BREAKING BARRIERS YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EVALUATION RESULTS

PRESENTED TO:

SAY YES BUFFALO

GREATER BUFFALO RACIAL EQUITY ROUNDTABLE

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Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council

Culturally Responsive Evaluation 2018-19 Results

Summary

Initial Findings: Young Men of Color who participate in Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council achieve positive outcomes.

Survey Highlights

- BBYLC graduates reported acceptable/stable levels of life satisfaction.
- BBYLC graduates were less likely to report viewing violence as a strategy to manage conflict.
- The data suggests that BBYLC graduates are demonstrating resilience in the face of perceived discrimination.
- BBYLC graduates reported high mean levels of self-esteem.
- BBYLC graduates reported high mean levels of civic attitudes and civic behavior.

Interview Highlights

- The young men similarly expressed that they joined BBYLC so that they could make a difference in their community.
- The young men felt their participation had an effect on how they thought of themselves as boys of color in the city of Buffalo.
- The respondents felt as if they had developed some strong bonds through the group.
- Besides developing bonds, the young men stated that being a part of BBYLC changed them in a positive way.

History

The Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable designated Say Yes Buffalo to convene the City of Buffalo's work in the advancement of equitable outcomes for boys and men of color (BMoC) around the policy target areas of early childhood, college access and readiness, career pathways and economic opportunities, and criminal justice and public safety. The vision of the GBRER is to ensure that "Buffalo has a shared future, where racial equity will create prosperity and opportunity for *everyone* in our region; and an overarching goal to "achieve an expanded, an inclusive economy" for all its residents.

Through a city-wide effort, the policy target areas are being explored through a racial equity lens for their effects on BMoC. Policies that negatively impact BMoC locally, state-wide, or nationally are addressed by both the Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council (BBYLC) and the My Brother's Keeper/Boys and Men of Color (MBK/BMoC) Coalition.

The MBK/BMoC Initiative is a coalition of youth, community members, foundations, education professionals, public health professionals, juvenile justice community members, and leaders in government working toward accelerating positive outcomes for boys and young men of color across the cradle-to-career continuum.

In 2017 Say Yes To Education created the Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council (BBYLC) of young men of color, ages 12 through 24. The goal of the leadership council is to expand the capacity of boys and young men of color and empower them to become agents of change in their communities. These individuals are becoming advocates for social justice, racial equity, and policy changes that ultimately improve the life outcomes for BMoC.

Since 2018, three youth leadership cohorts have launched, more than 100 young men of color have actively engaged in the monthly council meetings and 66 young men have successfully remained engaged beyond the 2-year period providing mentorship for incoming participants.

Throughout this reporting period, the BBYLC has elevated the voices of BMoC throughout the Buffalo community and strengthened the cohesiveness of the MBK/BMoC alignment work city-wide.

Strategy

From its inception, the GBRER and the BMoC Coalition has pursued two main initiative developmental areas:

1. Policy/Program Capacity Areas:

   a. Developing youth leadership and voice
   b. Narrative change surrounding young men of color
   c. Establishing policy platforms that strengthen and improve life outcomes for males of color

2. Data/Structural Capacity Development Areas:

   a. Promoting availability, collection, tracking, analysis, and utilization of MBK/BMoC data
   b. Developing effective and accountable partnerships
   c. Financial sustainability from private and public sectors

Working together with multiple strategic partners is essential to improving the lives of boys and young men of color in the Greater Buffalo community. Ensuring equitable outcomes for all young people in our communities requires national, state, and local partnership. To deepen the alignment with national initiatives around the MBK/BMoC efforts, the BBYLC attended the Cities United Convening in Hampton, Virginia, in addition to attending the 2019 Obama Foundation National Summit to learn more about promising practices around city-wide strategies. In addition, the local MBK/BMoC work in affiliation with our local partner Open Buffalo, has connected with the national Opportunity Youth (YO) movement, specifically around registering young men of color to vote. Coupled with partners such as the Casey Family Programs, The Wilson Foundation, the Education Trust of New York, these essential partners have helped to rapidly accelerate the work over the last two years.

This document seeks to present preliminary findings from an ongoing evaluation on the MBK/BMoC. The Goal of the evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the Say Yes Buffalo BMoC initiative BBYLC as determined by program goals and objectives and the impact on its participants, with their involvement. In the next section we describe the evaluation process.

Evaluation Process

To assess the effectiveness of the work of the MBK/BMoC, we employed a culturally responsive pre-post design accompanied by qualitative semi-structured interviews. Cultural responsiveness in evaluation is based on an examination of impacts through lenses in which the culture of the participants is considered an important factor. An evaluation is culturally responsive if it fully takes into account the culture of the program that is being evaluated. In other words, the evaluation is based on an examination of impacts through lenses in which the culture of the participants is considered an important factor, thus rejecting the notion that assessments must be objective and culture free, if they are to be unbiased. Moreover, a culturally responsive evaluation attempts to fully describe and explain the context of the program or project being evaluated. Culturally responsive evaluators honor the cultural context in which an evaluation takes place by bringing needed, shared life experience and understandings to the evaluation tasks at hand. For the purposes of this study, as stated above, we are seeking to determine the impact of engaging with the MBK/BMoC initiative among the young male participants aged 12-24. In order for a young male to be eligible to participate in the survey, he had to be identified by the program facilitators/managers as a participating male in the program and be present on the days of survey administration. Data collection took place on 4/6/19, 10/19/19, 11/2/19, 12/21/19, and 2/8/20 and consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Quantitative Data Collection

If a project/program involves a treatment, intervention, or some kind of experimental manipulation, one may consider using a pre-test/post-test design (known more generally as a repeated-measures design). In a pre-test/post-test design, the same participants are measured on the variables of interest at multiple points in time to determine if there is variation between the pre-score (baseline) and the multiple post-scores. Depending on the variable determines the desired direction of the difference between the pre and post score. With this definition in mind, the pre-post design was selected for the MBK/BMoC because we view participation in the MBK/BMoC initiative as a treatment/intervention that will lead to greater civic engagement and other positive outcomes.

> 90% of the evaluation process was performed by young men of color

Specifically, measures given to the youth were chosen through extensive discourse between the program stakeholders. There were a plethora of measures we would have liked to include. However, the desires to include multiple measures was carefully balanced with discretion to not overburden the participants and to collect data that we felt accurately represented the impact that the program had on the participants. Thus, in the development of the instrument in its final form, we avoided a lengthy survey which limited the potential for survey fatigue and at the same time, in our view, captured quality data that tapped into the experiences of the participants. The survey consisted of eight measures: life satisfaction, disposition toward violence, day to day discrimination, self-esteem, masculinity, racial socialization, civic engagement attitudes and behaviors and the use of the young men's structured and unstructured time. In total, the survey instrument consisted of 106 questions (not including 7 demographic questions) in which the participants completed in 15-20 minutes on average. We describe each of these measures in the following section.

