

HEALING TRAUMA, CHANGING NARRATIVES

EJUSA'S GRASSROOTS PARTNERS





EJUSA is delivering a new vision for responses to violence that break cycles of trauma and are rooted in the fundamental values of racial equity and well-being for all who are impacted by harm. Our work centers the people directly impacted by violence and trauma –those closest to the solutions. We partner with organizations led by people in Black and Brown communities that experience some of the highest rates of trauma yet receive the least access to the services and resources needed to heal and rebuild their lives. EJUSA's support helps these grassroots leaders harness their power, expand their reach, change minds, and influence policy. This support ranges from fundraising to strategy, communications to leadership development, peer support and much more.

In 2018, EJUSA held a National Convening on Trauma, bringing many of the leaders of these organizations together for the first time to share ideas, build relationships, and imagine together how we could transform the narrative on violence, race, and trauma. The convening laid the foundation for a national network that is growing into a collective voice for transformational change. Together, we are bound by the conviction that true justice must deliver safety, healing, and accountability for everyone impacted by harm. The leaders on the pages that follow inspire us every day.

Al-Tariq Best

THE H.U.B.B. – HELP US BE BETTER



Newark, NJ

Year Founded: 2006

Mission: To increase opportunity for success to youth and their families in underserved communities through healing programs, services, and events that Entertain, Educate, and Empower!

Thirteen years ago, Al-Tariq Best had his sons in the car with him in Newark, his hometown. The boys started shouting as they watched a violent beating out the back window. The scene shook Al-Tariq, but not as much as what his eldest asked moments later.

“He changed my life with one statement,” recalls Al-Tariq. “What are you doing to be part of the solution?”

Al-Tariq shifted his focus away from the music industry to found the FP YouthOutCry Foundation, which ultimately led to The H.U.B.B. Arts & Trauma Center (The H.U.B.B.), a community organization focused on entertainment, education, and empowerment as key components of youth violence intervention and healing.

Al-Tariq didn’t know it then, but he needed to deal with his own trauma to truly understand how to help young people. In 2016, he participated in one of EJUSA’s inaugural Trauma to Trust trainings and confronted a traumatic event with the police in his past.

“Those trainings have been paramount to the work I do today,” says Al-Tariq. “The H.U.B.B. has a trauma-informed lens with our youth, which helps us to understand that our young people aren’t bad, but they are moving through challenges.”

Al-Tariq has become an essential partner. With EJUSA’s technical assistance and mentoring, he has tapped into nearly \$300,000 in federal funding that expanded his impact, leading to more funding and a bigger footprint. Today, he and his staff—all of whom now go through EJUSA’s Trauma to Trust trainings—work with hundreds of young people every year.

In February 2020, The H.U.B.B. will launch the first trauma recovery center on the eastern coastline, combining the organization’s signature arts and empowerment model with clinical mental and emotional health services for youth grappling with violence and their own survivorship. The H.U.B.B. HELP Trauma Recovery Center will stand firm on what its acronym means: The Help Us Become Better Healing and Empowering Life Purpose Center.

“If you take a light and put it in a dark place, it can change the world,” says Al-Tariq. “The H.U.B.B. has become that light.”

Dr. Dorothy Johnson-Speight

MOTHERS IN CHARGE, INC.



Philadelphia, PA

Year Founded: 2003

Mission: Mothers In Charge, Inc. is a violence prevention, education and intervention-based organization, which advocates for and supports youth, young adults, family and community organizations affected by violence.

Some of the most effective changemakers are those directly impacted by the issues that they take on. For Dr. Dorothy Johnson-Speight, it was the murder of her son, Khaaliq, in 2001—nearly 15 years to the day after she lost her daughter, at age 2, to a grave illness—that inspired her to create her own organization supporting mothers who've lost children to violence.

In the moment that she learned about her son's death, Dorothy felt that she'd lost her future. Like her, Khaaliq was a trained social worker—"a peacemaker," she calls him—who had found a vocation in helping young children. They were planning to start their own organization together.

After a time of deep mourning and grief, this tragedy set her on a new path. "I realized I couldn't let the grief destroy me," Dorothy says. No matter where she looked, she couldn't find any organizations in Philadelphia that supported parents whose children had been murdered, especially Black parents, whose children were often seen as a cause of their own harm. So she started her own. In 2003, Dorothy founded Mothers in Charge (MIC) in a small church in the city.

EJUSA began working with MIC in 2005, providing fundamental support—everything from balancing the books to framing violence prevention as a public health strategy—that helped MIC multiply its impact. Most recently, this support helped MIC secure more than \$400,000 in new funding to provide mental health support for the families and children of murder victims.

Today, MIC has a total of 10 chapters across the country. Members find themselves in churches, schools, prisons, wherever the need for healing from the pain and trauma of violence is. "It's not just about mothers anymore," says Dorothy. "It's about children and families. We have to be comprehensive....We've opened people's eyes into a new way of thinking and feeling and being."

Ray Winans

DLIVE – DETROIT LIFE IS VALUABLE EVERY DAY



Detroit, MI

Year Founded: 2016

Mission: To provide young people and their support teams with the proper information and services to prevent reinjury as well as retaliation.

Ray Winans started working in community-based violence intervention in 2012, when he learned about the death of a baby who was caught in the crosshairs of a shooting. Although he was familiar with Detroit's gun violence through past gang involvement and the loss of family members to violence, the taking of this young life spurred his full-time commitment to reducing violence in the city.

