



Mama's Boyz: Home Schoolin, Because Learning Shouldn't Stop at 3 O'clock!

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Mama s Boyz: Home Schoolin is 112-pages of comic strips and stories aimed at getting kids and young adults to focus on the positive sides of African-American life. The book follows a year in the life of the Porter family, which is made up of Pauline (a widow), her two teenaged sons, Tyrell and Yusuf, and Gran pa and Uncle Greg.

In January, Gran'pa takes the boys downtown to eat at a lunch counter in celebration of Dr Martin Luther King s birthday. For the first time, the teens are made to realize what life was like before the Civil Rights Movement as Gran pa makes Yusuf give up his seat to a white passenger. Once at the restaurant, they are told how African Americans used to have to enter through the back door and were not even permitted to sit at the counter. These are crucial parts of our past that many of today's youth know absolutely nothing about!

Other topics include an appreciation of Black History and Women's History Months, back-to-school (Mom's favorite time of the year!) and Kwanzaa to name a few. And when the boys have to take care of their flu-sickened Mom during Mother's Day, they realize just how much she does for them on a day-to-day basis. In addition, October commemorates National Book Month as real-live NY Times best-selling author **Eric Jerome Dickey** appears in the strip to do a book signing at the family s bookstore!

Mama's Boyz: Home Schoolin' also includes a look at how cartoonist Jerry Craft creates his strips and draws his characters, as well as his commentary on various comics throughout the book. There's even an old-fashioned flipbook with a dancing Yusuf showing his moves at the bottom of the page. The final section includes special Mama's Boyz strips that have been done for organizations such as the **American Diabetes Association** and **Donate Life America**.

The book concludes with the most popular Mama's Boyz story in its 15-year run, entitled **Dawn of the Dad** in which Mom shows Yusuf the tremendous responsibility of raising a child as he s made to care for an infant for an entire weekend. Changing diapers, 2 a.m. feedings, crying, burping... you name it. When this story first appeared in newspapers, Jerry received over 500 emails from parents, teachers and clergy around the country commending the series. One mother wrote me to say that she let her son read the strips, then used it as a way to talk to him for the very first time about the issue of babies having babies. "I was honored to have played a role in that," says Craft. As a result, in June of 2007, he received a Conversation Starter award from the **DC Campaign to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy**. The award is for advocates who have helped change the conversation about teen pregnancy from one that places blame and shame on teenagers, to conversations about what it takes to motivate teens to want to avoid pregnancy in the first place.

Mama s Boyz: Home Schoolin' is a great read for everyone from eight to 108! And it s something the whole family can and SHOULD enjoy together, which is a rarity in itself.

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