

CLEVELAND CENTRAL PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD

**EARLY LEARNING
FAMILY PARTNERS
STUDENT TRANSITIONS
RESIDENT VOICE & LEADERSHIP**

CENTRAL PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE STAFF



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Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland is the lead partner of Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood.

**Follow us on Facebook at Cleveland Promise Neighborhood, or visit
ClevelandPromiseNeighborhood.org.**

AMBASSADORS AT WORK

The Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood is made up of a rich tapestry of individuals with passion, vision and hope for their community. The Promise Ambassador program opens doors to additional learning and opportunities for many community leaders to make change. Here are a few stories of how these Ambassadors have bolstered their community this year.

COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD SURGE PROGRAM



In his 2021 State of the County address, Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish announced the launch of the county's first Neighborhood Surge program, designed to transform the underserved and overlooked neighborhoods by focusing concentrated resources into one community at a time. Central is the first neighborhood to receive funding from the Surge.

Promise Ambassadors, along with residents, stakeholders and grassroots organizations joined together to form a Central Surge Steering Committee, which investigates and develops practices and systems that lead to more people participating in, benefiting from, and succeeding in the surge's areas of focus.

Grassroots leaders advocated for an extensive community engagement plan, a cooperative option for broadband services, a neighborhood laundromat, a community resource center, and a food cooperative. The steering committee is working with partners and county representatives to establish accountability and advocate for sustainable, ongoing investment in Central.

EAST 39TH STREET GARDEN: THERAPY, ART & HEALING

In 2021, art therapy and gardening were used to address mental health issues affecting Central stakeholders during the pandemic. Two public art exhibits: Hands Across Central and Becoming Unmasked were created and displayed at the East 39th Street garden, overseen by **Promise Ambassador Andrea Johnson**. In the years since COVID's onset, Andrea and her crew engaged an intergenerational group of over 50 residents, professionals, and donors for ongoing reflection on mental health issues and their vision for Central.

Group members designed and embellished hand word art panels and two-sided masks displaying themes of love, hope and perseverance against the backdrop of violence and despair in the Central community. The masks and panels, along with a collage of the artists who created them, are now on display at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center.



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COMMUNITY REVIEW TEAM AT SOCF CLEVELAND

Former Promise team member Joe Black, now health equity officer at Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, set out to establish the first-ever Community Review Team at SOCF to review grant applications and inform the decision-making process. Three Promise ambassadors, **Walter Patton**, **Gwen Garth** and **Carol Malone** were invited to review Good Samaritan applications and provide feedback to help SOCF's board make more informed funding decisions.

The team reads and ranks applications and submits recommendations to the Fast Response Team, a small board committee, who make a final decision. Community Review Team members develop experience in sharing presentations, reviewing grants—and in turn, understanding different and better ways to write applications—and collaborating with leaders and strategic thinkers from across greater Cleveland. For the board, the Community Review Team provided significant insight on how to prioritize the needs of Central and which organizations are doing work that the community values.

GHETTO THERAPY



Central experiences higher rates of gun violence than most communities within greater Cleveland, and lifelong residents **Walter Patton** and **Cassandra Gordon** are providing a place for healing in Ghetto Therapy. Ghetto Therapy allows attendees to talk about how living among poverty and violence has impacted residents mentally and emotionally with neighbors who understand those experiences. Every individual who has attended a Ghetto Therapy session leaves feeling a little bit lighter. Walt and Cassandra's are leaders looking to influence a new generation to heal from systemic trauma and create a new future in Central.

MEN AND WOMEN OF CENTRAL

Men and Women of Central, a grassroots organization focused on building relationships and community strength, recently launched its new strategic plan, which focuses on serving the whole family, connecting families to resources, programs, and information that would benefit everyone.

Launched by Promise Ambassador **Jerome Baker**, and now led by Promise Ambassador **Charmaine Jordan**, MWOC has a new vision to foster a healthy community by connecting residents to resources that will improve their lives. The mission is to empower the Central community by facilitating programs through community partnerships and collaborations.

We invite all interested to learn more about the programs and work of Men and Women of Central. Email MWOC954@gmail.com with questions.



