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Racial unrest is topic

Teens tackle tensions

By MARY McKENZIE
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NEW BRUNSWICK — Six-hundred junior and senior high school students met to discuss adolescent leadership and relations between the races in a day-long conference yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Hotel organized by the Princeton Center for Leadership Training.

Included in the conference were area students from Trenton Central High School, Princeton Day School, Lawrence High School, and Woodrow Wilson High School in Bristol Township, Pa., who learned about the importance of rejecting stereotypes, whether racial or cultural, said P.C.L.T. president and founder, Sharon Rose Powell.

"We want these kids to learn to accept others despite differences, from what they wear and what music they listen to ... to what color their skin is," said Powell.

"I can't think of a better way to remember the efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King than this," Powell said.

Students watched a one-act play performed by Trenton High and Lawrence High students on



Photo by Stan Brick

Lawrence High School student Sharahan Thomas performs a monologue during a skit about racial tensions yesterday at the Fourth Annual Urban-Suburban Peer Group Connection Conference.

breaking racial barriers. The play, which featured a monologue by Lawrence senior Sharahn Thomas, was written last year by then-Lawrence High senior Jeff McCullough.

Thomas, watching students from both schools reject members of another race, screamed

out at a silent audience:

"WHEN YOU WILL hear my voice? Not the black voice, not the white voice, but my voice?"

After the play, students met in small groups with representatives from different schools to discuss how to break the barriers of racial and cultural stereotypes.

"I think that most of the problems between races could be blamed on the media," said Long Branch High School senior Kenya Brooks, citing coverage of the recent Stuart murder in Boston, Mass., and television shows where murderers, rapists, and burglars are often black inner-city men.