



ASANTE NATION SAFE PASSAGE

NEWSLETTER

December

Vol. 1



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Community Empowerment Association

Community Empowerment Association (CEA), Inc. was organized by community activist T. Rashad Byrdsong in 1993 in an effort to reduce and prevent violence in the Homewood-Brushton area of Pittsburgh. CEA's mission is to restore, reclaim and transform distressed communities through strategic planning, collaboration, advocacy, education and mobilization. CEA seeks to develop the knowledge, skill, leadership and influence that will enable its participants, families, and the community to live healthy secure, fruitful, and productive lives. Since its inception in 1993, CEA has been tirelessly serving thousands of disadvantaged and minority families throughout the Greater Pittsburgh area and has served over 25,000 individuals, youth and families residing in 48 neighborhoods, enrolled in 74 schools and 9 school districts within Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

Executive Letter

Dear CEA Family:

I am honored to serve as the organization's Deputy Director for Community Empowerment Association (CEA). One of the aspects I have always enjoyed about CEA are the relationships that we are able to form with the youth, families, and surrounding communities. For over 25 years, our mission has been to surround our youth with a sense of order, positive social interaction, and opportunities supported by positive adults. CEA has become a trusted resource that allows youth to participate in positive programming rather than being left home alone or engaging in activities that are counter-productive. Many children in our surrounding communities face challenges and may be exposed to violence. Our Asante Nation Safe Passage After School program is a safe haven for our youth who are impacted by these obstacles. When we work as one, we can move our youth, families, and communities forward. As 2019 comes to a close, we are able to look back and appreciate the successful initiatives CEA has implemented for our youth.

This past year, we celebrated CEA's 25th year anniversary during our 25th Anniversary Gala. We successfully completed another summer camp with our amazing youth and FIPS. Our annual Black Family Reunion took place during the summer and generated hundreds of participants. Our Homewood site held a Lights on After School event for our youth and families to shed light on the importance of after school programming. Our McKeesport site held a Pizza with Police event to encourage positive relationships between our youth and the police department. CEA also held their annual Coat Drive which provided hundreds of youth with free coats for the winter.

I would like to thank our dedicated Board of Directors, Donors, and Community Partners for helping us move forward each and every day. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated staff here at CEA. Your commitment and hard work has and will continue to make a positive impact on our youth. You are the difference makers who make this organization the most valuable resource for children and families in this community. The efforts you put forth do not go unnoticed, and are truly appreciated.

Amargie Davis

**Deputy Director and Co-Founder
Community Empowerment Association**

Youth Intervention and Prevention

Safe Passage After School Program

Serving ages 5-18, Safe Passage provides, Monday through Friday, year-round intervention and support for youth and families in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County areas. Our dedicated staff build collaborative relationships with students, families, and teachers to support academic remediation through homework assistance, advocacy in the schools, mentoring, and cultural enrichment.

"But the question is, do we care enough? Do we care enough to sustain the passion and the pressure to make our communities safer and our country safer?" -- Barack Obama

Saturday University

We provide a safe, productive educational workplace for extracurricular opportunities otherwise unattainable to the boys and girls we serve. Programs may include STEM activities, multimedia, creative arts, dance, and computer programming. The success of this program relies entirely on strong, experienced community volunteers to work with our youth.



World Changers

In the city of Pittsburgh, over 8,000 violent crimes (homicide, rape, aggravated and simple assault, and robbery) occur annually, victimizing city residents - predominantly youth and young adults.

CEA will implement new initiatives to encourage anti-violence practices and strategies involving our youth, families, and community. Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration.

- CEA will invite professionals from organizations that deal with these specific issues to educate our youth.
- We will also launch a multimedia campaign to empower our youth, families, and community through education and awareness.
- There will be community forums throughout the year to discuss strategies against violence.

By working together, we can build a new infrastructure and encourage a brighter future for our youth and communities.



Youth Spotlight



Morgan McClung

Student in CEA's Safe Passage After School Program (McKeesport Site) and Academy in Match and Science (AIMS) Program

Why do you like coming to Community Empowerment Association?

I like coming to CEA because I get to play and see my friends

What is your favorite thing to do while you're here?

While I'm here I like to play and do my homework

What have you learned during the after-school program?

I learned that when you get pulled over by the police, you have to put your hands on the dashboard. You have to pay attention to what they're saying. I also learned that as a United States citizen I have constitutional rights.



Demonie Reese

Student in CEA's Safe Passage After School Program (Homewood Site)

Why do you like coming to Community Empowerment Association?

I enjoy coming to CEA because everyone here is really nice and extremely caring. The staff treats all of us good.

What is your favorite thing to do while you're here?

My favorite thing to do here is help out Ms. Barb and other staff. I also really enjoy playing and doing activities with my friends"

What have you learned during the after-school program?

I learned a lot about slavery and how Black people were treated during that time

Staff Spotlight



Todd Elston

Family Intervention Prevention Specialist and Program Manager

What makes CEA special?

CEA is special to me because it gives me an opportunity to help families who society and our politicians appear to have forgotten about. I have had many jobs throughout my life, but CEA is different for so many reasons. Here at CEA, we operate more like a family rather than co-workers. At CEA, I go home everyday feeling accomplished knowing I am making a difference in our youth and families' lives. Even though I primarily work with children, my job exposes me to the whole community.

What initiatives has CEA's Safe Passage After-School program implemented to promote anti-violence intervention and prevention for the youth?

It's all about developing a trusting relationship with both the parent and the child. CEA strives to build trusting relationships with each youth, their families, and the community. If they trust you, they are more open and willing to accept the assistance we offer. If a child is having difficulties in school, our staff will assist the parent by meeting with the teacher, counselor, or principal to help the school better service the child.

As a Family Intervention Prevention Specialist, we don't claim to have all the solutions and answers to a family's problem. However, it is our commitment to do what we can or lead them to the right resources. Our team is dedicated to helping them stay physically and emotionally safe, while achieving academic success by any means necessary.

Like the Ancient African Proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child". When families need help with raising their children in our communities, CEA always and will continue to be that village that our people need.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, 12/7/19
Diaper Distribution

Saturday, 12/7/19
 Feed The Hood
 12:00pm - 3:00pm

Monday, 12/9/19
 Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
 (Homewood Site)

Tuesday, 12/10/19
 Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
 (McKeesport Site)

Monday, 12/16/19
 Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
 (Homewood Site)

Tuesday, 12/17/19
 Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
 (McKeesport Site)

Saturday, 12/28/19
 Kwanza Celebration
 3:00pm - 8:00pm

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Looking to donate or volunteer? You can do so on our website www.ceapittsburgh.org



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