

Replicating Success: Sankofa Partnerships of Black Males

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The education of young Black males has long been an essential conversation in the Black community, but it is on the cusp of being a centralized, national conversation. With the advent of My Brother's Keeper and other initiatives through the White House and our federal government structure, the dialogue and debate have become absolutely essential yet complex. Nonprofit organizations who have labeled themselves as accountable to this dialogue in this population grapple with ways to create infrastructure that supports the success of Black males. This case study examines one leader's strategic approach to closing the achievement gap and providing mentoring with African American males through the pillars of the nonprofit organization he represents.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

100 Black Men of America began in 1963 in New York City when a group of concerned African American men who began to meet to explore ways of improving conditions in their community. These visionaries included businessmen and industry leaders such as David Dinkins, Robert Mangum, Dr. William Hayling, Nathaniel Goldston III, Livingston Wingate, Andrew Hatcher, and Jackie Robinson. Today the 100 Black Men has over 100+ chapters across its network of chapters; basing their programs and initiatives on the Four for the Future Pillars and Leadership;

encompassing all of the 100's Four For the Future programs, Education, Economic Empowerment, Health & Wellness with Mentoring being its cornerstone.

SETTING THE STAGE

Factors That Solicit the Need for Mentoring

There is a vast amount of economic research on the linkages between crime and the economy. The results of our economic crisis profoundly impact the families. Its effects have had a rippling effect through multiple contexts in which children and youth are situated.

Within the nuclear family, stressors such as job loss, home foreclosures or loss in family savings place strain on parental relationships and on the family as a whole. For already low-income families, the shock may be even more severe with basic needs such as food security, healthcare and shelter going unmet. Higher poverty rates are associated with increased rates of family conflict, child neglect and abuse. This means our children and youth are particularly vulnerable as they undergo critical developmental transitions, for example, graduating from high school. Adolescents at this stage may be forced to postpone their plans for higher education and instead seek increasingly scarce jobs in order to contribute to the household economy.

It is well documented that black males encounter unique barriers in their school experience that contribute to inequitable racial disparities in the outcomes of their education. Bababola (2018) found that these barriers impacted family structure and the need for mentoring is required in combating institutional racism. African American males have been bathed in the conventions of deficit mindset and rejection along with underachievement. This is especially prevalent in the academic environment. Situations such as these necessitate an unyielding support for these particular students to replace the constant narrative of inferiority (Stinson, 2007). There is a unique relationship between the social skills and the cognitive strengths of African American males as it has an undue and powerful influence on their self-efficacy to be successful educationally in spite of the previous barriers mentioned. Ellis, Rowley, Nellum and Smith (2018) found that cultural identity had the greatest connection, it was identified as the most prevalent predictor of academic confidence and performance. Mentoring is absolutely critical when shaping the self-fulfilling prophecy and belief systems of African American males when it comes to their success in the classroom.

Inequities for children of color have been long documented. It was always the hope of the Civil Rights Movement to rectify these inequities and they hoped that it would begin with the Brown versus Board of Education mandate but that has

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