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AMBASSADOR LEADERSHIP IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

During 2021, SOCF conducted an external evaluation of the Promise Ambassador Program. This evaluation was designed to better understand the growth of neighborhood leadership and social capital and how Ambassadors have been impacted by the program since it began ten years ago.

A core team of Ambassadors participated in all aspects of project design and implementation, including shaping a community-led definition of social capital to guide the project, designing surveys and focus group questions, and participating in data analysis sessions. The core team worked with staff and the evaluators to synthesize the project's findings into four recommendations to shape the future of the Ambassador program. Implementation of these recommendations continues in 2022.

The evaluation revealed that the program should continue to draw upon the richness of its staff, the Ambassadors and resident leaders, partners and the historical roots of and resources in the Central neighborhood.

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“I’m sitting here and thinking about how much I’ve grown, especially since becoming an Ambassador. I was just going through life and figuring out what was next for me. How and what I’m going to transition into. And I was able to reach out to Ambassadors to guide me through finishing up with my master’s program. I’ll be graduating in July, [Staff member] went through the whole conversation of when I was going to apply for school, what I needed to do, how can I structure it and it’s something that I was able to open up and share with my kids that I mentor that I didn’t do before.”

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“Just to hear about how redlining affected Cleveland, on the Central community, and just hearing about the food deserts and just hearing about mental health, finding out the median income and things like that. It’s just, you know, it’s alarming as a leader to be knowledgeable of that, but also understanding that within our role of leadership, how we can impact and make that change in our community.”

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CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

The Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood annually honors Central Neighborhood residents and staff who help partnering organizations fulfill their missions and make significant contributions to the vibrancy of the neighborhood. In November, more than 50 individuals gathered in a virtual celebration of these Champions of Central.



Yolanda Armstrong
Executive Director, Friendly Inn Settlement

Personal motto:
"When they go low, we go high." *Michelle Obama*
"To whom much is given, much is required." *Luke 12:48*

What song best describes you?
"Believe for It" by CeCe Winans
"Just Fine" by Mary J. Blige

One word to describe you:
PASSIONATE

"I hope to help the Central Community understand that they have a voice, and that if they want to turn challenge into a victory, they need to reach out to individuals and organizations that can help them in obtaining those victories! Just as we as organizations must help those in the community by giving them the tools to overcome those challenges and celebrate with them the victories that they have received!"

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021



Sonja (Sunny) McCord
Youth Librarian, Sterling Library

Personal motto:
"Ego Eimi: I am, I exist"

What song best describes you?
"Black Butterfly" by Denise Williams

One word to describe you:
COMMITTED

Central memory:
I grew up across the street from the old Friendly Inn. Our neighbors would get together and play cards and barbeque. We would play games like jump rope, hopscotch, and hide & seek. Some of the girls would braid each other's hair while sitting on the apartment building's steps. My favorite memory is the sense of community we shared.

"My vision for Central is that it will be a thriving environment, with a collective consciousness where members see themselves in a positive light."

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021



Ashley Williams-Gulley
Family Support Specialist, Marion-Sterling

Personal motto:
"God is within her, she will not fail." Psalm 46:5

What song best describes you?
"Masterpiece (Mona Lisa)" by Jazmine Sullivan

One word to describe you:
COMPASSIONATE

Fun fact:
I'm a risk taker. I once sat within two inches of a crocodile!

"My vision for Central is that our community members take advantage of the resources that are here, that relationships continue to be built that would encourage them to do that."

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021



William (Bill) Myers
Director, Central Recreation Center

Personal motto:
"Learn as if you were to live forever; live as if you were to die tomorrow."

What song best describes you?
"Atomic Dog" by George Clinton

One word to describe you:
PATIENT

Central memory:
Quad-fest was a carnival in the hospital parking lot that brought the entire community together. It is one of my greatest memories.

"My vision for Central is to create an area both indoors and outdoors for youth and their families to comfortably enjoy the life of leisure while also maintaining great relationships with each other on a social and emotional level as well."

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021



Cassandra Gordon
Community Advocate, Volunteer, Founder of BeUSisters Foundation

Personal motto:
"No matter the situation, obstacle storm or test, you could overcome anything with the grace of God. Always BeU!"