Table 1. Number of items per scale included in survey

Scale	# of items
Satisfaction with Life Scale	5
Adopting the Street Code Scale	7
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	10
Day-to-Day Discrimination Scale	9
Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity Scale	27
Racial Experiences Scale	24
Civic Engagement Scale	14
Engagement in Structured/Unstructured activities Scale	10
	*106

*Survey also included 7 demographic questions for a total of 113 items.

Life Satisfaction. There are many measures of mental health and disposition that purport to assess how a person feels. They include depression, self-esteem, anxiety, mood changes and fatigue to name a few. However, the idea of just being satisfied with life we felt was a good indicator of how the participants were doing. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) was developed as a measure of the judgmental component of subjective well-being. When it comes to a sense of subjective well-being it consists of two main components: the emotional component and the cognitive component. The cognitive component has been more closely conceptualized with life satisfaction and the SWLS is a strong tool that reflects a subjective sense of well-being and life satisfaction. The SWLS is shown to be a valid and reliable measure of life satisfaction, suited for use with a wide range of age groups and applications.

The SWLS was developed to assess satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole. The scale does not assess satisfaction with life domains such as health or finances but allows subjects to integrate and weight these domains in whatever way they choose. The SWLS is recommended as a complement to scales that focus on psychopathology or emotional well-being because it assesses an individuals' conscious evaluative judgment of his or her life by using the person's own criteria. The scale contains five items and is designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree. Higher scores on this scale suggest a greater level of life satisfaction.

Disposition Toward Violence. One of the purposes of BBYLC is to change the narrative surrounding BMoC. One narrative that is ubiquitous and permeating in our society is the framing of BMoC as prone to violent behavior and being described as dangerous. These sorts of narratives are invoked to justify the use of violence and vitriolic attitudes toward BMoC. We felt that it was important to challenge these sorts of stereotypes. As a result, we felt it was important to include the Adopting the Street Code scale (ASCS). There is a distinction between neighborhood street culture, which is a property of structurally disadvantaged settings, and the adoption of street code values, which is an individual-level process. Although the neighborhood street culture provides a set of informal rules that shape public interactions around violence, the adoption of street code values represents individuals embracing values, beliefs, and behaviors that are consistent with the rules or norms of the neighborhood street culture. It's been suggested that residents' beliefs and behaviors are likely to be structured and influenced by the neighborhood environment in which they are situated and live their day-to-day lives. These arguments suggest that in a disadvantaged and racially isolated context where a neighborhood street culture is widespread, adolescents need to acquire knowledge consistent with the street culture for survival and defensive purposes. This conclusion indicates that knowledge of the code is thus largely defensive, and it is literally necessary for operating in public. ASCS asks to indicate the extent under

certain circumstances to which it is justifiable or advantageous to use violence (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). Higher scores on this scale suggest an attitude and disposition agreeable toward solving problems with violence.

Perceived Discrimination. Although segregation has declined slightly in recent years, a report published by the Partnership for Public Good characterized the Buffalo-Niagara region as one of the most racially segregated metropolitan regions in the nation resulting from decades of explicitly racist federal, state and local policies. These policies had implications for criminal justice practices, housing choice, education and general indicators of neighborhood health that impact how BMoC think about how society views and values them. The vast majority of BBYLC participants reside in zip codes (Table 2) with poverty rates above 25%.

Table 2. Poverty Rates According to Zip code in Buffalo New York above 20% (n=14)

*	Zip code	*Population	*Poverty status determined	*Living below poverty level	*Poverty rate	**% of individuals below poverty level	BB(%)
1	14213	24,258	23,818	10,600	44.5%	42.6%	6
2	14207+	23,383	23,331	9,809	42.0%	41.8%	9
3	14201	11,711	11,403	4,571	40.1%	35.8%	2
5	14211	22,017	21,945	8,579	39.1%	38.5%	26(14)
6	14212	10,611	10,552	4,088	38.7%	41.5%	15(8)
7	14208+	11,514	10,336	3,756	36.3%	37.3%	13(7)
8	14204	8,687	8,351	2,790	33.4%	34.0%	10(5)
10	14214	20,381	19,326	6,247	32.3%	30.9%	10(5)
12	14215	39,458	37,977	11,273	29.7%	28.2%	51(28)
13	14209	7,693	6,965	1,875	26.9%	30.7%	--
16	14210	14,379	14,324	3,514	24.5%	25.3%	4
18	14206	20,352	20,252	4,752	23.5%	25.0%	6
19	14218 (Lackawanna)	18,912	18,687	4,376	23.4%	24.7%	2
20	14228 (Amherst)	21,533	21,325	4,439	20.8%	22.1%	--

*Business First of Buffalo 2018
**American Community Survey 5-year estimates
In the 100 largest metropolitan areas (according to the 2000 census) the typical white child lived in a neighborhood with a poverty rate of 7.2%. As a reference point, a neighborhood poverty rate below 10% is widely regarded as a low poverty level. Empirically, neighborhoods with such low rates tend to be safe, have good quality schools, and positive role models for children. In contrast, the typical black child lives in a neighborhood with a poverty rate of 21.1%. Neighborhoods with poverty rates of 20% or higher are regarded as high poverty and tend to have significantly worse physical and social environments that may not support healthy child development. According to Business First Buffalo 2018, 20 zip codes in the Western New York region have poverty rates above 20%. BBYLC participants are spread out among 19 zip codes, 13 of which fall on the list above. The majority of YLC participants reside in the 14215-zip code.

Given this fact, we thought it was imperative to include a measure of perceived discrimination. People who are discriminated against are more likely to feel depressed, nervous, restless, hopeless, and sad. Other research has found that discrimination is related to poor physical and mental health, high body mass index, and chronic health problems (e.g., stroke, asthma, and heart disease). Mental and physical health problems can interfere with people's ability to work and function, and so discrimination can make it that much harder for those living on low income to move out of poverty. Using the day-to-day discrimination subscale alone, researchers find that higher scores are associated with worse health and

more unpleasant emotions. However, research has also found that there are ways to reduce the damage of daily discrimination. For instance, being religious protects African Americans from the feelings of sadness and hopelessness that discrimination brings about for others. While higher perceived discrimination scores are associated with worse mental health, it does not necessarily mean that discrimination causes bad mental health. Within the context of Buffalo-Niagara, we view lower scores as an indicator of resiliency in the face of discrimination. The 9-item Daily Discrimination scale captures respondents' experiences with unfair treatment in their day-to-day lives (e.g., "You are treated with less courtesy than other people"). Respondents complete the daily discrimination scale by indicating how often they feel discriminated against on a 1 to 4 scale (1 = often; 2 = sometimes; 3 = rarely; 4 = never).

