

ASANTE NATION SAFE PASSAGE

NEWSLETTER

February

Vol. 3



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Community Empowerment Association

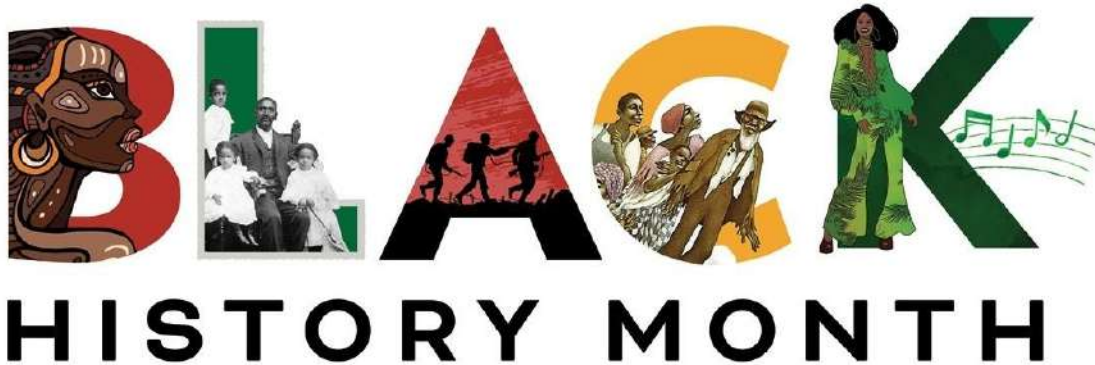
Community Empowerment Association (CEA), Inc. was organized by community activist T. Rashad Byrdsong in 1993 in an effort to reduce and prevent violence in the Homewood-Brushton area of Pittsburgh. CEA's mission is to restore, reclaim and transform distressed communities through strategic planning, collaboration, 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 would like to start off by saying Happy Black History Month. Even though our contributions, history, and culture can not be confined into one month, it is still a good time to reflect. Black History is American History, and our people have played an important part in contributing to it.

As we enter a new year, we still find a lack of equity and inclusion within society and institutions. What makes Community Empowerment Association so special, is the value and appreciation we hold for each and every Black experience, especially our youth. We strive to create a safe place for our youth, so they can be free to be themselves. With that, I would like to thank our parents for allowing us to be a part of your youth's experience.



Amargie Davis

Deputy Director and Co-Founder

Community Empowerment Association

Youth Intervention and Prevention

Black History Month and 2020 Theme

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements and a time for recognizing the central role African Americans has had in U.S. history.

Our Safe Passage After-School Program youth will be engaging in a Family Lineage project. Family history is an important part of our Black experience and we want our youth to explore and research their own history. We are asking all parents/guardians to be involved with helping them during this project.

Once complete, our youth will have the opportunity to share with other youth, parents, and CEA staff.

Manga and Anime Club

"The idea to start the Manga and Anime club stemmed from brainstorming ways to improve reading comprehension and get our group more interested in reading recreationally.

A kind of added benefit of the club is giving the youth exposure to more diverse forms of international non-fiction. The group will meet on Wednesdays and Fridays to go over fundamentals of the genre, read manga (Japanese Comic Books), and watch corresponding anime (Animated Interpretation of Manga) of the manga that is being read by the group.

While this group will be fun and informative, its main focus is improving literacy through reading and reading comprehension."

- Marcus Smith (*Family Intervention and Prevention Specialist*)



World Changers

Our youth driven interpersonal and social anti-violence campaign will focus on "Bullying" for the month of February.

Bullying

In the U.S. 10% of students in 6th-10th grade report being bullied, and 13% report bullying others. Bullying contributes to 10% of the suicides completed in the U.S. This month our youth will engage in hands on workshops and create their own art and media campaign.

Family Engagement Event

Safe Passage After School Staff would like to thank all of the parents, youth, and staff who attended our Hot Chocolate and Cookie Social.



Town Hall Community Forum

This past month CEA held a Human/Sex Trafficking panel discussion. Our panelists included representatives from Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR), Eden's Farm, Gwen's Girls, Allegheny Department of Human Services, and the Pittsburgh Police Vice Unit.

Each representative was able to give insight and helpful tips on how we can keep ourselves and each other safe.



Youth Spotlight



Annette Afolabi

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

Why do you like coming to Community Empowerment Association?

"I like to come because we always do fun activities. We get to cook and talk with our friends."

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

"My favorite thing to do here is have fun."

What does "Community Empowerment" mean to you?

"It means a community of black people coming together like a family, and working to make life better."



Amyca Wilson

Straight A Honor Student in CEA's Safe Passage After School Program (McKeesport Site)

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

"One of my favorite things to do while I'm at CEA is to help others. Since I'm one of the older kids, I help the younger kids. I help them with homework, projects, and crafts."

How has CEA staff helped you while being here?

"All of the McKeesport CEA Staff are extremely encouraging. Brother Todd has helped me with good advice about me being able to do anything I can put my mind to."

What does Community Empowerment mean to you and how does CEA help achieve that?

"Community Empowerment means a lot to me. It introduced me to community service, so that made me eligible for different extracurricular activities at school."

Staff Spotlight



Gregory Watkins

Workforce Development Case Manager

What makes CEA special?

What makes the Community Empowerment Association special is the tradition that it was born out of. A lot of the work and programs that the CEA are implementing are a continuation of the survival programs carried out by the Original Black Panther Party. Programs like the Feed the Hood Program, Coat and Book-bag give away and the Diaper Distribution program all directly address every day bread and butter issues in the black community in Homewood Community (and in the surrounding areas). People are being employed, educated, clothed and fed.

What initiatives has CEA's programs implemented to promote anti-violence and resilience?

There have been several. CEA was part of a Gang Peace Summit that created a peace treaty in and around Pittsburgh in the 90's that gained national attention from national news media and praise from prominent black leaders like the Honorable Louis Farrakhan. There is also the Brother to Brother Breakfast, which is an open discussion/forum designed to put like minds together to brainstorm on solutions to common problems, like violence, that we all face in our communities. Sister to sister circles have also been implemented to help grieving mothers that have lost children to gun violence.

Do you have a favorite CEA memory? If so, what is it?

I'd have to say as a writer/history enthusiast, my favorite moments are the opportunities that CEA has given me that have allowed me to learn from activists, organizers, true freedom fighters and revolutionary artists. I have sat and learned directly from Brother Rashad as well as, Pam Africa, Sekou Odinga, Brother Bullwhip (Innis), Bilal Sunni-Ali, Khalid Samad, Elaine Brown, the Last Poets, Professor Griff and many others.



Upcoming Events



Friday, 2/7/20

Youth Leadership Council (YLC) Meeting

Wednesday, 2/12/20

Anti-Bullying Workshop

Wednesday, 2/12/20

YLC Multimedia Workshop with Point Park University Center for Media Innovation

Wednesday, 2/19/20

Anti-Bullying Workshop

Wednesday, 2/26/20

Anti-Bullying Workshop

Friday, 2/18/20

Family Lineage Youth Presentation

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

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