

BIOs



Minnesota House of Representatives, Rena Moran

In 2000, Rena Moran and her children were homeless. In 2010, she was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives and is now serving her second term. The transition from homelessness to elected office is a testament to her leadership, strength, commitment to community, and belief that ordinary people can make a real difference and to the power of the Assets for Independence program which promotes financial self-sufficiency. "Each of us can make a difference. The voices of ordinary citizens must be brought to the halls of City Hall and the State Legislature," Moran said. She also works as Parent Leader Coordinator for Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota.



Sam Simmons, LADC Sam Simmons has over 29-years' experience as an alcohol and drug counselor and behavioral consultant specializing in culturally sensitive trauma informed strategies focused on African American males and historical trauma. He is an Adverse Childhood Experience Interface Trainer in the state of Minnesota. Sam received the 2016 Healing the Hidden Wounds of Racial Trauma award and the Black Tear Drop Award for his vision and leadership in culturally sensitive trauma informed work in the community and around the country. In 2017 Sam received the Champions for Children Award for his trauma work with parents. In 2018 he received Public Health Hero Award for his unique, innovative, and culturally specific trauma informed work from the City of

Minneapolis. In 2018 Sam was honored by the NFL for his work to end violence against women and interpersonal violence. He is co-host of "Voices" radio show on KMOJ FM that addresses issues of the urban community. Sam is co-creator of the Community Empowerment Through Black Men Healing conference and for that work in 2018 he received recognition from both Minneapolis and St. Paul Mayors and Minnesota's Governor.

Morning Workshops



Sam Simmons, LADC and Brandon Jones, MA They will discuss community trauma work.

Brandon Jones is a psychotherapist, professor, behavioral health consultant. He specializes in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Historical and Intergenerational trauma, Social/Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Leadership, and Youth Justice. Born and raised in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Brandon has survived living in a home of domestic violence and various other forms of trauma. Brandon holds a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Minnesota, a Masters in Community Psychology from Metropolitan State University, and a Masters in Psychotherapy (MFT) from Adler Graduate School. Brandon is also a 2013 Bush Foundation Leadership Fellow. He is also professor at Metropolitan State University and Century College.

All the following workshops 10:30AM, WILL REPEAT AGAIN AT 1:30PM



William R. Moore, C.P.E. "A Father's Role in Co-Parenting"

- To help men and their significant others successfully co parent by dissecting and false assumptions of gender roles and giving a voice to both parties
- Open Dialogue and Discussion

William Moore is a Public Health Educator with Saint Paul Ramsey County Public Health, a Semi professional Football player, a Consultant and one of two of the first Male Doula and lactation Consultants in the History of the State of Minnesota. He has worked in Public Health for the last 3-4 years and has experience lobbying and advocating for non-profits and public health legislation on Capitol Hill in Washington DC.

"History is not about the past. It's about the present!" Dr. El-Kati



Moriah Friend "Getting to Good Grief"

- Participants will evaluate areas of grief in their lives and discover ways to work through and overcome that grief.
- By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to identify areas of grief (unhealthy or undealt with) in their lives and in their families by journaling/reflecting and open discussion of experiences.
- By the end of the workshop, participants will compare and contrast the effects of good grief vs. bad grief by discussing and sharing with partners.
- Participants will demonstrate what it means to have good grief by applying some of the tools and wisdom provided in his or her personal life.

Moriah Friend is a mother, educator, author, and leader who has worked in the field of early childhood education for several years. With the heart to help nurture and educate children, she received a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education Administration and a Master of Education. Furthermore, it has been her desire to see hurting women, children, and families become restored and whole so that they can live their best life. Her greatest joy has come from raising and nurturing her three children ages 12, 9, and 3 years old. Moriah currently resides in Minneapolis, MN with her family.



VOA-MN Culturally Responsive Caregiver Support and Dementia Services "It's a Family Affair- fortifying the village"

- Explore culturally responsive models for memory loss and dementia
- Know 10 warning signs of memory loss
- Importance of a checkup from the neck up
- Understand culturally responsive modifications, techniques and skills to support family caregiving



Dorothea Harris, MSW, LICSW, has served the past 14 years with Volunteers of America – Minnesota (VOA-MN) in Senior Services contributing her passion in the service of African American caregivers, elders, and their families. She has developed and implemented a new program in response to the pressing community need, "Culturally Responsive Caregiver Support and Dementia Services" which features a recent purchase of a Healthy Aging and Memory Mobile Clinic. She is dedicated to expanding the number of diverse professionals and Community Health Workers to promote principles of health equity and enhance person-centered caregiving and dementia care for ethnic and cultural communities who have the highest health disparities. Dorothea says, that her spiritual calling and passion for service stems from her historical and cultural upbringing that promotes respecting, honoring and caring for your elder family members.