Self-Esteem. In addition to the SWLS, we included a measure that provided an indication of how the participants felt about themselves. When a person values themselves, they are said to have good self-esteem, they feel secure and worthwhile. People with high-self-esteem generally maintain positive relationships with others and feel confident about their abilities. They're also open to learning and feedback, which can help them acquire and master new skills. One of the oldest and most used measures of self-esteem is the Rosenberg self-esteem scale. Developed in the mid-1960s by Morris Rosenberg, the scale assesses global self-esteem. Rosenberg and his fellow researchers define global self-esteem as *"the individual's positive and negative attitude toward the self as a totality."* The term global connotes a holistic view of oneself. Thus, a person can have an attitude toward the self generally, and also specifically. You could hold a negative attitude about your aptitude for a specific subject, and generally have a positive attitude about your overall intelligence. So, this measure is an overall view of how a person views themselves. The scale measures global self-worth by assessing both positive and negative feelings about the self in adolescents and adults using a 4-point scale anchored by the options strongly disagree-strongly agree. Higher scores indicate a higher level of self-esteem.

Masculinity. A focus of the BBYLC is to change the narrative about Black men in the city of Buffalo. The only way to do that is for them to become the change they want to see in the world. Therefore, positive displays and attitudes of masculinity are something we seek to instill in the young men not only by providing examples but also through thoughtful discourse and discussion. In the social sciences, toxic

masculinity refers to traditional cultural masculine norms that can be harmful to men, women, and society overall; this concept of toxic masculinity is not intended to demonize men or male attributes, but rather to emphasize the harmful effects of conformity to certain traditional conceptions or ideas of what it is to be a man. For example, positive traits traditionally viewed as masculine in Western society include strength, courage, independence, leadership, and assertiveness. Men who adhere to traditionally negative masculine cultural norms, such as risk-taking, violence, dominance, primacy of work, need for emotional control, desire to win, and pursuit of social status, tend to be more likely to experience psychological problems such as depression, stress, body image problems and substance abuse. Healthy masculinity means being honest with oneself about your own feelings, needs and desires. It also means treating all others with the kindness and respect that you deserve. Healthy masculinity means not using your size, strength, or power to get what you want from others. BBYLC participants seek to become exemplars of positive masculinity in their community and we capture this through the Meanings of Adolescent

Masculinity Scale (MAMS). While most masculinity scales focus on men, this scale was developed specifically for use by adolescent and young adult males. The scale measures the endorsement of traditional male role norms. The scale consists of four sub-scales. The first sub-scale called "**Constant Effort**," resonates with the idea that boys tend to exert continual effort in maintaining strong, confident and impenetrable fronts in order to seem masculine to others. Accordingly, the items on this subscale reflect the social comparative nature of male gender roles, the constant self-monitoring involved in adhering to male gender roles, and the high priority many boys place on maintaining a masculine image. The second subscale is a measure of "**Emotional Restriction and Stoicism.**" Simply put, the idea that "real men don't cry" and the lack of emotional expression has long been a hallmark of traditional masculinity. Remaining cool, calm and collective in the face of trauma and adversity or maintaining the "cool pose" is held as a manly ideal across many cultures. Scale items for the second subscale reflect these ideals. The third subscale, **"Heterosexism,"** reflects the intense pre-occupation of avoiding any and all behavior viewed as feminine or gay. Previous research has suggested that adolescent boys view femininity and homosexuality as a monolith category against which they construct their identities. Therefore, items for the "heterosexism" subscale reflect attitudes toward traits viewed as feminine. The fourth and final subscale, **"Social Teasing,"** is reflective in the idea that boys perceive a component of masculinity as the ability to tease and poke fun at male peers and to stand up to teasing when it is directed at them. It's been suggested that teasing and taunting is considered not only normative behavior among adolescent boys but also instrumental behavior in establishing masculine persona. These subscales are measured with 27 items on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores on these scales represent stronger endorsement of traditional male norms.

Racial Socialization. Given the current political and social climate in our country, the importance of parents and the programs they entrust their children to communicate positive racial socialization messages is vital. All parents have the task and responsibility of raising their children with culturally-appropriate values and principles that prepare them to take on adult roles. However, parents of Black children, along with parents of other ethnically underrepresented youth, are also tasked with teaching their children how to navigate, and sometimes even survive, a society that may give messages that undermine parents' efforts. Parents often must counteract messages their youth receive from broader society including the media, and the judicial, educational and health systems, to name a few. The way in which parents teach their youth how to navigate contradictory messages or teach them what it means to be Black is called racial socialization. Racial socialization messages vary and can take the form of: emphasizing pride in

one's culture, warnings about racial inequities, mistrust of other racial groups, de-emphasizing the importance of race (color-blind approach) or not speaking up and being silent about racial issues. Given the messages that BMoC are exposed to through the media and cues from their environment, we felt that it was important, especially in the context of Buffalo-Niagara, to explore this concept. The Cultural and Racial Experiences of Socialization-Beliefs **(**CARES-B) instrument asks Black youth about their experiences with racial socialization. The instrument also asks about the presence and quality of strengths like relationships with extended family, beliefs about spirituality, and metaphorical parenting (i.e., the use of proverbs, stories, or sayings to teach children about life lessons). The Youth-CARES-B

was designed for dissemination to a broad range of young people from adolescents to college students (approximately ages 12-25). This measure seeks youth's beliefs of the racial socialization messages they have received throughout their lifetime and consists of three sub-scales. The first subscale **"Racial Coping"** includes items that provide racial affirmations as well as racism awareness and coping strategies. Racial Coping items focus more specifically on Blackness. Higher scores on this sub-scale suggest a higher propensity of racial awareness and resiliency. The second subscale **"Racial Stereotyping"** includes rigid and cynical intra-racial appraisals of relationships, motives and capabilities. Moving beyond traditional concepts of cultural mistrust, which focus on a suspicion of the motives of White people, racial stereotyping includes messages that convey doubt in the intentions and capabilities of other Black people based on social class, gender and colorism stereotypes. Thus, higher scores on this subscale suggest a belief in the negative stereotypes of Black people. The third and final subscale, **"Surviving the Mainstream"** reveal the degree to which the participants believe in specific strategies for navigating White and/or mainstream spaces. Higher scores on this subscale suggest a strong ability to codeswitch. The scale consists of 24 items measured on a 4-point scale anchored by the choices strongly disagree – strongly agree.

Civic Engagement Attitudes and Behaviors. A goal of the BBYLC is to foster attitudes and behaviors around community service and involvement. Getting involved with others to address social ills within the community is an activity that fosters connectedness with others and develops character. Some research has indicated that many college students are choosing paths that are disconnected from civic life, voting, politics, governments, and social problems. Some researchers contend that changes within our society have limited the way individuals form attachments to the community at large. Concerns that the younger generations may be less inclined to participate and engage in their communities have created an interest in the way young people are socialized and learn to engage in their communities. Some scholars have noted that the overall decline in civic life and an overall lack of participation in community service may contribute to the declining interest in community engagement. To improve and enhance an individual's civic responsibility, one must experience some level of civic learning. Therefore, BBYLC are often afforded opportunities to work on community service projects and policy issues that

negatively impact their community. For the scale, civic attitudes have been defined as the personal beliefs and feelings that individuals have about their own involvement in their community and their perceived ability to make a difference in that community. Civic behaviors have been defined as the actions that people take to actively attempt to engage and make a difference in their community. Their level of agreement was measured on a 7-point Likert type scale (1 = *disagree*, and 7 = *agree*) and their level of participation was also measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never*, and 7 = *always*). Higher scores on both of these scales suggest greater levels of civic engagement.