What song best describes you?
"After the Pain" by Betty Wright

One word to describe you:
PASSIONATE

Central memory:
I am a lifelong resident of King Kennedy, the third generation on both sides of my family. I enjoyed growing up in the projects. We were all a family that always looked out for one another. 36 years later I still have that same love, support and family.

"My vision for Central is to continue being an uplifted source, resource and support for the community, build a deeper connection between the residents, homeowners and community, building confidence, health, wealth, and equity."

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021



Dr. Shemariah Arki
Educator, Activist, Organizer

Personal motto:
"Lift as you climb."

What song best describes you?
"Q.U.E.E.N." by Janelle Monae & Erykah Badu

One word to describe you:
PASSIONATE

Central memory:
Seeing the legacy work of Ms. Geraldine Burns in all of the programs and services provided at Friendly Inn.

"My vision for Central is to reclaim, through storytelling and lived experience, its rightful history in the legacy of the Great Migration and the Black Liberation Movement."

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

"The Champions of Central continuously go above and beyond the call of duty to help ensure Central families have access and support to available resources," said Dawn Glasco, Promise manager of social innovation.
"In a nutshell, they are people who we look up to."

Antoinette (Toni) Smith

Community Volunteer, East Tech HS

Personal motto:

"Treat people the way you would like to be treated."

What song best describes you?

"Let Go, Let God" by DeWayne Woods

One word to describe you:

PATIENCE

Central Memory:

My uncle's Father's Day celebration. Food, drinks, entertainment - a lot of love put into this event. Everyone was welcome and would come from near & far.

"I would love to see free training programs to help our youth and young adults succeed in life, and to make sure our youth are getting quality education. I want to continue to strive to work together to keep our Central community vibrant, beautiful, and safe."

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

Kate Woods

Community Mental Health Worker

Personal motto:

"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny."

What song best describes you?

"Live While We're Young" by Johnnyswim

One word to describe you:

LOYAL

Fun fact:

I love animals and would one day like to have a therapy animal for clients.

"My vision for Central involves a safe and involved community that finds support and success within itself."

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

Eddy & Maddy Gurewitz

Community members

Personal motto:

"A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

What song best describes you?

"The Best Is Yet to Come" by Frank Sinatra

Central memory:

My best memory of Central is when Maddy came to the community from New York and cleaned the drugs off the street. Neighbors could finally rest with the drug activity gone.

*"Out of the tree of life, I just picked me a plum
 You came along and everything started in to hum
 Still it's a real good bet
 The best is yet to come"
 - Frank Sinatra*

PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

Andrea Johnson

Community Ambassador, E39th St. Garden

Personal motto:

"I believe in the power of possibilities."

What song best describes you?

"We Are Family" by Sister Sledge

One word to describe you:

EMPATHETIC

Fun fact:

My mother was concerned about me being too much of a tomboy. She sent me to three charm schools to make sure the lessons stuck!

"My vision is to empower wellness in Central together. I loved seeing the looks of accomplishment in the faces of those participating in Becoming Unmasked when they saw the materials on display at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center."

