



**BROTHERHOOD
OF ELDERS NETWORK**

UJIMA IN ACTION: BUILDING POWER AND WELLNESS ACROSS GENERATIONS

2024-2025 Impact Report



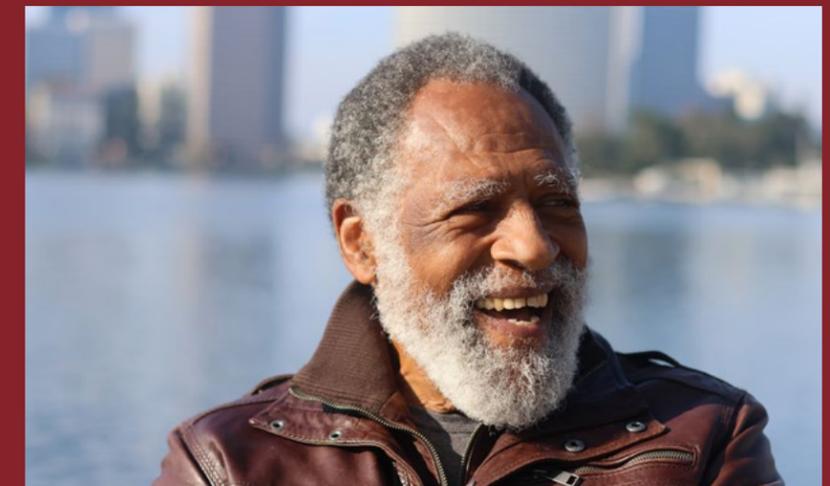
Dear Community,

As I reflect on 15 years of community and collective work with the Brotherhood of Elders Network, I am reminded that community represents the spirit of who we are and what we do. As elders, our shared responsibility is to make a difference in our communities. I have had the opportunity to spend time in Zimbabwe and South Africa, where I experienced firsthand how elders play a pivotal role as stewards and guides in communities. My time there brought a renewed understanding of our responsibility to show up for our people and co-create opportunities to be, feel, and work together toward a shared vision. We carry rich legacies of those who came before us and remind us of the wisdom and experience we carry that can help us pave the way for those who come after. When we coalesce as a community and claim our rightful role as stewards, we create change for generations to come.

The Brotherhood of Elders Network was born when African American leaders came together to address the concerns of the increasing violence and deaths occurring in our neighborhoods. During these uncertain times, we have held tight to our shared vision of intergenerational healing and liberated futures for boys and men of African descent and their families. Our collective responsibility, our Ujima, is to see that vision through, making daily commitments that move us closer to liberation. Today, our network has over 100 men, spanning four generations, leading collective efforts to improve the lives and well-being of Bay Area communities of color. As you will read in this impact report, collectively, we are bringing our vision to life through transformative strategies, from political education to youth development, that are making a real difference in our communities.

We are committed to investing in youth at every stage of their lives, with a belief that we have much to learn from young people. I have listened to many young men in different life stages, full of ideas, insight, and potential, but needing more support and guidance to fully thrive. These conversations are what led to the Ubuntu Leadership Institute, an opportunity for young men of African descent to experience land-based education, journey to Africa, explore African culture, and engage with local scholars and native members of the community.

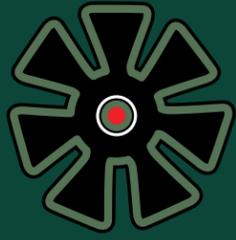
As you will see throughout this impact report, our network of brothers have sustained a vital link within the community that is made possible by those who believe in us and invest in our work. Thank you for being a part of our village and walking with us on this journey. With your continued support, we will keep cultivating healthy, loving, thriving, and active families and communities across the Bay Area.



With gratitude,

BABA ARNOLD PERKINS

Brotherhood of Elders Network Co-Founder



OUR STORY

The Brotherhood of Elders Network is a community of over 100 Black boys, men, and elders who are cultivating healthy, connected, and thriving Black families and communities. We are dedicated to celebrating and preserving our African heritage and are guided by Ujima, the principle of collective work and responsibility, in our commitment to creating an intergenerational network for health, wellness, fellowship, community, and service. By creating and providing the space, resources, and support to learn and organize, we are building power and seeding new narratives that uplift and respect the lives and dignity of Black men, boys, and families to improve our collective health and well-being.



