

# Special Needs Network and HBCU Heroes Launch Free Summer Life Skills Program for Teens

*Empowering Youth with Emotional Resilience and Career Readiness*

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Special Needs Network (SNN), one of California's leading nonprofits serving youth with developmental disabilities and from underserved communities, is launching "Beat the Summer BLUES," a free two-week virtual life skills series.

In partnership with national nonprofit HBCU Heroes, the program aims to equip more than 200 teens, ages 13 to 19, with critical social-emotional strategies and workforce readiness tools.

Part of SNN's larger THINK Autism Campaign, the series centers on culturally competent, evidence-based interventions designed to support young people—especially those with autism and from historically marginalized backgrounds. HBCU Heroes will manage the program and facilitate delivery of the curriculum between June 9 and June 20, 2025.

## Program Overview

Structured over six total hours of live group instruction, the Beat the Summer BLUES series takes place from June 9 to June 20, 2025 and includes flexible, after-school Zoom-based sessions. The program integrates SNN's Blues Program, a key component of its THINK Autism campaign, offering culturally competent, evidence-based interventions to support youth mental health—especially for students with autism and those from marginalized communities.

## Training Schedule:

- Track A: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays – 5:00 to 7:00 PM PT (weeks of June 9 & 16)
- Track B: Tuesdays & Thursdays – 5:00 to 8:00 PM PT (weeks of June 9 & 16)



## Incentives for Participants

Teens who complete their track by attending the full six hours will receive:

- A \$50 stipend
- A Certificate of Completion (great for resumes, college apps)
- Entry into a \$250 prize drawing (four total winners)

All sessions are led by diverse trainers experienced in working with youth and grounded in culturally relevant, therapeutic frameworks. Students also complete at-home assignments to reinforce key concepts.

## Why It Matters

“Too many young people fall through the cracks emotionally during summer,” said Areva Martin, Esq., founder and president of SNN. “We’re giving them the tools they need to be seen, supported, and successful.”

Mental health data from the American Psychological Association, National Institutes of Health, and World Health Organization highlights increased emotional instability in teens during summer months due to reduced structure and access to support systems. The Blues Program directly addresses this seasonal vulnerability with practical strategies that build resilience.

“The Blues Program equips students with cognitive-behavioral strategies to manage emotions, challenge negative



Founder/President of SNN | Award-winning Civil Rights Attorney | USA Today & Wall Street Journal Bestselling Author | Radio & Talk Show Host and Producer | In-demand Keynote Speaker |

Special Needs Network  
**Beat the Summer BLUES**  
Learn to Reduce Stress, Think More Positively & Manage Your Emotions  
Youth Webinar Series on zoom  
Powered by HBCU Heroes  
Open to California students ages 13-19

**PARTICIPATION PERKS**

- ✓ **\$50 stipend** (via PayPal for completing 6-hour course)
- ✓ **Daily raffles with fun prizes**
- ✓ **Certificate of Completion**  
(Great for resumes, college apps, LinkedIn)

**Chance to win \$250!!**  
Winner Selected for each course track (4 winners total) Must be present to win

**BLUES**  
Initiative of

**Scan to RSVP Today**

**RSVP Link** <https://bit.ly/SNNBeatSummerBlues>

**June 9-13 OR June 16-20**

**Track A:**  
**Monday/Wednesday/Friday** OR **Track B:**  
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM PT | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM PT

(Participants can only sign up for one and one track)

[www.snnla.org](http://www.snnla.org) | [www.hbcuheroes.org](http://www.hbcuheroes.org) | [traceypennywell@hbcuheroes.org](mailto:traceypennywell@hbcuheroes.org)

thinking, and build lifelong coping tools,” said Juan Carlos Garcia, M.Ed., senior vice president at SNN. “Research shows these methods can reduce depression symptoms for up to two years and lower the risk of developing major depressive disorders.”

## How to Register

SNN is encouraging parents, educators, counselors, and youth-serving nonprofits to share this life-changing opportunity widely.

Eligibility: California teens ages 13–19

Registration Deadline For Track 1: Monday, June 9th at 12:00 PM PT

How to Register: <https://bit.ly/SNNBeatSummerBlues>

Spots are limited—early sign-up is encouraged.

Note: This training is mandatory for students applying to youth counselor roles at Camp JPAC, SNN’s summer day camp.

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## About Special Needs Network

Needs Network, Inc. (SNN) is a nonprofit grassroots organization responding to the crisis of autism and other developmental disabilities in underserved communities. We recognize the intersectionality of individuals with disabilities and that their fight for disability rights is inextricably tied to the fight for racial justice and the civil rights of all people. Learn more at [www.snnla.org](http://www.snnla.org)

## About HBCU Heroes

HBCU Heroes is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit co-founded by DEI strategist and career coach Tracey Pennywell and NBA veteran George Lynch to advance career readiness, financial literacy, and equitable access for students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other underrepresented communities. Through scholarships, upskilling, and nationwide mentorship programs, HBCU Heroes connects high-potential talent with top employers, partnering with Fortune 500 companies to grow diverse pipelines. Learn more at [www.hbcuheroes.org](http://www.hbcuheroes.org).

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