Valorie Jones has over 25 years of professional and personal experience advocating and providing resources and culturally responsive services to address the needs of multicultural families. Her passion is to empower and strengthen a caregivers' capacity to provide, manage, and cope with caring for others while preserving their own health and well-being.

Monisha Washington is the Community Health Worker (CHW) that has had the passion to serve the community for several years. She is currently the Outreach Coordinator at Volunteers of America for the Culturally Responsive Caregiver Support and Dementia Services program. In this role she trains the Community Health Workers on connecting with diverse communities in various ways. Monisha focuses on educating the community on chronic diseases, preventive measures and risk factors for Dementia. She independently consults with MN Department of Oral Health on community engagement and outreach. She is the MN Grassroots Representative for the Dentaquest Open Network. In this role she assists with reaching goals of equitable access to oral health for everyone. She serves on the MN Oral Health Collation Outreach committee and the Mayo Clinic FAITH (Fostering African Americans Improvement in Total Health) CBPR Community Steering Committee. She has also served on MN Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS) planning committee and The Cancer Health Equity Network (CHEN) committee. Monisha has the passion to serve the community and provide them with resources and education. She wants to impact the lives of underserved populations and enable them to make lifestyle changes which leads to living longer, healthier lives.



Kelis Houston Founder "Village Arms"

A Christ-centered non-profit organization dedicated to aiding and assisting African American youth and families impacted by child protection. Village Arms' focus is family preservation and reunification through parenting education, in-home visits, resource acquisition and advocacy with a cultural base. Village Arms was created in direct response to the over representation and disparate treatment of African Americans across the child welfare service continuum.



Kelis Houston personal mission is to address and help eradicate these disparities through legislative action, youth and family advocacy, policy reform and community engagement. She serves as cultural consultant and trainer to child welfare staff, students and service providers. Her training is designed to bring a new level of cultural awareness to those working for and within the African American community; in an effort to achieve clearer lines of communication and a sensitivity to culture. In addition to her full- time work and advocacy she also serves as Chair of the NAACP Minneapolis' Child Protection committee. Kelis began her career in social services over a decade ago and has since been a voice for marginalized communities.



Men and Boys Programs Panel Panel Moderated by Curtis Marshall, MS

W. Curtis Marshall, MS is a Public Health Consultant with the Wisconsin Division of Public Health. Utilizing structured analytical approaches, he works with public health departments, community-based organizations, and consortiums to identify root causes, to develop and implement population-based and health equity strategies and programs, targeting at-risk populations to improve community health. He is a founding member of the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative, serving eight years as program chairperson for the Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit. He is passionate regarding positive father and male involvement in their children's lives and provides consultation to fatherhood and family service providers.

Programs



Ujamaa Place

Corey Stewart
Education Director at Ujamaa Place

Ujamaa Place is an organization focused on young African American men in Saint Paul (primarily between the ages of 18 and 30), many of whom suffer multiple barriers to becoming stable, productive members of the community. These barriers include being undereducated, unemployed and/or unemployable, affiliated with gangs, a criminal history, homelessness, drug use, and a general marginalization by greater society.



In 2009, a group of leaders in the St. Paul African American community, including then St. Paul Police Chief John Harrington [rt.], Executive Director of the St. Paul YWCA Billy Collins, then St. Paul City Council Member Melvin Carter III, Thad Wilderson M.A. Ed. LP, Mary K. Boyd from St. Paul Public Schools, the NAACP, and several members of the Black Ministerial Alliance and the Council on Black Minnesotans identified that programming for this population was a significant gap in the social service delivery system in St. Paul, and needed immediate attention. Without intervention from a program like Ujamaa Place, this will be a "lost generation" of young men who die at a young age or are incarcerated for most of their lives.

After several months engaging additional key community leaders in development and planning for the organization and securing early start-up funding from The Saint Paul Foundation and F.R. Bigelow Foundation, Ujamaa Place received 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in April 2010 and opened its doors at 1885 University Avenue in St. Paul in January 2011.
<http://www.ujamaaplace.org/>



Building a Better Future

Thomas Adams, PhD, President and CEO

Better Futures Minnesota engages men who have had a history of incarceration, homelessness, poverty, and untreated mental and physical health challenges to help them achieve self-sufficiency and a better future for themselves and their communities.