After years of working directly with his community, Ray met Dr. Tolu Sonuyi, an emergency room physician passionate about healing the trauma that devastated Detroit's Black community. Tolu shared his vision for an organization that met survivors of trauma and violence at the time of their greatest need—upon entry to the hospital's emergency room. In 2016, Ray, Tolu, and fellow violence intervention specialist Calvin Evans founded DLIVE at Sinai Grace Hospital in Detroit.

As the first hospital-based violence intervention program in Michigan, DLIVE staff meet hospital patients at their bedside and work with them to create a network of support for them and their families. DLIVE offers its members holistic services—including therapy, housing assistance, and job placement—to provide them with the opportunities needed to heal and prevent further violence and retaliation.

The organization has grown rapidly and continues to expand. After meeting Ray and Tolu in 2016, EJUSA provided technical assistance needed for them to secure their first VOCA grant (federal funds that support victim services), totaling \$290,000. Three years later, they've leveraged that funding to sustain a budget of over \$1 million and serve more than 150 community members. DLIVE has expanded into its second hospital.

While many people still associate public safety with police and prison, DLIVE focuses solely on what each survivor needs in order to heal. So many people who hurt someone were first victims of violence who never got that kind of support—where healing might have broken the cycle.

"We're here because we give a damn," says Ray. "Traditionally, law enforcement comes from a place of, 'Tell me who did this, so that I can find them and arrest them.' We're not talking about what you did in order to get here, whether you have harmed or shot someone and you have been harmed as retaliation...today you're the victim and we're focused on your healing journey as a survivor of violence. We're shifting the tradition in Detroit."

Lakeesha Eure

NEWARK ANTI-VIOLENCE COALITION



Newark, NJ

Year Founded: 2009

Mission: To empower people in Newark through social and political awareness in addition to teaching the power of self-sufficiency in a community.

"We wanted to end business as usual," Lakeesha Eure says, recalling the founding of the Newark Anti-Violence Coalition (NAVC). In 2009, Newark saw a surge in shootings, especially the number of women who were victims. After the death of a young woman named Nakisha Allen, NAVC's soon-to-be founders grew angry at the lack of outrage.

So they went to the intersection where Nakisha was murdered and stopped traffic. "This was a life interrupted," says Lakeesha. "So business was going to be interrupted."

This wouldn't be an isolated protest. Violence was rampant, so the group held weekly vigils and rallies in response to every shooting. The group met 155 weeks in a row, with their number growing throughout.

"At first the community saw us as a nuisance," Lakeesha says, laughing, "but after a while, they started calling us when things would happen. They know we're going to show up."

The work expanded. NAVC members attend funerals, assist families in applying for victim compensation, support families in court and with finding relocation resources, and advocate for more trauma-informed education in schools. One of Lakeesha's proudest moments is NAVC's role in getting a formal, city-wide acknowledgement of gun violence as a public health issue. They now bring violence intervention programs into Newark schools.

The coalition has been a unique partner to EJUSA. It is a volunteer-run organization of community members, many of whom work full-time jobs. Capacity building with NAVC has meant understanding the flexibility of their work and finding ways to provide assistance and structure within that. "EJUSA has always been available for us to ask questions about how we can do things better," Lakeesha says. "Whether how to go after funding, develop greater partnerships, or putting some infrastructure behind what we do."

NAVC's results have led to growing influence. "I'm proud that we have a voice and a place at the table," Lakeesha says. "For so long, we didn't have that, and that's why we were founded."

Miles Mulrain

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD



Orlando, FL

Year Founded: 2015

Mission: Let Your Voice Be Heard was founded to represent the under-represented, serve the under-served and lift up the voices of those who need to be heard!

Miles Mulrain has an instinctual understanding of how to bring a community together. With his first organization, Black Orlando United, he hosted cookouts and back-to-school giveaways to unify people, with an increasing focus on working together to end police violence.

Then, in 2015, a close friend of his was killed in a drive-by shooting. Miles decided to push the mission of his work even further. "I realized that we couldn't just focus on police brutality—we had to focus on all community violence," he says.

Soon after, Miles planned a series of community forums on violence and renamed the organization Let Your Voice Be Heard (LYVBH). Over 200 people attended their first event. "We asked people what they saw going on. When they named problems, we'd take them down and come up with solutions," Miles says.

These solutions included everything from starting after-school programs for youth to working with students to end violence in schools to mentoring young people in juvenile detention centers. Eventually, LYVBH became the go-to organization for community members when problems came up, including murder and other violence. In addition to direct service, the group still holds rallies to raise awareness and hold local leadership accountable.

EJUSA began working with Miles in 2017 to support the organization's expansion and has since helped to secure \$20,000 in seed funding. As LYVBH continues to create holistic approaches to reduce violence and support survivors, the group is also working to get to the root of police-community tensions. LYVBH's focus on ending police violence in Orlando led him to participate in EJUSA's Trauma to Trust training in 2019—an experience that Miles refers to as "groundbreaking," and one that he wants to replicate in Orlando.

"We're taking people who've been harmed by the system," says Miles, "helping them heal, and channeling their healing in order to change that system."

EJUSA is transforming the justice system by promoting responses to violence that break cycles of trauma. We work at the intersection of criminal justice, public health, and racial justice to elevate healing and safety over retribution, meet the needs of survivors, and advance racial equity.



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