THE UJIMA PLAN

The Brotherhood's Ujima Plan provides the strategic framework for all programs, partnerships, and initiatives, rooted in African principles of collective responsibility, accountability, and intergenerational leadership. The plan ensures that every program strengthens unity, advances systemic change, and supports thriving Black families.

Through a nine-month planning process that started in March 2023, dozens of individuals from all cohorts of the Brotherhood, community leaders from partner organizations, and funding partners provided input through a series of workshops and surveys. Some of the needs identified included:

- Clear African-centered principles to guide the work
- Operational clarity, including leadership to implement more good work
- Clearer communication, especially about committee work
- Structure to share knowledge intergenerationally
- Deeper local political engagement

The Ujima Plan was finalized in December 2023. This impact report documents progress made over the last 18 months, January 2024 - June 2025, in meeting the recommendations and strategic direction of the key pillars of the plan, including:

- Youth Development: Cultivating leadership, resilience, and cultural identity among Black boys and young men.
- Health & Wellness: Promoting holistic well-being, access to care, and culturally relevant health practices.
- Civic Engagement & Political Education: Building power and civic literacy in Black communities.
- Arts & Culture: Fostering creativity, cultural pride, and intergenerational expression.
- Community & Organizational Partnerships: Strengthening networks and investing in Black-led organizations to sustain long-term impact.

BY THE NUMBERS

REVENUE



July 2023 - June 2024:
\$1.7M

76%
growth

July 2024 - June 2025:
\$3.0M

GENERATIONAL COHORTS



12 intergenerational cohort meetings

Elders Cohort meeting
1X/month

Brothaman Cohort meeting
1X/two months

Warriors Cohort began
1X/month meeting in January 2025

NETWORK



70 active network participants

2 network retreats
(Health & Wellness Retreat and Elders Retreat)

6

committees

4

40x40 Neighborhood Empowerment events

20% growth in active network participants

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



150 community members served through cultural events

39 new youth participants between January-June 2025

400 high school students engaged at Oakland Tech College Fair

100 boys served at Black Diamond Middle School in Antioch

1000 youth and young adults engaged between ages 13-26

200 community members engaged through 40x40/Rise East convenings



VOLUNTEERS



125 total volunteers

50-75 active volunteers who contribute about 600 hours each year

While these are conservative estimates, those 50 active volunteers contribute about 600 volunteer hours each year – labor that could be valued at \$45,000 (\$75/hr).

These volunteer hours involve an array of services including, but not limited to, attending meetings, planning events, guest teaching in schools, co-designing youth programs with our partners, offering advice, providing transportation, attending court as youth advocates, visiting the juvenile justice center, and directly mentoring young men.



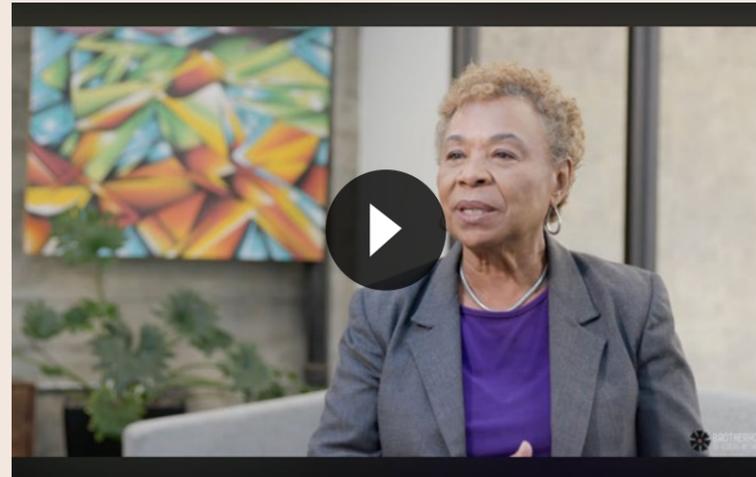
POLITICAL EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

The Brotherhood of Elders Network encourages civic literacy and power-building to advance systemic change and community self-determination. As Black intergenerational leaders committed to Ubuntu, collective responsibility, we believe civic engagement is one of many ways to celebrate and preserve the uniqueness of Oakland's Black, brown, and Indigenous cultures.