Use of Structured and Unstructured Time. While we are aware how BBYLC spend their time on Saturday mornings (and more recently since the pandemic, daily at 12pm) we are also interested in how they spend their time, both during organized structured activities outside of the youth leadership council and during unstructured time when they are more likely to be spending their time with their peers. Research consistently shows that youth and young adults involved in organized activities are significantly less likely to drop-out of school and or be arrested for crimes. Furthermore, adolescents participating in voluntary community service demonstrate significantly better long-term adjustment than non-participating youth. To capture BBYLC participants use of structured and unstructured time we utilized a 10-item scale in which 4 of the questions were concerned with the use of unstructured time and the remaining 6 questions focused on engagement in organized activities. Both scales are measured on an 8-point scale anchored by the options a few times per month-never. Higher scores on each scale suggest a greater use of their time in either organized or un-structured activities.

Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the survey administration, a second form of data collection is the engagement of the young men in interviews soliciting their voice. While one of the goals of the MBK/BMoC initiative is to assist the young men in finding their voice, we felt that this data collection procedure would exploit that goal. Young men who volunteered to be interviewed about their experience in the MBK/BMoC were interviewed by young men who were involved with the Buffalo Center for Arts (BCAT) and Theater. The young men from BCAT went through evaluation training and engaged in three systematic observations of the BBYLC over the span of 5 weeks to generate an understanding of the BBYLC and to facilitate the development of the semi-structured interview questions (Tables 3, 4 & 5). The interviews took place at the Say Yes office on Main street. About 6 male participants were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Finally, implementing this process as an on-going vehicle will help to continually improve delivery of service to young men of color involved in the initiative.

Table 3. BCAT Evaluation Schedule

	Monday	Wednesday	Saturday
Week 1	11/5 (**B-CAT)**	11/7	
Week 2		11/14	11/17 (observation #1)
Week 3	11/19 *(Parker 202)	11/21	
Week 4	11/26 *(**Parker #202)**	11/28	12/1 (observation #2)
Week 5	12/3 *(**Parker #202)**	12/5	
Week 6	12/10 *(**Parker #202)**	12/12	12/15 (observation #3)
Week 7	12/17 (**B-CAT)**		

*Trainings and debriefings took place on UB South Campus Parker Hall

Table 4. Schedule of BCAT Evaluation Training

Week	Session Content
Week 1	What is evaluation, why do we engage in evaluation, why are we evaluating the Breaking Barriers program, observation techniques.
Week 2	Review of observation sheet & observation techniques, prep for observation #1
Week 3	Debrief about observation #1, Data organization & Storage of qualitative data in excel
Week 4	Follow up on data organization and storage assignment, data interpretation, prep for observation #2
Week 5	Debrief about observation #2, data compilation, organization and storage, qualitative data interpretation, final reporting format
Week 6	Data interpretation cont., final reporting prep, & prep for observation #3
Week 7	Debrief about observation #3, data compilation, organization and storage, Final report plan!!! Construction of semi-structured interview questions for BBYLC participants.

Table 5. Schedule of BCAT Evaluation Training

	Timeline
February 2018	Initial meeting with Dr. Christopher St Vil PhD., Assistant Professor University of Buffalo, School of Social work.
May 2018	Evaluation Process Design
June 2018	Data Base design
July 2018	Evaluation Instrument & Logic Model presented
August 2018	Logic model confirmed
October 2018	Evaluation Instruments confirmed
December 2018	Final Evaluation Process review
January 2019	Young Men of Color from Buffalo Center for Art and Technology identified, and trained as qualitative evaluators
February 2019	First administering of evaluative instrument
July 2019	Second administering of evaluative instrument
December 2019	Third administering of evaluative instrument (postponed due to weather)
February 2020	Third administering of evaluation rescheduled and administered
March 2020	Data captured and analyzed
May 2020	Executive Summary Due
June 2020	Review
July 2020	Report review edits; report submitted

Procedure

The actual survey administration entailed the young men spreading apart in a large room and self-administering the instrument. Program managers/facilitators managed literacy issues and provided the definition of terms and clarifications when program participants requested assistance. Once completed, surveys were collected from the participants and forwarded to the evaluator for data entry. The data are entered and stored in a statistical package database for later analysis.

Quantitative Results

Table 6. displays the pre-post estimates on all measures taken by the BBYLC participants. The sample was disaggregated by graduates and non-graduates. The main purpose is to examine mean differences on all measures between those who went through and successfully completed the Breaking Barriers program and graduated versus those who are currently participating but have not yet reached the graduation milestone. These estimates are based on an overall sample of 67 young men of color who provided at least two data points.

Table 6. Pre-post estimates of graduates and aspiring graduates on all measures

|	BB Graduates		BB Aspiring Graduates	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Life Satisfaction	22.85	23.05	25.42	22.25
Street Code	17.32	17.55	16.86	22.00
Day to day Discrimination	27.66	24.72	23.51	44.00
Self-Esteem	27.81	30.78	29.55	28.00
Masculinity				
Constant Effort	17.40	17.58	16.78	19.50
Emotional Restriction	13.03	12.66	13.66	17.50
Heterosexism	17.85	16.50	18.97	18.33
Social Teasing	12.07	11.61	12.47	15.25
Racial Socialization				
Racial Coping	37.70	37.72	36.03	36.00
Racial Stereotypes	13.21	14.66	13.29	17.75
Surviving the mainstream	15.25	14.73	14.00	15.50
Civically Engaged Attitudes	19.86	27.55	19.34	14.33
Civically Engaged Behaviors	15.82	20.77	19.36	25.66
Unstructured Activities	17.30	19.00	19.00	18.33
Organized Activities	24.72	26.63	27.78	34.00

Life Satisfaction

Table 7. displays the interpretation of scores for the SWLS and figure 1. presents an illustration of the SWLS results. The level of life satisfaction among the Breaking Barrier graduates increased slightly from Time 1 to Time 2 from 22.85 to 23.05. Both Time 1 and time 2 scores for the graduates fall within the slightly satisfied range. In contrast, the aspiring graduates demonstrated a slight decrease in life satisfaction from a high of 25.42 at time 1 to 22.25 at time 2.

