

CELEBRATING BLACK PHILANTHROPY

BUILDING A MILWAUKEE FOR ALL
TAKES ALL OF MILWAUKEE



"When we embarked on the journey to restore ThriveOn King, it was a form of reconciliation for those who had a vision for better. By sharing time, talent, treasure, ties and testimony, our community demonstrates that legacy is meaningful and philanthropy takes all of us."

GREG WESLEY

President and CEO, Greater Milwaukee Foundation



Public spaces in ThriveOn King are named in honor of distinguished African American leaders through a community-designed, donor-sponsored process.

"Philanthropy calls us to both meet our community's immediate needs and change the conditions that create them. Charity alone is not enough – true justice requires dismantling barriers, addressing root causes and rebuilding the systems that can either liberate or confine us."

FIESHA LYNN BELL

Senior Director of Development and Major Gifts, Greater Milwaukee Foundation

A MILWAUKEE FOR ALL NEEDS BLACK PERSPECTIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

In collaboration with donors and community leaders across the region, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation is ushering in a fresh perspective on philanthropy – one in which all voices are valued and differences drive progress.

In greater Milwaukee's Black community, philanthropy is a principle so entrenched across families and networks that it can feel second nature. To give of one's time, talent, treasure, ties and testimony is to be an active community member. It is part of accepting the charge passed forward from previous generations to take responsibility for the next. Black philanthropy is a vital force for social progress – inextricably tied to Black history, Black prosperity and Black joy.

We celebrate the diverse community of African American philanthropists and the evolving ways they are meeting the moment, no matter what that moment brings. When challenges emerge, a legacy of generosity that spans generations offers the tools to overcome and the opportunity to leverage aligned goals and drive greater impact. With collaboration and creativity, philanthropists of all kinds are forging transformative partnerships, designing novel solutions and making impactful contributions toward a vibrant future.

**Our community is strongest in partnership.
Join us as we build a Milwaukee for all.**



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

KEEPING THE GATE

LAUREN FEASTER WANTS TO CONNECT THE DOTS.

As CEO of Professional Dimensions, a Milwaukee women's professional association, she is pursuing a mission she has held throughout her career: empowering communities. Built on shared responsibility and strengthened through strategic partnership, philanthropy is a key part of her vision for progress.

What opportunities do you see in the philanthropic sector?

What we don't talk enough about is the opportunity to use and leverage existing systems to do a little bit more. For example, the mission of Professional Dimensions is to unite women leaders in the pursuit of better. There are a lot of different ways you can do that – why not select a way that accomplishes that mission but also uplifts, with a giving mindset and a diverse mindset? I can focus in on Black women, for instance, while upholding the mission of our organization.

My friend **Dana Guthrie** has a quote that I love: "Financial returns and social returns are not mutually exclusive." Supporting initiatives in an equitable way and supporting the communities that need it most can generate revenue when done correctly. We can do good while doing the typical business of our organizations.

How is a tradition of generosity passed through generations in the Black community?

It's embedded in our culture and the habits that we build when we're young. We have

expectations for each other and for what it means to be part of our community. It's collective accountability.

I'd love to see even more charges from our elders for the younger generation. Young people need to hear more about how folks operated before and take that history forward. They need to be in the room, even on the perimeters, to see how business is handled and what's expected of them. And I'm always pushing on people to be visible in their philanthropy, because when you do something good but you're anonymous, people don't know how it came to be or why you did it.

How would you describe your role in the Milwaukee community at this point?

There's a small group of us that are connected to the generations ahead of us but are still on the ground with the younger generations, your Gen Z and younger. We can be a point of both connectivity and accountability.

When people talk about gatekeeping, they usually use it in a negative light, but I want to be a gatekeeper in a more constructive and positive way. To me, the gatekeeper

determines what goes in and what goes out, connecting others to resources, relationships and ideas. If more people who have exposure to all sides can be the ones keeping the gate, more things will flow across that gate in an intentional way. I love taking that role in the philanthropy space.

What would a thriving greater Milwaukee community look like to you?

For me, it's about autonomy and agency. A better Milwaukee is a Milwaukee where everybody feels like they have control over their own situation. It's not eliminating

problems; it's equipping people with more of the skills and resources and community to solve for any problem that arises. At Professional Dimensions, we say you have to build relationships before you need them, and you have to organize before it's time to mobilize.

My dream for Milwaukee is to be so clear on our access to resources and talents that we can all create the reality that we want for ourselves – and that we feel responsible for it.



