



A Reporter Visits

On Monday, June 12th, JPA was honored to have John Fountain, Chicago native and award-winning journalist, stop by for conversations with JPA staff. John writes weekly for the Chicago Sun–Times and was formerly a national correspondent with the New York Times.

He has been a staff reporter at the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune and currently is a professor at Roosevelt University.

He received his BA and MA from the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign. He also writes about Chicago issues for the Huffington Post and has published several books about growing up and the importance of family.

John's interest in JPA's work stems in part from his coverage of issues surrounding inner city poverty and race, but, even more important, from his own background growing up on Chicago's West Side. From his webpage biography:

Fountain grew up on some of the meanest streets in Chicago, where drugs, crime, decay, and broken homes consigned so many black children to a life of despair and self–destruction.

One thing saved him—his faith, his own true vine.

father at seventeen, a college dropout at nineteen, a welfare case soon after, Fountain was on the verge of giving up all hope. One thing saved him — his faith, his own true vine. [In his book *True Vine: A Young Black Man's Journey of Faith, Hope and Clarity*] he shares his inspirational story of going from poverty and the urban mean streets of Chicago's West Side to the top of his profession.

During our conversation at JPA, we discussed the importance of creating relationships between youth and caring adults. He easily understood how important JPA's work with traumatized youth is as staff members explained our methods and how we integrate ourselves into communities.

We hope this meeting will be the first of many with John, who has overcome many of the barriers our own children have. His insights and perspective in his books and reporting, are invaluable. We look forward to his next visit.

JPA