We believe everyone deserves a fair shot at the American dream, and for the men we serve, that means the opportunity to become productive citizens, fathers, employees, and neighbors. Whether intentional or not, our society has turned its back on a group of people, overwhelmingly African American men, who are labeled as chronically homeless, chronically unemployed, frequent offenders, and frequent users. This is a public health crisis that has a deep human and financial toll.

We seek to address this crisis through an evidence-based, integrated-care model that connects the men of Better Futures with the Four Fundamentals (health, housing, jobs, and coaching) and focuses on healing, personal accountability, and hard work—all of the parts working together to achieve personal transformation and positive outcomes. Since 2007, Better Futures Minnesota's unique model has helped men throughout Minnesota realize their potential for success and become responsible members of the community who earn wages, pay taxes and child support, and are self-sufficient and engaged in building their own success stories. <https://betterfuturesminnesota.com/>



Change Equals Opportunity

Jamil Jackson, co-director of the basketball league called Run and Shoot and developer of the mentoring program, CEO that stands for Change Equals Opportunity. Jackson teaches life skills in CEO session. There are eight teams in the league, and nine players to a team. Two teams start the evening in the mandatory mentoring session while another two teams are on the court. Mentoring sessions can include guest speakers, or chats about relationships and career goals.

Lunch Speaker

“Eat, Play, Love: My Journey with Grief”



LaDonna Redmond will share her journey with grief after the loss of a child to opioids. She is an activist that has worked on several initiatives that have created greater access for community residents. She believes that every community has the intellect to heal itself.

LaDonna is an activist that has worked on several initiatives that have created greater access for community residents. LaDonna co-founded a substance abuse treatment facility, Sisterhouse. Sisterhouse is dedicated to the recovery of women.

LaDonna successfully worked to get Chicago Public Schools to evaluate junk food, launched urban agriculture projects, started a community grocery store and worked on federal farm policies to expand access to healthy food in low-income communities. LaDonna is a 2003 WK Kellogg Food and Society Policy Fellow. In 2009, Redmond was one of 25 citizen and business leaders named a Responsibility Pioneer by Time Magazine. LaDonna presented at 2 TEDx events: Twin Cities and Manhattan. Her TEDx Manhattan talk is Food + Justice = Democracy is widely distributed.

In early April 2013, she launched the Campaign for Food Justice Now (CFJN), a membership-based organization that uses a race, class, and gender analysis to promote food and agricultural system reforms and advocate for the adoption of right-to-food policies in the U.S.

She is currently Diversity and Community Engagement manager for Seward Community Co-op. In that role, LaDonna leads an effort to build a natural foods co-op in a historically African American community. The 2nd co-op opened October 2015. LaDonna is a Qualified Administrator (QA) for the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). LaDonna is also a facilitator who believes that every community has the intellect to heal itself. As a facilitator, LaDonna supports any configuration of a community to find its unique pathway to wholeness and sustainability.

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Afternoon Workshops



THE POLICE AND BLACK MEN PROJECT

In the aftermath of local police-involved shootings, a group of Black Men and Minneapolis Police Officers came together to discuss the issue of distrust between Black men and the Police. The group began biweekly meetings in January 2017, with this goal: to forge connections between Police officers and African American men that can lead to better partnerships for community safety and law enforcement. Learn more about the Police and Black Men Project Minnesota by exploring the above links. <https://innovation.umn.edu/policeandblackmenmn/>

Other Morning workshops will be repeated in the Afternoon (see above) Afternoon Speaker



John Turnipseed is a former gang leader, pimp and drug dealer, who spent his childhood battling demons brought on by a volatile, abusive father. In a 20-year journey, John Turnipseed has transformed into a community leader, pastor, speaker, and serves as the Director of The Center for Fathering and Vice President of Urban Ventures, a 21-year-old non-profit set in the heart of the same Minneapolis gang territory that John and his family terrorized. John's life-changing turnaround fueled his passion for rebuilding relationships between fathers and their families. John and the Center for Fathering team have now developed programs that reach over 600 men and 200 women a year.

His story powerfully demonstrates how faith, hope, and forgiveness backed up by persevering mentors and role models are essential for real and relevant transformation. It also encourages us all to never give up on people. John's "redemption" and work at The Center for Fathering are highlighted in a Fox News update by the same investigative reporter who once helped police capture him. John's story was selected as the first "Everyday Hero" segment by Twin City Television and was nominated by Amicus, a mentoring program for prisoners. John's life is highlighted in the film Turnipseed (www.turnipseedfilm.com) which is used in classes at the American University through the Department of Justice.