"I strive to lead by example – with excellence, with integrity, and with joy even in the midst of struggle – believing that leadership anchored in community is **contagious, transformational and required for progress.**"

LAUREN FEASTER
CEO, Professional Dimensions

FEATURE

DOING WELL AND DOING GOOD

BACKED BY PHILANTHROPY AND ROOTED IN MISSION, DR. HOWARD FULLER COLLEGIATE ACADEMY IS TRANSFORMING STUDENTS' FUTURES

When **Dr. Howard Fuller** was a young man, he wanted to change the world. Today, he's entrusting his vision with a community that's changing many.

A longtime civil rights activist, education reform pioneer and former superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools, Dr. Fuller's goal was to create a Black-led, Black-governed, Black-serving school, grounded in his belief that every child should be educated in a loving, caring environment. In 2004, he did just that, founding what was then called CEO Leadership Academy alongside eight local pastors.

"Ultimately, what I want Black kids to get out of education is some sort of value construct," Dr. Fuller said. "I always tell our students that I want them to do well so that they can do good."

A growing community of African American philanthropists has helped propel the school's expansion from an initial class of 33 to a three-school, K-12 system of over 1000 students. Along the way, the school changed status from a private voucher school to a public charter, and, at a donor's encouragement, the name changed in 2019 to **Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy (HFCA)**, honoring the school's visionary founder.

Perhaps the most notable marker of the school's progress is its new high school building, built from the ground up across the street from

ThriveOn King. HFCA board chair **Michelle Nettles** spearheaded the ambitious plan, charging husband **Cory Nettles** with co-chairing the capital campaign to make it possible. The campaign raised over \$35.4 million.

To Cory Nettles, developing a committed community of African American philanthropists was critical. Black philanthropy, he said, has a long legacy in greater Milwaukee, but it hasn't always been visible outside of the Black community. He and the other campaign chairs were grateful to see African American community members make commitments ranging from \$50 to seven figures.

"African American philanthropy is alive and well, and it's probably a little less invisible than it was before our campaign," he said. "I could not be prouder that African Americans stepped up and supported this project within their means."

For the school's donors, leaders and volunteers, the reward is transformation – not just of the physical space, but of the students themselves. While 83% of the student body are considered economically disadvantaged, HFCA leans into a joyous energy and a culture of empowerment. In doing so, it offers a second home for students, including a full suite of academic resources and leadership that helps them define and envision success.

At the start of the school year, HFCA hosted Mission Day, a celebration of alumni who have graduated from college. Before the event, the gym rang with hundreds of students belting R&B classics, eventually quieting for CEO **Rodney Lynk**'s remarks.

"Today is special because every person here completed our mission of going to and through college," he said. "We want you to see it because we want you to aspire to be it."

HFCA continues the uphill climb of improving test scores, college graduation rates and

other metrics. But as the alumni came up for recognition, the numbers faded away. There is no measuring a steadfast dedication to children whose future is ahead of them. There is no quantifying the transformative power of education.

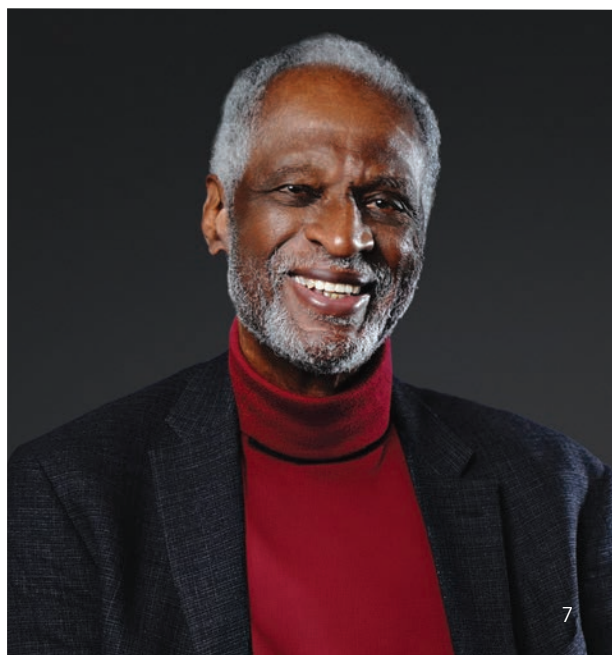
Behind each hug from Dr. Fuller was something bigger than data – a lifetime of powerful commitment to justice passed forward to an enthusiastic community of supporters, pouring into the promise of limitless potential.



"My radical goal is for every single person to get the type of education they need to be able to **engage in the transformation of their world**. I want our students to be caring, thinking human beings who ask, 'How can I make this world better?'"