Table 7. SWLS Score Range

Range	Item
31-35	Extremely satisfied
26-30	Satisfied
21-25	Slightly satisfied
20	Neutral
15-19	Slightly dissatisfied
10-14	Dissatisfied
5-9	Extremely dissatisfied

Figure 1. Comparison of SWLS, BBYLC Time 1 vs Time 2
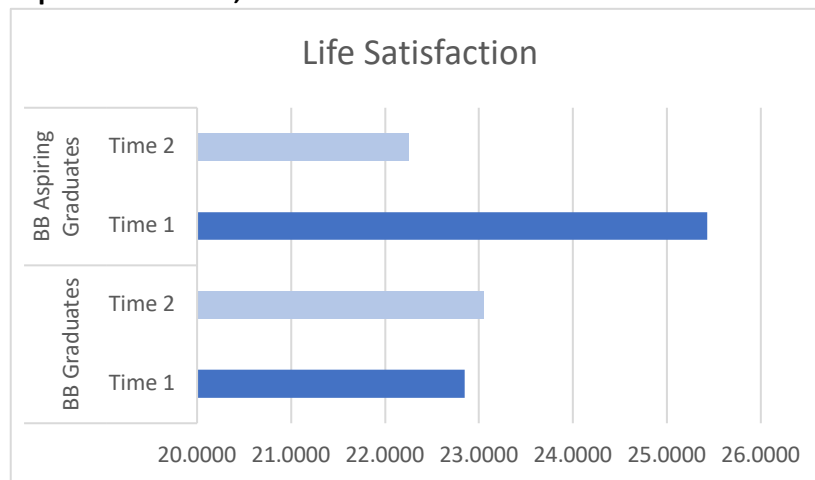
Adopting the Street Code Scale/Disposition toward Violence

Table. 8 displays the interpretation of scores for the ASCS and figure 2 illustrates the results in graph form. Higher scores suggest a greater propensity to solve conflict with violence as a first resort. The BBYLC graduates demonstrated a slight increase in their mean level of adopting the street code from 17.32 to 17.55. This places the graduates at the lower end of the medium range. In contrast, aspiring graduates increased their disposition from 16.86 to 22.00, just meeting the threshold for the high range.

Table 8. ASCS Score Range

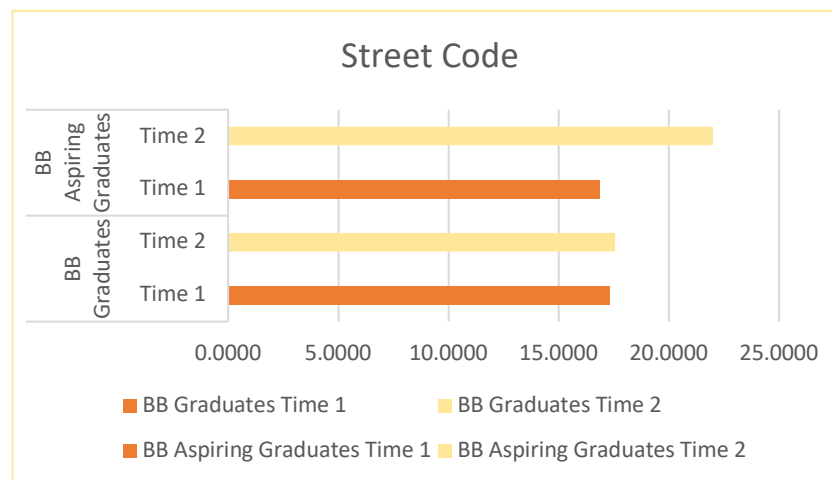|	
7-14	Low
15-21	Medium
22-28	High

Figure 2. Comparison of ASCS, Time 1 vs Time 2

Day-to-Day Discrimination

Table. 9 displays the interpretation scores for the day-to-day discrimination scale. BBYLC graduates decreased from a score of 27.66 at time 1 to 24.72 at time 2. This places them within the range of perceiving a low rate of discrimination. In contrast, aspiring graduates appear to have significantly increased the mean level in which they perceive discrimination is taking place. Their time 1 measure increased from 23.51 to 44 at time 2. This places the aspiring graduates at perceiving a high level of discrimination.

Table 9. Day-to-Day Discrimination Score Range

Range	Level of Perceived Discrimination
9-24	Low rate of discrimination
25-40	Moderate rate of discrimination
41-54	High rate of discrimination

Self-Esteem

Table 10. displays the interpretation of scores for the self-esteem scale. The graduates increased their esteem overtime from a score of 27.81 at time 1 to 30.78 at time 2. In contrast, the self-esteem of aspiring graduates decreased slightly from 29.55 at time 1 to 28 at time 2.

Table 10. Self-Esteem Score Range

Range	Level of Self-esteem
10-20	Low self-esteem
20-30	Medium self-esteem
30-40	High self-esteem

Masculinity

Table 11. displays the interpretation of scores for the masculinity subscales. Among the graduates, there was a drop from time 1 to time 2 on all subscales except for constant effort. In contrast, the aspiring graduates reported increases in all the masculinity subscales except heterosexism. Among graduates, constant effort increased slightly from 17.40 to 17.58 whereas aspiring graduates reported a larger increase from 16.78 to 19.50 resulting with both means scores being positioned in the medium range. Graduates reported a time 2 mean of 12.66 for emotional restriction placing them in the low range in comparison to the aspiring graduates mean of 17.50 landing in the medium range. The graduates heterosexism mean of 16.50 at time 2 fell in the lower end of the medium range whereas the aspiring graduates time 2 score of 18.33 similarly fell in the medium range. Lastly, with regard to the social teasing subscale at time 2 both graduates and aspiring graduates reported means within the medium range with 11.61 and 15.25 respectively.

Table 11. Scale Ranges for Masculinity Sub-scales

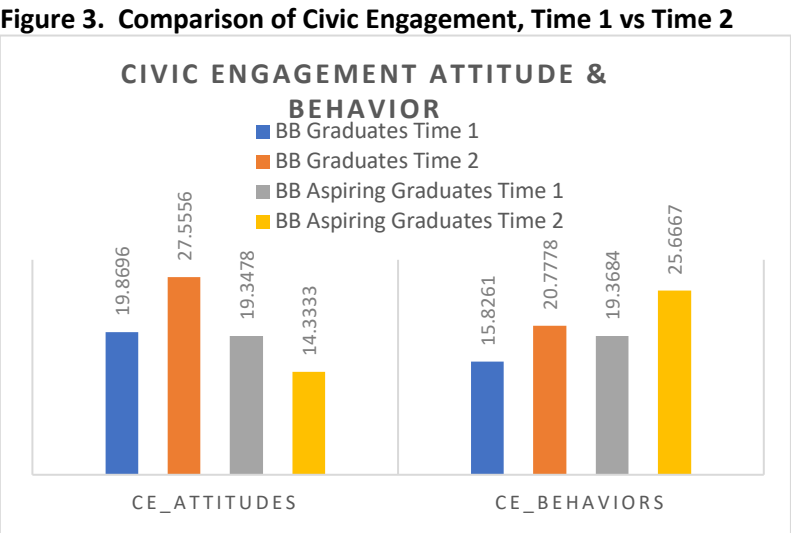| Constant Effort	Emotional Restriction	Heterosexism	Social Teasing
7-14=Low	7-14=Low	8-16=Low	5-10=Low
15-21=Medium	15-21=Medium	17-24=Medium	11-15=Mid
22-28=High	22-28=High	25-32=High	16-20=High

Racial Socialization Messages

Table 12. displays the interpretation of scores for the youth CARES-B scale. With regard to **racial coping**, the graduates reported a mean of 37.72 and the aspiring graduates reported a mean of 36 at time 2. Both groups scored in the high range of racial coping. The next measure is **racial stereotyping**. A high score here represents a disbelief in the capabilities of Black people. As a result, low scores indicate racial pride. Graduates increased their score by one point from time 1 to time 2, but their time 2 score of 14.66 is lower than the time 2 score of the aspiring graduates with 17.75 thus, the graduates landed in the low range and the aspiring graduates landed in the medium range. The final measure in this group of scales is **surviving the mainstream**. A high score here suggests a high awareness in the idea of codeswitching and understanding racial climate in order to get ahead in life. Here, the aspiring graduates reported a higher mean than the graduates but both of their means were within the medium range at 14.73 and 15.50 respectively.