REAL TALK ABOUT THE TOWN

We uplift the needs and voices of Black communities and encourages our network to stay civically engaged by hosting Real Talk About the Town, a unique election season series where we hold real, unfiltered conversations about the issues shaping our communities. In March 2024, we recorded video interviews with Alameda County Supervisor candidates from Districts 4 and 5.

In November 2024, we held a live candidates forum for the District 5 run-off, engaging 60 community members who had the opportunity to hear from and ask questions to the candidates directly. In April 2025, we recorded interviews with candidates for the Oakland Mayoral Special Election and released a series of short videos and highlight reels, which attracted hundreds of views. These resources are valuable for keeping Oakland voters informed about the candidates' stances on critical issues affecting Black residents, including community-centered public safety, police accountability, and equity-driven investments.



SCAN QR CODE
TO VIEW VIDEO

[Watch Here](#)



IMPACT



1
event
hosted



8
candidates
interviewed



2
video series
released



60
live attendees
engaged



1,800+
viewers
engaged

**REAL TALK
ABOUT
THE TOWN**

STATE-WIDE POLICY ADVOCACY

Reparations

The Brotherhood of Elders Network has engaged in statewide policy advocacy in partnership with the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII). As disparities in admissions persist and reflect deeply rooted structural inequities, we are organizing to address the lasting impacts of slavery and systemic racism through higher education access. In 2025, we supported Assembly Bill 7, authored by Assemblymember Isaac Bryan, a member and vice chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus. AB 7 is the first statewide measure of its kind to address the harms of slavery by giving public and private colleges and universities the option to offer admissions preferences to applicants who are descendants of enslaved people. In the effort to push our state to adopt reparations, it empowers universities with the option, not a mandate, to acknowledge and respond to this historical context when evaluating applicants.

Black Educator Pipeline

The need for targeted resources for Black students, families, and educators is long overdue. In response to this need, the Aya Education Coalition coalesced in May 2024, consisting of organizations and advocates committed to strengthening the Black educator pipeline and Black student achievement across California. Aya is an Adinkra symbol meaning “endurance” and “resourcefulness,” representing the spirit of resilience and innovation that drives our work. The Aya Education Coalition—anchored by the Brotherhood of Elders Network and the Black Educator Advocates Network—will develop the infrastructure and platform for a statewide Black educator advocacy channel in California. Through collaboration with key partners, including the 40x40 Council and Sierra Health Foundation, we have been working to distill and narrate key policy areas for supporting the Black educator pipeline, and will work with state-level stakeholders to develop and support related state legislation to pursue in 2026.

“

At every step of the way, the Brotherhood wrote letters to each and every committee asking to pass AB 7. They made a great impact. Their letters were important coming from an organization that serves young Black boys, the population most missing from the higher education system.”

Darris Young

Director of Organizing for Black Health, Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII)



“

In just 18 months, the Aya Education Coalition has brought together 15 organizations across California to reimagine and repair the Black educator pipeline. By lifting stories through our Power in the Pipeline series and engaging partners like the California Teachers Association and California Federation of Teachers, we’ve built more than a network — we’ve built momentum for systemic change led by Black educators.”

Jalisa Evans

CEO, Black Educator Advocates Network





YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

We prioritize programs that nurture leadership, cultural identity, and socioemotional growth for Black boys and young men, grounding this work in the principle of Abe Dua — self-actualization — which calls on them to grow fully into their own potential and purpose.

UBUNTU LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Ubuntu Leadership Institute nurtures leadership, resilience, and professional readiness among youth. Designed for young men ages 16–22, the program combines mentorship, skill-building, and cultural education to empower participants to thrive academically, personally, and professionally.

