



Emerald Smith
Branch Ministries Secretary
2022 to Present
Branch Secretary

Hiya, my name is Emerald M. Smith I was born and raised in the south Bronx a.k.a. "THE BX" as we call it . In the year 2010 my mother, sister, and i moved to long island N.Y. Although, I stayed in N.Y.C. until 2013 Long Island was and still is my home.

Back in 2020 in the beginning of the pandemic I was introduced to the Branch Ministries. Shortly after joining in 2022 I agreed to take the position as secretary of the Branch Ministries. When I joined I was going through a lot of grief and depression. My trajectory led me to lose hope with humanity. The Branch Ministries members were so kind to me I felt compelled to know more about this place that just seemed to have appeared in my time of need. I Started attending their class curriculum on Dealing with Stress, Anxiety, Healing a Wounded Heart as well as; Hurts and Anger class and so many other classes. I couldn't believe that not only were these programs free that they were open to the public and even to a new person like me. It felt good to be around people who are going through similar issues or have the same feelings as me. I have seen myself open up in ways I could not imagine. I experienced a true sense of family, friendship and community with my classmates. I noticed that my classmates were as blessed as I was. The classes are a place of hope and expectation. When all failed it felt like God would appear and bring a fresh spring of water in our souls.

The Branch Ministries as I have seen, is a safe haven for people who have lost everything but still want help. The activities provided In The Branch has brought people together with laughter, food, games, dance, gardening, Art, classes, music and retreats. It is the kind of place that welcomes everyone. Really, it is a place for the whole family to enjoy. I have seen; what people called the "toughest" to deal with leaving with a smile and a healed heart. Funny, in all honesty that includes me. From staff to guests the Branch encourages people to be your best self not only for you but in Christ and for others.

The Branch classes have helped me to see life through a full glass and not empty. They gave me something I was missing which was a family. My mother ,sister and father have all passed on. It felt like I was moving on autopilot with no feelings attached. The lights were on but no one was home figuratively and literally. The Branch Ministries helped me wake up, restored my voice that I thought was lost. I was not only dealing with a tremendous amount of grief from other family and friends, I was also getting over a hard life overall. I'm still going step by step, day by day, but I'm grateful to be able to do this journey with them.

Sincerely,

Emerald Smith