futures.

MIKE WEAVER

Birthplace: Aiken, S.C.

Age: 30.

Resume: B.A. in computer science, Morehouse College, 1991. Master's degree in public health, University of South Carolina, 1992. Worked for organizations including Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta, YMCA and YWCA and Capitol Area Mosaic. Cur-

rently director of community development at United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, a full-time job.

Project: T.A.R.G.E.T. (Teaching Adolescents to Rethink Getting Education Towards) PREVENTION.

Title: Opportunity leader.

What it does: Educates and funds peer educators, who teach other teens about health issues such as STDs, pregnancy, self-esteem and violence.

do, that the “extracurriculars” are not a choice. “It gets back to my mother spending a lot of time in the community,” he explains. “That was part of our whole tradition and culture, for many people in the black community, to visit the sick and the ‘shut in.’ I’m continuing the tradition. I’ve just turned it to the

young.”

For more information on T.A.R.G.E.T. PREVENTION, call 404-524-1751. Or send e-mail to TargetPvtn@aol.com. The home page address is <http://users.aol.com/targetpvtn/target.html>.