Table 12. Scale Ranges for the Racial Experience Scale

Racial Coping	Racial Stereotyping	Surviving the Mainstream
11-22=Low	7-14=Low	6-12=Low
23-34=Medium	15-21=Medium	13-18=Medium
35-44=High	22-28=High	19-24=High

Civic Engagement Attitude and Civic Engagement Behavior

Figure 3. illustrates the results of the civic engagement scale. With regard to civic attitude, the graduates demonstrated a significant increase from a score of 19.86 at time 1 to 27.55 at time 2. In contrast, the aspiring graduates civic attitude declined from a score of 19.34 at time 1 to 14.33 at time 2. For civic behavior, the graduates again increased their average from 15.82 at time 1 to 20.77 at time 2. Similarly, the aspiring graduates also raised their mean level from a score of 19.36 at time 1 to 25.66 at time 2.

Figure 3. Comparison of Civic Engagement, Time 1 vs Time 2

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR

- ■ BB Graduates Time 1
- ■ BB Graduates Time 2
- ■ BB Aspiring Graduates Time 1
- ■ BB Aspiring Graduates Time 2

CE_ATTITUDES: 19.8696, 27.5556, 19.3478, 14.3333
CE_BEHAVIORS: 15.8261, 20.7778, 19.3684, 25.6667

Structured and Unstructured Time

The use of time for **unstructured activities** by the graduates actually increased from time 1 17.30 to time 2 19.00. In contrast, the aspiring graduates reduced their use of unstructured time from time 1 19.00 to time 2 18.33. For the second scale, organized activities, both graduates and aspiring graduates reported gains in **organized activities.** However, the aspiring graduate group reported a much more significant gain with a jump from 27.78 at time 1 to 34.00 at time 2. In contrast, the graduates reported a score of 24.72 at time 1 followed by a mean average of 26.63 at time two.

Qualitative Results

In addition to the survey discussed above, interviews were conducted with 6 BBYLC participants. The 6 participants were interviewed by two youth from the Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology. The two youth were young men of color from the community who were trained to be Culturally Responsive Evaluators prior to conducting all interviews. All responses where transcribed as received in an attempt to truly gather youth voice. A number of insights were drawn from the interviews and we display those insights as themes in table 13.

Table 13. Insights from BBYLC Interviews

Themes
Making a difference in the community & self-improvement
Improvement of view of self/Self-esteem/Racial Socialization
Male bonding/Relationship Building
Changes within self
Lessons Learned
Finding a replacement
BBYLC as a vehicle for change

When asked why they joined BBYLC the young men expressed a number of responses that revolved around making a difference in the community and self-improvement.

> *Over a period of time we started really becoming friends and more like family to me. I really started to learn a lot too and learn about myself, that I really do wanna make a difference in this community. (001)*

> *Me, when I was growing up, I always wanted a big change. I said, I might as well join this, because it might be a foundation for me to start changing Buffalo. (010)*

> *The premise of this Breaking Barriers is to bring together a bunch of African-American males or other races, to try to come up with a game plan for life after high school,… (009)*

> *I joined Breaking Barriers because Brother Malik, suggested it to me. He said that's it's a group of like-minded individuals that are dissatisfied with the hatred and disrespect that people of color face on a daily basis, and I was ready to contribute my perspective to the group. (007)*

> *That's why I come here, because I had the opportunity. This opportunity is about leadership. It's about courage. It's about knowing what you represent, and it's all about knowing what you want. (005)*

The second theme that was generated was improvement of self/racial socialization. The question that generated this theme was how they felt being a part of MBK/BMoC had an effect on how they viewed themselves as BMoC within the city of Buffalo.

> *I see myself more mature, better than how I was before. I see myself as a better black man now that I was. I'm just really happy that I'm able to make a difference in this community and with this group. (001)*

Being black is something that's beautiful. Something that's powerful, something that's amazing. That's what I've been trying to tell—well, not try to—that I would tell my little brother, and also my goddaughter that being black is beautiful. Being human is beautiful. (010)

Why are we always being' criminalized or always labeled as the ones that are always angry or aggressive or always trying' to not learn?" They're labeling' us like we can't be educated and there's no hope for us. That's why I wanna try to get out of the system, to stop labeling' us African American males and Puerto Ricans that we are criminals…., I have a great opportunity in influencing communities. I'm planning' on making' multiple community centers. (010)

> *I see myself more mature, better than how I was before. I see myself as a better black man now that I was. I'm just really happy that I'm able to make a difference in this community and with this group.*

Well, growing up as a brown kid, I felt like I never really fit in anywhere. I felt like it wasn't my place to be anywhere specific, but being in a group like this, where everybody's excepting, and everybody's willing to listen to you, and everybody's willing to make friendships and trust, I felt that I could truly be myself. In finding myself, I found my own voice. I found out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, and I want to do exactly the same thing for the rest of my life, which is allow people to become unapologetically themselves. (007)

The third theme reflected rapport building and relationship development. The men suggested in these next comments that MBK/BMoC helped facilitate some of the within group bonds they developed with their peers.

A few of the people I met, some of them are from my school, my school when I was in tenth grade at McKinley. Others I just met. We actually went to Knoxville, Tennessee for that meeting down there and we had all lived in a house together down there and I really got to know them a lot, lot better. All of them. They really started to become like family to me. I feel like I really shared a deep bond with them too. I think the fact that I met them, I think it will better help me in the future and with the Breaking Barriers. (001)

I know it might be hard to pronounce their names, but I know them by their face and their action. I know them by the way they speak. I look at them as all my brothers from—I know Duane; … Yeah. Jordan, he's becoming a great leader, great young man as well. He's somebody that I look up to, even though we're the same age,….he kind of helped me push forward, because I looked up to him. Meeting Duane, I'm, like, yo, this guy is, like, legit, like. …I can be with these people with that same mindset as I do, the same mission, same goals and the same craving of knowledge, and being competitors in life in order to get things done. (010)

> *I've made so many friends. I've made so many acquaintances that I know that, 20, 30 years from now, it's gonna be like a network. I'm gonna see the same guys. I'm gonna recognize them. I'm gonna know, okay, that's my brother.*

Well, yes I have. I've bonded with a couple of young men in here, and I really enjoy talkin' with them, getting their perception of their experience, and just hangin' out. We're talkin' about geographical factors or stuff in the society that's going on. ….I just went to Knoxville in August. It was a good opportunity. I really loved it, really. I met a couple of older adults there, and it was really geared to experience other perceptions from adults that's already been there and that's doin' things for themselves. I also met the mayor (of Minneapolis) down there. She was a nice lady. Former mayors, and a couple of—a lotta good people I met. (009)

I've made so many friends. I've made so many acquaintances that I know that, 20, 30 years from now, it's gonna be like a network. I'm gonna see the same guys. I'm gonna recognize them. I'm gonna know, okay, that's my brother. I don't care if we're 60, 70 years old. I know that I know where our values are, I know what we strive to be, and I know that we're young men of color destined to become leaders, and I'm looking forward to seeing where my brothers end up. (007)

What is possible is you have the destiny of getting yourself stronger. Life is not easy. Even if you tried to, it's not going to be because the way life is set up, you know? It's all about building something and make it last, aka legacy. That's what I like about the group, because they're about legacy and not a one-time thing. (005)

The young men were also asked about the changes they saw in themselves as a result of their participation in MBK/BMoC. The responses to this question generated the fourth theme "changes within self."