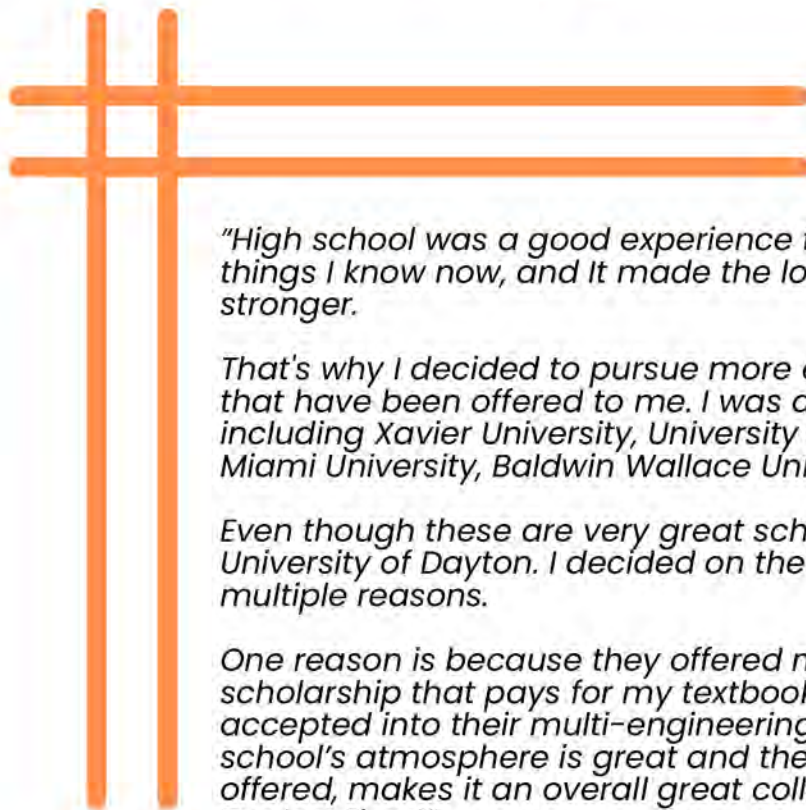
PROMISE CHAMPIONS OF CENTRAL 2021

PROMISE SCHOLARS – EAST TECH HIGH CLASS OF 2022

Central Promise Neighborhood Student Transitions Program provides summer bridge learning workshops that focus on health and wellness activities and post-secondary education and employment opportunities for high school graduates who live in the Central community. The majority of the Promise Scholars attend East Tech High School and are awarded a \$500 scholarship from the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland to support continued learning and career exploration.

Student Transitions is implemented in collaboration with **College Now, Cuyahoga Community College, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, The Phoebe Foundation, Cleveland State University, Say Yes to Education, Beyond the Field Foundation, CIPPT, Inc.**, and other important collaborators. This year, we celebrated 30 Promise Scholars who are selecting various pathways towards continuous personal growth and development.

Our Student Transitions action team works earnestly to provide students with concrete support in times of need while helping students deepen their social connections.



"High school was a good experience for me. It showed me a lot of things I know now, and it made the love I have for basketball grow stronger.

That's why I decided to pursue more educational opportunities that have been offered to me. I was accepted into several schools including Xavier University, University of Akron, Marietta College, Miami University, Baldwin Wallace University.

Even though these are very great schools, I will be attending the University of Dayton. I decided on the University of Dayton for multiple reasons.

One reason is because they offered me a civil engineering scholarship that pays for my textbooks and my tuition. Plus, I was accepted into their multi-engineering program as well. The school's atmosphere is great and the additional opportunities offered, makes it an overall great college. I'm proud to be a Dayton Flyer!"

*Donte Byrd
Central Promise Scholar Class of 2022*

PROMISE SCHOLARS – EAST TECH HIGH CLASS OF 2022

**Stacie Barrows
Wendell Bell
Mia Brumfield
Mya Brumfield
Donte Byrd
Khalai Carrington
Michael Coleman
Jeremiah Cook
Carlos Demore, Jr.
Shanisha Deramous
Janya Douglas
Zaria Freeman
Kalia George
Roosevelt Guins, Jr.**

**Devonte Greene
DeAnthony Harper
Jasmine D. Jackson
Ta'Keya Jackson
Tyleon Jenkins
Jeante Johnson
Ricky Meyers
Truston Morris
Shonte'ana Ray
Timya Richardson
Eddie Swift
Rosco Hilliard Jr.
Aaron Hayward**



"I'm going to Cleveland State University in the fall with a full scholarship. I'm interested in the medical field as well as business marketing. I think I can pursue both.

I'm considering nursing because I'm the friend who takes care of everyone when they are either sick or hurt themselves. Helping people feel better excites me. It makes me feel that I made a change. I love the anatomy of the human body. Sometimes I think about becoming a pathologist or medical examiner.