Participants engage in intensive cohorts that include backpacking trips, land-based education, professional development workshops (resumes, CVs, headshots, interview prep), and mentorship from leaders and guest presenters. These experiences cultivate confidence, teamwork, and a deep sense of identity rooted in African-centered values.



In the last 18 months, one young man launched a catering business after program participation, while another navigated the foster care system to pursue college and entrepreneurial ventures. We also took the young men on two backpacking trips in the Sierra Mountains.



LAND-BASED EDUCATION

As part of the Ubuntu Leadership Institute program, the Brotherhood offers land-based education, providing youth with immersive experiences in nature to foster leadership, problem-solving, and environmental stewardship. Activities include backpacking trips, hiking excursions, and experiential learning projects that connect participants to the land, their peers, and their own potential.



The program emphasizes patience, resilience, and collaboration while allowing youth to unplug from technology and engage fully with their environment and each other. Partner organizations provide logistical support and expertise in outdoor education, ensuring safety and meaningful engagement.

IMPACT

-  **120** mentorship hours
-  **1** international trip
-  **3** graduated cohorts
-  **50** youth served

“



I notice I’m able to change and let go of parts of my character that don’t align with my core values. Being out here in nature—connected to the trees and even the chipmunks—I’m able to see myself in a different light. In the city, I don’t get the same chance to really tune in to my own being.”

Kayin Beth
Fellow

BLACK YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BOOK

The **BYD Book** serves as a vital resource for parents and community members, offering guidance on youth development and practical tools to support young people. The first printing, completed in February 2024, distributed approximately 400 books at ten community events over six months, providing families with culturally relevant strategies and insights. Through the BYD Book, we are amplifying its reach beyond direct programming, equipping parents and caregivers with resources to foster Black youth leadership, resilience, and cultural pride.

IMPACT

 **400**
books distributed

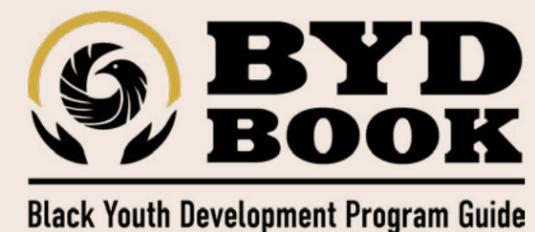
 **2,800**
visitors to
BYD Book
website

 **10**
events attended to
distribute books



“

Thank you for putting together this resource, I wasn't aware of some of these organizations until I found this website.”





HEALTH & WELLNESS

Our Health and Wellness initiatives prioritize holistic well-being for Black men, promoting physical, emotional, and mental health through education, access to care, and community support. The Health and Wellness Committee has expanded programming over the past 18 months to include webinars, podcasts, and quarterly forums addressing topics like heart disease, nervous system disorders, and preventive care. Participants are empowered to take charge of their health while learning culturally relevant practices rooted in African traditions.

PROSTATE CANCER WALK & AWARENESS

In June 2024, our Black Men's Health Committee hosted the Dr. Frank Staggers Sr. Prostate Cancer Walk to raise awareness of prostate cancer screening, early detection, and care in the Black community. The initiative combines community engagement, education, and celebratory events to inspire proactive health practices and intergenerational dialogue.



ANNUAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS RETREAT

The Annual Health and Wellness Retreat is a multi-day program that combines meditation, drumming, nature walks, and skill-building workshops. The retreat fosters camaraderie, mentorship, and intergenerational healing, providing participants with immersive opportunities to reflect, connect, and grow.



CULTURALLY- BASED HEALING CIRCLES

Culturally-based healing circles provide participants with spaces for emotional, spiritual, and psychological restoration. They complement Healing Generations programming and are offered during retreats, youth programs, and community events. These circles allow participants to explore identity, address trauma, and strengthen relational bonds across generations.