Day Two Speaker



Lavon Morris-Grant is the Executive Director/Founder of MACOSH Healing Network, the first culturally specific, holistic African American non-profit, domestic violence organization in the State of Georgia. She is a social justice expert, gifted international and keynote speaker and dedicated political activist on vital social and psychological issues including; domestic violence, mental illness, trauma recovery, suicide prevention and gun control.

Lavon is an entrepreneur and accomplished author, having written many articles and two critically praised books, *Whom Shall I Fear: A Spiritual Journey of a Battered Woman*, describing the brutality she and her family endured at the hand of an abusive spouse, ultimately resulting in him attempting to take her life and shooting her several times. In her latest book, released in 2014, *Who Will Speak For My Children: Healing Through The Trauma*, Lavon describes the powerful, debilitating and lingering effects that trauma leaves behind and how she, and her three children, personally survived, recovered and thrived through multiple, devastating traumas. Lavon's mission is to educate others on the insidious nature of domestic violence and the painful dynamic of the crippling trauma that ensues, as well as to instill hope and inspire others who are enduring struggle and strife to take action to live violent free lives.

Over the past 20 years, she has traveled throughout the U.S., and globally, offering intensive training and powerful keynote presentations to universities, colleges, religious and social justice organizations and corporations. Lavon's speaking topics include; Healing through Trauma, Domestic Violence Faith-Based Training, Building and Strengthening Relationships within Communities of Color, Teen Dating Violence, Sexual Assault of The Little Girl, etc. She is a knowledgeable, informative presenter and a gifted, motivational speaker who fearlessly addresses the social and systematic barriers of oppression that negatively impact individuals' lives.

By invitation, Lavon spoke alongside Democratic Party Presidential nominee, Hillary Clinton, at a press conference sponsored by the Americans for Gun Safety Foundation at the White House to appeal to local, state and federal authorities to strictly enforce the gun restrictions on domestic violence protective orders. She also appeared on a domestic violence Public Service Announcement hosted by Verizon with CBS Sportscaster Analyst, James Brown. Lavon aspires to and inspires in others the philosophy and belief that we should never allow our circumstances or others to define who we are.

Special Guests



Tiffany Turner-Allen is best known for her passionate style. Her work has been intense and across various issues of health, public health and education; her areas of expertise include Violence in the Black Community, Violence Against Women, Engaging Black Men and Boys, HIV & AIDS, Adjudicated Youth, Educational Equity, Animal Abuse, Bullying, School to Prison Pipeline, Infant Mortality, Healthcare Reform & Access, Food Deserts, Technology & the Digital Divide, Returning Citizens, Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Human Trafficking and Stalking. She holds a BA in Communications and a minor in African American studies from George Mason University; as well as a Certificate in Community Health Leadership from Morehouse School of Medicine. Lastly, she is very proud of her roles as wife, daughter, mother, pet-parent, friend, advocate, activist, trainer, mentor, mentee and leader. As a proven leader with remarkable dedication, she is driven to experience new things, people, and opportunities and lives by her desire and determination to enhance the lives of others! Tiffany has embarked upon the next and natural phase in her career as the Program Director for Ujima – The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community. She focuses on training, education, outreach and policy advocacy around domestic violence, sexual violence and community violence in the Black community. More info: ujimacommunity.org



Michael Sweetney starred at Georgetown before being selected by the Knicks with the No. 9 pick in the 2003 draft. He currently Family Centered Specialist providing case management, advocacy services for client's and actively participate in quality improvement projects. Recently he has been speaking about his battle with depression and advocating for more mental health services.



Larry A. McKenzie, Head Coach Minneapolis North Boys Basketball

A coach, author, educator, Larry McKenzie, the First coach to win four straight state titles in the 100-year history of the Minnesota State Boys Basketball at Minneapolis Patrick Henry and most recently became the first coach in Minnesota history to lead two schools to multiple state titles after having now led Minneapolis North to two straight Class A state titles.

He is a long-time community and youth advocate with 25 plus years of experience working with urban youth. His service to young people has earned him numerous awards and recognition including KARE 11's Eleven Who Care, KTCA's Everyday Hero, the Minneapolis Park Board's Volunteer of the Year, and Positive Image Father of the Year.

He is author or co-author in three publications, Basketball So Much More Than Just a Game, Let Me Testify . He is featured in Chuck Brown's X's O's and W's. He is co- host of a weekly program titled Community Value Conversations on KMOJ 89.9 FM radio.

“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.” Audrey Lorde