

Welcome Black Male Achievement Leaders in Residence Program

Our university is excited to collaborate with the Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Louisville's Metro United Way on the launch of the Black Male Achievement Leaders in Residence Program (LiR), an ambitious initiative that will provide professional development opportunities to individuals committed to working with our young African American males.

A few thoughts to share just in case someone should ask why there is need for such an initiative. It has often been said that America is failing its young black boys. The aforementioned statement rings true for youth residing in rural, metropolitan, and mid-sized communities. In fact, research findings over the past several years suggest that there is a statistically higher probability that our young black boys will find them-selves at a greater risk of walking the corridors of prison than the halls of a college or university. Perhaps the honorable Marian Wright-Edelman in an addressing a conference hosted by Educational Testing Service (ETS) framed the concern best when she noted that *"our children are suffering from a toxic cocktail of poverty, illiteracy, racial discrimination and massive incarceration that sentences poor boys to dead-ends and hopeless lives"*.

So when one considers that our young African American males fall victim daily to a multitude of problems clearly one can understand and appreciate the *'clarion'* call to action. Moreover, while the national statistics are bleak, we have an opportunity to *"right size"* the ship. Addressing the plight of African American youth, particularly young black males must become a major priority for all including, non-profits, governmental agencies, civic organizations, clergy& faith leaders, politicians, businesses executives and yes our educational institutions.

Our university looks forward to partnering with the Campaign for Black Achievement on the overarching goal of equipping our present day and future leaders who work with black boys with the necessary skills and tools that positions this very vulnerable population for educational and life success.

A quote from historian and social activist Frederick Douglass puts the work of the Black Male Achievement in Leaders in Residence Program (LiR) in the proper perspective; *"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men"*.

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