DR. HOWARD FULLER

Founder, Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy



HONORING

*the generosity of
the African American
community*

WE ARE

WE SHARE OUR TIME



Brothers Khalif and **Que El-Amin** saw generosity in action at an early age – a scholarship fund honoring their grandfather, their parents’ involvement in social work.

“It’s in our genes to give back and uplift people,” Khalif El-Amin said. “From a young age we saw time and talent invested in underrepresented demographics, so it was natural to carry that philanthropic goal forward and put our own twist on it.”

The twist led them to cofound the **Young Enterprising Society**, which has provided Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) programming and entrepreneurial support for thousands of students. As entrepreneurs themselves, they hope to model the long-term payoffs of dedicating time to younger generations.

“If we can give real opportunities to people, they will take advantage and it will benefit the entire metropolitan area,” said Que El-Amin. “When we think of all of us as in this together, we create solutions that will serve us all and not just a few.”

WE SHARE OUR TALENT



Despite his degree, **Nehemiah Edwards** isn’t wired for electrical engineering. In 2017, he decided to follow his heart and pursue a creative career full-time, and he hasn’t looked back.

“I asked myself, if I had to leave a legacy, what would I want to be known for? It always came down to this concept of love,” he said.

A self-taught artist, Edwards is less focused on technical mastery than a sincere commitment to reveal and spread positivity through his work. To him, success comes whenever he can share in the basic joy of the human experience. It’s an outlook that motivates him to collaborate with community, such as working with over 50 children for his ThriveOn King installation, **“Together We Thrive.”**

“I consider myself a budding philanthropist,” he said. “Philanthropy is one of the greatest forms of love, because it’s all in the name of wanting to serve others, to see people survive and thrive.”

PHILANTHROPISTS

WE SHARE OUR TREASURE



The late Dr. Jeanette Mitchell's daughters – **Pamela Mitchell, Yvonne Mitchell** and **Yvette Murrell** – are proud to have inherited the family business: pouring into others. Though they miss their mother deeply, they see loving on people as her legacy made active.

"Grief happens because we've got love and we don't know where to put it," Murrell said. "Philanthropy gives us the opportunity to put that love someplace else."

In part, that comes through managing the **Dr. Jeanette Mitchell Legacy Fund** at the Foundation. It also comes from following in the footsteps of their mother's prolific network and the heart and strategy she brought to every connection.

"As a Black community, we have been taught to give and to raise people up, but we have not been taught that philanthropy is that, too," Pamela Mitchell said. "Expanding our identity as philanthropists allows it to be less about struggle and more about giving from our fullness."

WE SHARE OUR TIES



To **Cecelia Gore**, philanthropy is most potent – and most thrilling – when it is collective. First instilled in her by church collection plates and her mother's Girl Scout leadership, a team approach has become a career throughline.

"I've been able to witness how small contributions and collective efforts to make a difference can grow over time and have an impact," she said.

Gore has always found community in philanthropy, serving on nonprofit boards, starting grassroots funds and forging partnerships as executive director of the **Brewers Community Foundation**. As the next generations turn to her for mentorship, she emphasizes that unleashing creativity to make an impact on others, big or small, makes life meaningful.

"I think young people recognize that they have to create the community they want to live in," she said. "They have to roll up their sleeves and contribute financially, through volunteerism or by connecting with others. The energy is there."

JOIN US

TIME

- **Engage in the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's stakeholder opportunities**, including visioning sessions, tours and events
- **Consider joining the Foundation's Community Adviser & Ambassador Network (CAAN)**, comprised of leaders and professional advisers with diverse backgrounds and a passion for philanthropy and service

TALENT

- **Volunteer with a nonprofit** by joining a board, serving on a committee or sharing your expertise
- **Provide pro bono consulting services** to a nonprofit of interest

TREASURE

- **Start or grow a fund** at the Foundation
- **Create a legacy gift** through the Foundation to ensure an impact
- **Coinvest in our strategic priorities** to advance community outcomes including economic mobility, educational opportunity, health equity and housing security

TIES

- **Introduce members of your network** to the Foundation
- **Refer a community leader or professional adviser** to join CAAN

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation is YOUR community foundation,
and charitable partnership is YOUR chance to share your unique gifts
in this collaborative work. **In partnership, we can move greater
Milwaukee forward together.**



"Bronzeville House Quilt" is textile installation at ThriveOn King, created by Reginald Baylor Studio, including Reginald Baylor, Melissa Courtney and Montavius Jones. Works from over 20 acclaimed and home-grown artists are featured in the building, responding to neighborhood residents' call for art to honor history and connect community.



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