I found my voice. I know that I wanna advocate for immigrants and people of color and other marginalized communities. I know that I wanna fight back against laws that use legal loopholes to discriminate against immigrants, minorities, and other marginalized groups. Breaking Barriers has let me realize exactly what I wanna do, and it's given me the platform to be around people with the same ideas. (007)

Some of the changes that I've noticed is that I'm more confident with speaking, 'cause, believe me that in the beginning I was really shy. I couldn't volunteer or speak up 'cause I

> *I found my voice. I know that I wanna advocate for immigrants and people of color and other marginalized communities.*

was like—I was around a lotta kids. I'm, like, "These are kids. Why am I bein' shy? I'm older than them. I'm supposed to be the one speakin' up," but I was still transitioning from high school into college. I'm gettin' there now. I'm feelin' confident now, and this has helped me with speakin' up and talkin' to other people, like business, people, teachers, lawyers— 'cause I work as a substitute teacher, and I'm talkin' to teachers like we're connected. I'm feelin' like we know each others' experiences, and it's good because it's makin' me feel comfortable

talkin', 'cause at first, when I started doin' that, I was, like, "I can't. I can't speak. I'm afraid to talk to these teachers," but goin' to these events, it built my character. (009)

I really started to learn a lot too and learn about myself, that I really do wanna make a difference in this community. I'm happy that my mom did make me go to this group. It was actually I think the best choice that my mom made for me in my life, so yeah. The fact that since I've been here they've actually got me goin' out, well myself too, but I'm out talkin' to people about my group and trying to get other people to join. I really just, I was so surprised at myself cuz I really didn't think I could do something like this. For a long period of time I had a lot of doubt in myself for a while so the fact that I joined this group — all of them are so inspirational. I really felt like I could really make a change and I'm gonna, at the school I go to….I tell a lot of people about my group. I'm actually in another leadership group there so I'm here and there. I actually went on a food drive too to help homeless families and that really felt good. I feel like both of those youth leadership groups have really helped me. (001)

The fifth theme, "Lessons Learned" reflected specific things the young men felt they took away from program. The young men from BCAT challenged the interviewees a bit more and pushed them to identify three concrete things they learned from being a part of BB.

They taught me how to stand up for myself, to be a better leader than our previous ones. Just believe in yourself. They taught me all three of those and I've been doin' those a lot lately. (001)

One of the things were about us playing with what Egypt meant. I can't, like, really say the meaning of it, because I forgot it. But I understand what he meant by it, because when Europeans started taking over Europe, they looked at us—they feared us as gods, kings, and worship over in Egypt, because Egypt was such an advanced place in Africa. One of the most advanced black civilizations. With that, that's how I know that our culture is deep, our heritage is deep. Our love and faith, in order to spread that love, our culture is deep. Another thing that I learned is, what true brotherhood means. What true brotherhood means. It's not just being a face front. It's actually being a leader for the people, being a leader for your brothers, being a leader for yourself. A third thing that I learned is that everybody goes through struggles. (010)

Knowing where you came from, knowing you are a leader, and knowing that you are more than what people say that you are. That's very important, because I feel like—in my opinion—without those three things, there wouldn't be no Breaking Barriers. (005)

> *They taught me how to stand up for myself, to be a better leader…*

As part of the program design each young man prior to graduation is required to recruit another young man from the community that they believe would benefit from Breaking Barriers. We asked, "what does finding your replacement mean to you? As a result, the theme was titled "finding your replacement."

It's for us to find a replacement in order, again, to break the cycle. In order to keep our legacy going. ….Again, what I told my little brother, I wanted him to break the cycle, instead of us as being—instead of, like, everybody just being on the streets killing one another, I wanted him to be one of those leaders that people could look up to. I try my

best in life to inspire him, inspire others as much as I can. …. See, my goal, ever since I was little, I've always had dreams of helping others. (010)

Well, finding a replacement is important to me because I'm the only brown Muslim that's in Breaking Barriers, and Breaking Barriers is a great opportunity for people like

> *We can find solidarity with other like-minded people of color. It's a struggle being a person of color, and when you unite as one group, it benefits everybody.*

me, brown Muslims, to see that there are groups that will be accepted in the community. We can find solidarity with other like-minded people of color. It's a struggle being a person of color, and when you unite as one group, it benefits everybody. I think the more diverse that Breaking Barriers becomes, the more different types of skins are in Breaking Barriers, I think the stronger the organization's gonna become. The more different perspectives that there's gonna be there. (007)

Because the BBYLC is dedicated to the development of men of color, a question was posed to Breaking Barriers members about how they felt their participation may have had an effect of how they thought of themselves as boys of color in the city of Buffalo. Answers to this question generated the final theme "using BBYLC as a vehicle for change."

> *"Well, being here, it changed my perception, that I know I'm not alone and that I could be a real impact to both of my communities. Trying to really inspire them, and tryin' to bring activities to their areas or programs that can provide assistance or educational programs for them to start. Get them into these good jobs and professional jobs so they can try to work on and get in, so they can have a stable lifestyle. 'Cause it's hard to see that, on both sides, they're killin' each other for stupid stuff that's not relevant.*

> *What I wanna do is try to; at some point in my career or my life; I would like to be part of an organization that gives assistance to low-income families or low-income races that are struggling with financial issues and educational issues, too. For instance, what came on the news or what I seen with African-American males being' suspended. I didn't like that. I'm, like, "Are you serious? Why are we always being' criminalized or always labeled as the ones that are always angry or aggressive or always tryin' to not learn?" They're labelin' us like we can't be educated and there's no hope for us. That's why I wanna try to get outta the system, to stop labelin' us African American males and Puerto Ricans that we are criminals.*

> *We're more than—I mean, there's some that do that, but there's some that wanna apply their knowledge to other things, like being' a lawyer, being' a teacher, being' a principal of a school, being' a business owner, stuff that matures. I think, once I get there, I have a great opportunity in influencing communities. I'm planning on making multiple community centers. I'm planning on doing' some type of find—first, right now, I'm workin' on my network. I have a good enough network but expand it so I can know some business owners and other owners from that nature, so I can get the idea and the fundamentals of how to start or where to begin in doin' that." (009)*

"Well, growing up as a brown kid, I felt like I never really fit in anywhere. I felt like it wasn't my place to be anywhere specific, but being in a group like this, where everybody's excepting, and everybody's willing to listen to you, and everybody's willing to make friendships and trust, I felt that I could truly be myself. In finding myself, I found my own voice. I found out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, and I want to do exactly the same thing for the rest of my life, which is allow people to become unapologetically themselves." (007)

"In finding myself, I found my own voice. I found out what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, and I want to do exactly the same thing for the rest of my life, which is allow people to become unapologetically themselves."