ARTS & CULTURE

Our Arts and Culture programming offers youth and community members opportunities to explore creativity, celebrate heritage, and participate in performances and workshops. Activities include drumming lessons, live performances, and community cultural events that cultivate artistic expression while reinforcing African principles and cultural pride. Central to this is the African principle of Bantaba, a gathering or meeting place, where the community comes together to share knowledge, traditions, and joy.

DRUMMING WORKSHOPS

These workshops, led by Mosheh Milon, our artist in residence, are part of our cultural programming, teaching rhythm, collaboration, and African-centered artistic expression. These lessons create spaces for self-expression and intergenerational connection while celebrating cultural heritage. Classes have been held once a month since January 2024. On average, 10-15 community members join each class.

This work goes far beyond drumming or playing instruments—it’s about connection, healing, and community impact. Through workshops, performances, and social media, this work has reached thousands of people, inspiring collective healing and joy.

For our ancestors, drumming was a way to call the village together at the Bantaba, the gathering place where important community events took place. Today, that tradition continues—using the drum to bring people together, strengthen community bonds, and nurture healing across generations.



IMPACT



24
bantaba drum
call teachers and
presenters



540
participants



15
healing
circles



36
shows and
special events

EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

We host community events and performances to foster unity, celebrate cultural heritage, and provide platforms for youth and elders to showcase talents. These events amplify the organization's values and deepen engagement across the community.



KWANZAA CELEBRATION

Our Kwanzaa celebration is our annual hallmark event, promoting African-centered cultural values, intergenerational connection, and community pride. The celebration features performances, storytelling, and recognition of community achievements. On average, 200 people of all ages are in attendance.



BABAS TO BROTHERS PODCAST

[Babas to Brothers](#) is a podcast where wisdom meets action, and the legacy of brothers and elders fuel the passion of the next generation. Hosted by Spencer Whitney, each episode features members of the Brotherhood of Elders Network. Through stories of mentorship, cultural preservation, education, and community leadership, the show spotlights the transformative work being done to uplift and inspire people.



SCAN QR CODE TO LISTEN

[Listen Here](#)



40X40 COUNCIL AND RISE EAST

The **40x40 Council** is a collaborative effort to reverse decades of disinvestment and create a thriving, multi-generational community for Black residents in Deep East Oakland. Together, we are addressing systemic inequities and building a future where Black residents can stay, return, heal, prosper, and build power. With our partners on the 40x40 Council (Black Cultural Zone, East Oakland Youth Development Center, Roots Community Health), we are stewarding a 10-year **Rise East** plan, a roadmap for revitalizing the 40x40, built from input from over 400 community members. With our anchor organization partners, we have raised \$100 million to-date – a historic investment toward systems change. It is part of a generational effort to return the 40x40 back to a place where people have access to what they need to stay and thrive.

The Brotherhood contributes the following support to the 40x40 Council and Rise East: fundraising, organizing and operations, power-building strategy, youth development partnerships and program development, engagement and innovation with civic leaders, political stewardship, and communications.



IMPACT

Partnered to secure **\$100** million over 5 years for the 10-year Rise East plan



CAREER EXPLORATION EXPERIENCE

The 40x40 Council is working to expand access to education and create career pathways for youth to have the support, resources, and opportunity to achieve their academic and life goals. The Brotherhood partnered with East Oakland Youth Development Center to design the Career Exploration Experience (CEE) program to provide young people with paid internships, job readiness training, and personalized support to overcome obstacles.

In Summer 2024, 143 youth earned over \$450,000 collectively while participating in work-based learning opportunities across careers like healthcare, digital arts, and STEM fields. The CEE program created 292 paid summer work-based learning opportunities for youth and young adults ages 14-26 (242 unique youth, with 50 youth returning summer 2025). Youth not only gained valuable skills but also experienced the dignity of earning a paycheck while shaping their futures. Organizations like Umoja Health, Hidden Genius Project, and the Oakland Zoo hosted interns, providing them with real-world experiences and connections that will last a lifetime.