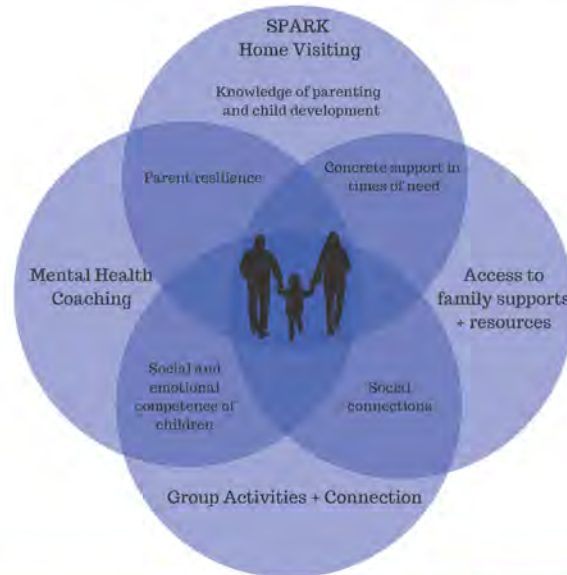
I'm interested in business marketing because I can be my own boss. I'm working on a business idea and target audience now. Plus, my dad inspired me by investing in a clothing brand for me. I want to make that brand a big name for me and my siblings."

Shanisha Deramous
Central Promise Scholar Class of 2022

FAMILY PARTNERS HIGHLIGHTS

Family Partners

2021 PROGRAM EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS



CHILDREN OUTCOMES

- 35% learning gain in pre-literacy
- 11% learning gain in early numeracy
- Majority on track in development milestones
- Demonstrated greater school readiness



"[Since working with Family Partners Staff], books are more engaging for [my child], it's not just me reading to her - SPARK taught me how to inquire about what's going on in the story and in the pictures." - Family Partners Parent, 2021

FAMILY OUTCOMES



- Increased attention to literacy activities
- Gained more skills in developmentally appropriate reading habits with their children
- Peer-to-peer support through virtual and in-person gatherings and online social groups
- Demonstrated resilience during significant challenges

"I met new people, and gained new techniques that may help with my child through the Family Cafe'. It is a family outside of family. It is good to talk to people you do not know when you are going through some things." - Family Partners Parent, 2021

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PROGRAM COLLABORATORS



EVALUATION BY:



FAMILY PARTNERS HIGHLIGHTS

Caregiver voice is at the center of Family Partners programming.

Through the Family Advisory Council, parents and caregivers emerged as community leaders even amid unprecedented neighborhood strife.

CAREGIVER OUTCOMES

- Strong relationships with their child— shown through affection, responsiveness, and encouragement when parenting.
- Demonstrated strong skills in being learning partners
- Many caregivers stepped into the role of teacher for their child(ren)



"This program helped me become a better me, a better parent. As a mother, and a woman, as a single mother fighting generational poverty. This program has changed my life for the better."

- Family Partners Parent, 2021

What we are learning: **Evaluation**

In terms of child academics, success was previously defined only by scores on state assessments in math, reading, social-emotional and non-cognitive development.

However, **caregivers recognized that they had better control over the educational factors in the home** rather than individual academic outcomes. Instead of only looking to assessment scores, families on the advisory council agreed that they defined success as working hard, completing tasks or work they start, and feeling they have well-established networks of resources and support.

We now use qualitative data from caregivers describing these factors in addition to assessment results to more holistically measure child academic growth.

What we are learning: **Workforce**

In collaboration with a workforce development expert and consultant, we are exploring the needs, thoughts, and experiences of families within workforce. Family Partners caregivers attended voluntary focus groups where caregivers shared their experiences in the workforce.

These experiences range from salary inequities to systemic barriers to obtain full-time employment with equitable benefits, in addition to rigid hours and expectations. Many of these barriers cause them to **feeling as if they have to choose between poor and hostile work conditions or being present for the rendering and nurturing of their children.**

Currently the Parent Advisory Committee members are exploring ways they can provide support to one another to help everyone practice coping skills despite the level of stress they may feel.

Promise and the entire Family Partners team would like to extend our appreciation to Joanne Federman, who helped launch this partnership, and many others, after leading the Family Connections organization for nearly 30 years. As a result of her work, more parents are engaged in their child's learning from birth through first grade and more children are entering school ready to learn. Family Partners would not be what it is today without Joanne's leadership and support, and we wish her all the best in a well-earned retirement.

