



ASANTE NATION SAFE PASSAGE

NEWSLETTER

January

Vol. 2



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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 excited to be bringing in the new year with all of you. You may or may not know that January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Community Empowerment Association will be kicking off the new year with a Community Forum focused on Human and Sex Trafficking. We will be hosting several different agencies, organizations, and community leaders with the intent to encourage collaboration and develop working networks around anti-violence initiatives.

By coming together we can help our youth paint a new picture for their futures. CEA is dedicated to our community, youth, and families. Our goal is to empower while educating and bringing awareness around these important topics of violence. In 2020, we will be implementing several new innovative youth-driven initiatives to combat violence within our communities.



Amargie Davis

Deputy Director and Co-Founder

Community Empowerment Association

Youth Intervention and Prevention

A.C.E. Study/Resiliency Workshops

This workshop was created to identify and address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among the youth ages 10+ that attend the Asante Nation Rites of Passage After School Diversion Program at CEA. These workshops will provide both youth and their families with holistic, safe, educational and both culturally and developmentally appropriate activities to support their growth and development.

Workshops Include:

- Growth mindset Activities
- Peer and staff support
- Self-Assessments
- Resiliency Workbook Activities/Discussions (Optimistic Outlook, Sense of Control, Sense of Self, Ability to Bounce Back, Types of Change

-Chelsea Freeman (Case Manager and FIPS)

Saturday University

Our Saturday University will kick off the new year with our Youth Drama Club and our "Speak" yoga series.

"In this weekly series, Speak, students will use yoga and mindfulness as a way to enhance their artistic skills. Through meditation they will tap into their unique skills of expression, poetry, writing, and breathing."

-Diarra Imani (Certified Raja Yogi)

"The YDC aims to provide our youth a basic understanding and appreciation of the arts. YDC will show students the various ways that theater promotes communication skills, teamwork, dialogue, negotiation, and socialization. That arts can be a healthy coping mechanism when dealing with the impact of violence that besets many African American communities."

-Leslie "Ezra" Smith (Performing Arts Professional of 27+ years)

World Changers

CEA World Changers is a youth driven interpersonal and social anti-violence campaign that will empower our youth, families, and communities to awaken their consciousness and be the change our communities need. Part of this initiative involves aiding in collaboration efforts in order to formulate effective strategies among our community demographics.

Youth Educational Forums

For the months of December and January, our after-school program hosted Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR). PAAR came and discussed important topics such as harassment, boundaries, and more.

Town Hall Community Forum

This month we are working to address a serious issue that is taking place within our communities. Human Sex Trafficking has become a wide spread problem throughout our communities. That is why this month we are hosting a Town Hall Community Forum titled "What to Watch For" to address the serious dangers around Trafficking.

In 2018, there were 275 cases of human trafficking reported in the state of Pennsylvania, an increase from 162 in 2016 (The National Human Trafficking Hotline). We need to ask ourselves the right questions. For example, "How do we effectively prevent violence before it occurs"? A public health approach can facilitate the prevention of violence by helping community members see violence as a problem that can be understood, solved, and prevented.

Please join us as we host community organizations, leaders, families, and youth and discuss the



Youth Spotlight



Jeremy Moore Jr.

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

Why do you like coming to Community Empowerment Association?

"I like coming to CEA because I have lots of fun and they teach us history."

How has CEA staff helped you while being here?

"The staff helps me with my homework. If I need to study for school, they will let me study. They also make sure no one gets disrespected."

What have you learned during the after-school program?

"I learned that there are a lot of African Americans that helped us get to where we are today."



De'Jean Pace

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

Why do you like coming to Community Empowerment Association?

De'Jean has been attending CEA since he was 6 years old. He is now 15 years old and attends McKeesport High School.

"I like coming to CEA every day after school because it gives me an opportunity to contribute to helping others in the community. It also allows me to be more responsible and gain maturity".

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

"My favorite thing to do at CEA is help others".

What have you learned during the after-school program?

"I have learned that not all police officers are 'bad people'. I had the opportunity to interact with McKeesport police officers in a positive way".

Staff Spotlight



Chelsea Freeman

Case Manager and Family Intervention Prevention Specialist

What makes CEA special?

Recently in my life I found a desire to spread awareness on trauma in our communities and how it can affect individuals and also the generations following them. After finding out that CEA was going to develop a program geared to address trauma in its youth attending the Safe Passage After-School program to help them develop resiliency I just knew in every way that this is where I wanted/needed to be. Trying to help these youth understand that no matter what life brings to them that they can be resilient has been very rewarding so far!

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

CEA brought me into the family to work to develop and implement a workshop to address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in the youth and to provide them with the skills to become resilient. In order to address such an uncomfortable, sometimes touchy, subject I found that working to earn the trust of the youth and also for the youth to learn to trust one another is absolutely necessary for the kids to feel comfortable discussing with staff and one another some of the difficulties that they may have faced or are currently facing. In addition to this new workshop CEA has also been bringing in speakers from different organizations to discuss with the youth the anti-violence prevention project that CEA is also working to develop and implement with the youth and their families. CEA has begun creating family engagement events to encourage parents to participate.

Safe Passage youth are also provided with workshops daily in the areas of Health and Wellness, Personal Growth/Resiliency, Educational Support, Creativity, etc. CEA also provides Saturday programming where they are able to have access to even more opportunities to activities, programs, etc.



Upcoming Events

Saturday, 1/4/20

Diaper Distribution

Monday, 1/6/20

Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
(McKeesport Site)

Tuesday, 1/7/20

Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
(Homewood Site)

Monday, 1/13/20

Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
(McKeesport Site)

Tuesday, 1/14/20

Youth Educational Forum w/ PAAR
(Homewood Site)

Thursday 1/16/20

Hot Chocolate and Cookie Social
6pm-8pm

Saturday, 1/25/20

Town Hall Community Forum
What To Watch For - *Sex Trafficking*
1pm-3pm

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Empowerment-Association

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our website www.ceapittsburgh.org



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