IMPACT



292 paid summer work-based learning opportunities for youth and young adults ages 14-26



500+ youth and young adults received job training



\$700K+ in stipends/wages were distributed directly to youth



NATIONAL COMPADRES NETWORK

A collaboration between the Brotherhood of Elders Network and the **National Compadres Network**, the Healing Generations Institute (HGI) trains community health workers, promotes familial community healing, and addresses community strife through culturally-based healing circles as communal spaces for emotional, psychological, spiritual healing, and collective support. Rooted in Ubuntu philosophy of shared humanity, healing circles are communal spaces where participants can share experiences in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. This practice fosters belonging, resilience, and reconciliation while honoring the circle's deep symbolism as a representation of life, renewal, and community connection.



Over the past 18 months, HGI has engaged youth and elders in dialogue and collaborated with organizations like OYCR to influence juvenile justice practices. Its work has also included a statewide listening tour, engaging communities from Del Norte to Fresno, Sacramento, Coachella Valley, San Diego, Oakland, and Richmond, asking critical questions about best practices, effectiveness, and obstacles in implementing healing circles for school-aged children.

IMPACT



12
circles in 11
communities
throughout the state
and 4 outside of CA



115
participants



150
survey
participants



3
community
events



6
collaborative
partners



PARTNERSHIPS

BESE SAKA INITIATIVE

In partnership with the San Francisco Foundation, Bese Saka, originally a two-year initiative, launched in 2022 to provide vital support to 18 Black-led organizations across the Bay Area. Named after the Adinkra symbol for unity and abundance, Bese Saka strengthens these organizations through two-year grants and quarterly gatherings to cultivate deeper connections, foster sustainable growth, and build a resilient ecosystem. Each organization received a \$150,000 grant from SFF to participate in quarterly power and capacity building convenings that are coordinated by the Brotherhood. This \$3.4 million initiative to build the collective power and capacity of Black-led organizations across the Bay Area concluded in March 2024.

After securing resources for an additional year, Bese Saka partnered with East Bay Community Foundation's ASCEND BLO program to host a three-day Reparations, Power, and Healing convening to honor Malcom X's 100th birthday, celebrate Black culture and deepen their work and commitment to reparations, power building, and healing for the Black community.



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IMPACT



50+
Black Led Orgs
served throughout
the Bay Area



\$30,000
total funds
distributed



300+
engaged residents,
organizers, business
owners, artists,
students, community
org leaders



6
volunteer service and
healing activities that
served communities
in Oakland, Berkeley,
Richmond, and
San Francisco



“

Bese Saka really marked a continuation of an opportunity to stay in community with Black-led organizations advancing Black liberation. The Brotherhood of Elders Network facilitated a space of joy, vulnerability, and knowledge sharing that encouraged us to focus on our assets, find ways to build a larger tent, strengthen our commitment to wellness, leverage our work and build traction.

The Brotherhood is a central and critical convener, and we are inspired to see how we can continue this work in other multigenerational spaces.”

Brandon Nicholson

CEO, The Hidden Genius Project



PARTNERSHIPS

SOLIDARITY ACTION ALLIANCE OF THE BAY AREA

Through the leadership of Ancestor Joe Brooks, the Brotherhood was a founding member of the Solidarity Action Alliance of the Bay Area, formerly known as the African American Latino Action Alliance (AALAA). SAABA is a coalition of African, Indigenous, and Latinx men dedicated to enhancing the mental, economic, and political well-being of Black and Brown boys, young men, their families, and communities in the Bay Area.

The Solidarity Action Alliance of the Bay Area received a 100K grant to launch a Black and Brown Unity and Action Project in Oakland. After forming a coalition of Black and Brown groups and individuals, SAABA launched a successful kick off forum focusing on similarities and misperceptions between our communities.

Unfortunately and tragically, Baba Joe Brooks became gravely ill and passed at the end of 2023 as we were planning community listening and healing circles. SAABA took time to recognize and honor Baba Joe for his leadership in the community and for being a founding member of the organization. We reconvened and for the last 18 months have focused on the Black and Brown Unity and Action Project.