FAMILY PARTNERS AND EARLY LEARNING

As early learning programs in Central continue to face challenges, programs like Family Partners will help bridge the gap and equip parents and caregivers to be a child's first teacher.



*A conversation with Coretta Daniel, LSW
Promise Early Learning Coordinator, Starting Point
2022 Early Childhood Leadership Fellow - Groundworks Ohio*

What are some of the challenges early learning centers are dealing with?

The centers continue to face challenges with enrollment and staffing. This is mostly due to the pandemic and longstanding systemic issues with compensation for early learning educators. During the pandemic, some sites shifted their services to provide support for remote learning for school-age students. Providers also have staff serving dual roles as teachers and administrators. They are working to keep classroom capacity lower to account for student-teacher ratio while staffing is low.

What is important for parents to know about early learning opportunities?

Even if parents choose not to send their children into center-based care, there are other supplemental programs that support early learning and development. Some are home-visiting programs like SPARK-Ohio and Family Partners, and others are programs in the community where families can connect and learn together.

What opportunities do you see for the future?

I would like to create a continuum of care for our early learners that focused on supporting their development from prenatal through them entering kindergarten. This would be a pipeline that includes our Family Partners Network.

Early learning programming must continue to focus on the whole family, whether that's through new programming development or aligning our partnerships in a unique way. Areas in need of attention are housing stability, community violence, mental and emotional health, as well as food and financial insecurity.

I would love to see families being empowered as advocates, and having knowledge about their child's developmental stages and how to support them.



Coretta was a featured speaker at The Literacy Cooperative's 2022 Read Across America event. She spoke as an educator and a parent about early childhood literacy. "I would recommend this (Dolly Parton Imagination Library) program 1000 times," she said. (Pictured here with Emily Campbell, Center for Community Solutions)

ST. VINCENT CHARITY HEALTH CAMPUS

In June 2021, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland (SOCF), Sisters of Charity Health System, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center and Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine announced plans to create a Health Campus adjacent to St. Vincent Charity Medical Center in Cleveland's Central neighborhood. The goal is to provide care for the whole person by bringing new services to the community that address the social determinants of health.

Together with many partners who live, learn, work and play in this neighborhood, SOCF Cleveland and Cleveland Central Promise have embarked on a journey to transform Sisters of Charity's East 22nd Street Campus into the St. Vincent Charity Health Campus. This vibrant hub will align health care and services that address the social determinants of health while building on the important community outreach St. Vincent Charity Medical Center has provided for more than a century.

From the start of the project, community engagement has been a foundational basis for the campus vision. For more than a year, we have purposefully engaged diverse community partners, families and residents to provide services that meet the spiritual, physical, social and emotional needs of the community today. Together with the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Sisters of Charity Health System, Cleveland Central Promise, St. Vincent Charity Medical Center and SOCF Cleveland worked alongside MASS Design Group on this important planning work.

Beginning in early 2021, **Richaun Bunton, managing director of the Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood**, leveraged relationships and neighborhood insights to bring residents, organizations, community leaders and other stakeholders into conversation about the needs of Central and greater Cleveland. These include social service organizations, primary care providers, youth development organizations, food security organizations and champions, community gardeners, workforce development organizations, higher education leaders, foundation leaders, real estate developers, public libraries, artists, cultivators, and public officials. Bunton pointed out that many members of the community carry deep mistrust in institutions, and an authentic engagement process helps create accountability and trust.



"When we ask community members, leaders, residents, families, and many others to join in the co-creation of the Campus it allows us to re-establish and strengthen a relationship between an institution and those who have felt used and unheard by other institutions," Bunton said. "I knew we had to be held accountable for our part of the relationship and honor their voices, hear about their previous experiences, and rely on their wisdom and expertise throughout the process."

Many of these conversations raised ongoing struggles with community trauma, especially as it comes from violence. Community members have a desire to create safe spaces that evoke beauty and remembrance.

"The greatest value in hearing from the community continues to be their ingenuity," Bunton said. "The passion that they have for seeing Central return to its roots of community trust, vibrancy and well-being is inspiring."