Conclusion

"You should never view your challenges as a disadvantage. Instead, it's important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages." -
Michelle Obama

Breaking Barriers is an initiative of the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable's BMoC that is aimed at accelerating positive outcomes for BMoC across the cradle-to-career continuum. In partnership with the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable, the City of Buffalo and Buffalo Public Schools, and Say Yes Buffalo, "Breaking Barriers" expands the capacity of BMoC to improve life outcomes and empower them to become agents of change in our community. Overall, we feel that we are on track to realizing that goal.

Overall, while both groups are doing extremely well, the results of the evaluation suggest that young men who engage with BBYLC and graduate report slightly better outcomes on the majority of the measures included in the evaluation than those who are aspiring to graduate.

For example, BBYLC graduates were more likely to report slightly higher levels of life satisfaction (23.05 versus 22.25 at Time 2) and self-esteem (30.78 versus 28.00) than their counterparts. With regard to life satisfaction specifically, we felt that the graduates demonstrated a level of consistency and stability that did not reflect extreme highs or lows. Being closer to neutral was more desirable for us and both groups at Time 2 reported scores within the slightly satisfied range. Now the decrease from a high of 25.42 to 22.25 for the aspiring graduates shouldn't not raise alarm because 22.25 is still within the slightly satisfied range. Nonetheless, we feel that not being too high or too low on this measure of life satisfaction is the more desirable outcome that we seek, and we feel the aspiring graduates are on track to maintaining that stability similar to the graduates. Furthermore, although graduates reported slightly higher levels of self -esteem, there is only a two-point difference indicating that aspiring graduates reported high levels of self-esteem as well.

Additionally, BBYLC graduates reported lower levels of dispositions toward violence and lower rates of perceived discriminatory experiences than their counterparts. Referring to the disposition toward violence, a low score (7-14) on this scale reflects a pacifist disposition and an unwillingness to engage in violence. A score in the medium range we interpret as a healthy disposition where participants may resort to violence in situations where they have to, especially self-defense. The data suggest that the graduates, demonstrated by the slight increase are indicating stability within that range. The aspiring graduates just meet the threshold for the high range and are more likely to view violence as an option to solve a conflict or a situation. However, we expect this mean to decrease as they increase their tenure with the BBYLC. With regard to day-to-day discrimination, what the difference in the scores suggest is that the graduates have developed a level of resiliency where they no longer allow events or daily microaggressions to impact them significantly. Whereas, aspiring graduates may be significantly moved by perceived acts of discrimination possibly leading them to experience anger or depression at higher mean rates. With the BBYLC programmatic curriculum concentrating on the systemic nature of racial injustice, this has allowed graduates to view everyday discrimination from a macro rather than a micro scale. By no means does this scale indicate discrimination is not being experienced by the graduate group, but that they are learning better ways to address it. We expect the mean score of aspiring graduates to decrease overtime as their tenure in the BBYLC increases.

Aspiring graduates reported higher means on all masculinity subscales at time 2 compared to graduates. Means for both groups on the subscales were positioned in the medium range except for emotional restriction. Graduates reported a time 2 mean of 12.66 for emotional restriction placing them in the low range in comparison to the aspiring graduates mean of 17.50 landing in the medium range. The difference in this subscale suggests that the graduates are more willing to express their emotions and are less likely to display shows of stoicism compared to aspiring graduates. With regard to racial socialization, both groups reported a high level of racial coping and code switching. However, they differed slightly on the racial stereotyping subscale with aspiring graduates demonstrating a slightly higher disposition to subscribe to racial stereotypes about Blacks. We expect this mean to decrease as tenure in the program increases. BB graduates reported higher mean civic attitudes, but aspiring graduates reported higher mean levels of civically engaged behavior. BB graduates report a higher mean with regard to unstructured activities and aspiring graduates reported a higher mean for structured activities.

Statistical analysis revealed that three of the variables discussed above were significant between the graduates and the aspiring graduates. Those variables were civically engaged attitudes, racial stereotypes, and self-esteem with BBYLC graduates scoring significantly higher means then the aspiring graduates on self-esteem and civically engaged attitudes and significantly lower on racial stereotyping. These findings suggest that participation in BBYLC leads to increases in civic attitudes and self-esteem and a reduction in the support of stereotypes that present Black and Brown citizens in a negative light.

The semi-structured interviews largely supported the quantitative results and revealed, through the young men's own voices that participation in BBYLC affords them opportunities to make a difference in their community and contributes to their development as engaged citizens and ambassadors of their community. This self-improvement is packaged through intangible improvements in how they view themselves, how they view others in their community, and tangible changes in skills and knowledge acquired through experiences and exposure. They develop rapport and lasting bonds with each other and seek to indoctrinate other men with a sense of civic responsibility thereby reproducing vessels for community action and change. Taken together, both the quantitative and qualitative data serve as preliminary evidence of the positive impact participation in BBYLC imparts on its members.

While we fully acknowledge that these findings are preliminary and represent our first attempt at evaluating the impact of BBYLC these findings are reassuring and provide some confirmation that we are on the right track and that BBYLC is value added to the city of Buffalo and the Buffalo-Niagara Community as a whole. Future evaluative efforts seek to conduct a between group comparison of BBYLC participants and young men outside of the BBYLC. This way comparisons can be made with a group of males who have not been exposed to the same treatment. Nonetheless, the data has confirmed our anecdotal suspicions that participation in BBYLC impart benefits to BMoC.

The findings of this report were presented to the BBYLC prior to dissemination, they confirmed that this report was reflective of their experience. Allowing the BBYLC to provide their feedback on the interpretation of these findings is reflective of the culturally responsive approach to this evaluation.

Special Thanks to DaVon McCune, Cody Clem, Mohamud Mohamed and Eric Muharareni of Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology (BCAT); along with Daphne Ross and Jamil Crews of the Say Yes Buffalo Communications team. Many thanks as well to the community members, both men and women who have taken time out of their Saturdays (and more recently lunch hours) to either present and/or interact with the BBYLC. Your time was/is greatly appreciated, and we can't wait to have you back. Also, many, many thanks to the parents and socializers (both male and female) who continue to serve as the models

that motivate our young men.   Finally, Special thanks to Dr. Christopher St. Vil, Associate Professor, University at Buffalo School of Social Work, and all the Young men of color who make up the Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council. Without you and your participation this work is not possible. Thank you for becoming the change you want to see in the world!