IMPACT



4 listening and healing circles



10 participants with a gender, racial and intergenerational balance



5 collaborative partners



Currently editing recorded circle videos to use as an educational and teaching tool

FISCAL SPONSORSHIPS

Our fiscal sponsorships have enabled new partnerships and provided resources to Black-led organizations, supporting health equity, leadership development, and community empowerment. We fiscally sponsor two projects that are increasing community capacity to achieve health equity and expanding the Black physician workforce to improve health outcomes in the Black community: Black Doc Village and Umoja Health.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIPS

UMOJA HEALTH

Umoja Health provided health information throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Weekly meetings drew public health, health systems, local clinics and community advocates into a powerful community-facing coalition. Umoja Health is an informal, voluntary community coalition and could not have applied for or received any grants or contracts funding without support from the Brotherhood of Elders as a fiscal sponsor. That support helped us continue and expand our offerings beyond COVID to cancer screening in the community.



“

Umoja Health in Alameda County is the safety net under the safety net. It is a model for the whole country and it would not have been possible without the Brotherhood of Elders Network.”

Dr. Kim Rhoads
Founder of Umoja Health

IMPACT



500+
pop up events



10,000
COVID tests administered



70
young people trained in healthcare and public health careers



4
summer internship cohorts,
80% from groups underrepresented in medicine





OPERATIONAL GROWTH

Over the past 18 months of implementing the Ujima Plan, we have experienced significant internal growth, strengthening organizational infrastructure, communications, and staff capacity. Key accomplishments include:

- Completion of the first financial audit
- Staff expansion and hiring of strategic leadership positions
- Development of employee handbook and 401(k) plan
- Launch of website and engagement with communications agency

These operational improvements have enhanced our ability to manage larger budgets, support programming, and sustain long-term growth.



IMPACT



6 staff members added

- **Terrance Holliday**, Youth Development Director
- **David Walker**, Network Engagement Director
- **Olafemi Bankh Akintunde**, Ubuntu Leadership Institute Director
- **Marc Anthony Robinson**, Ubuntu Leadership Institute Project Lead
- **Chris Darby**, Director of Strategic Collaboration
- **Mamie Chow**, Executive Assistant



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“There is no beauty but in relationships.”

Ayi Kwei Armah

Ghanaian novelist and historian

As African people, we are grateful to our Creator for all the blessings of life, prosperity and health. We are inspired by our ancestors- those people and communities who came before us and continue to provide wisdom and direction in our daily lives.

Gratitude for Community Support

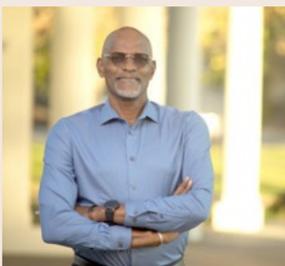
The work of the Brotherhood of Elders Network has flourished thanks to the unwavering love, dedicated support, and ongoing investments from our community members. Every achievement reflects the generosity and involvement of those who believe in our mission.

Enduring Commitments

We are deeply grateful for the long-standing funding commitments that have sustained our initiatives. The care and nurturing provided by individuals—spanning from our founders to the newest participants—have been instrumental in our continued growth and success.

The Staff Team

Our staff team’s hard work and steadfast commitment have been vital to every step of our journey. Their efforts ensure that the values and vision of the Brotherhood of Elders Network remain at the forefront of all we do.



Asante Sana!

GREGORY HODGE

CEO

SUPPORTERS

Elevate Youth California

San Francisco Foundation

Akonadi Foundation

Blue Meridian Partners

PG&E

Stupski

The CA Endowment

PolicyLink

East Bay Community Foundation

Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative

Oakland Museum of CA

Gilead Sciences

Silicon Valley Community

Foundation

Kaiser

Hellman Foundation

CA Wellness Foundation

Fidelity Charitable

James Irvine Foundation

National Compadres Network

Oakland Promise

CA Dept of Health Care Services

Sierra Health Foundation

Alameda County

UCSF

Alameda Health System Foundation

Bay Area PL Services

Weill Cornell Medicine

Pfizer

CA Healthcare Foundation

The Commonwealth Fund

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



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OUR WEBSITE AND
MAKE A DONATION



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OF ELDERS NETWORK**

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