

# MBK NEWSLETTER

September 2024

Issue #1.1

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## Quote of the Month

"Success at anything will always come down to this: focus and effort. And we control both." – Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson



*MBK Alumni student, Imhotep Qadaar, following his speech at Yonkers Public Schools first ever Convocation at Westchester County Center, September 4, 2024.*

## WELCOME MESSAGE

What an amazing month it has been for MBK! Welcome to the first MBK newsletter for the 2024-2025 school year. Our goal in sharing this newsletter with you is to highlight and broadcast all the excellent practices happening in Yonkers Schools and disseminate essential MBK information directly to you.

The MBK Team is excited about the upcoming school year. We had an amazing turnout for our Convocation earlier this month, and the energy and excitement were palpable. Since that day, we all embraced something truly special – a little something we like to call "Yonkers Magic." MBK's own Lenex Sikafoo led us in the Pledge of Allegiance; MBK Alumni student Imhotep Qadaar (see above) gave an inspiring and powerful speech to the audience while Superintendent Soler closed out the show with his inspiring words and inspirational video.

I end this message with this: our MBK program at Yonkers, New York, will go as far as WE will take it. As I shared during our monthly chapter meeting, it will take every one of us to move the work forward. I know we will! – Dr. Baez

# MBK THEMES FOR OCTOBER

*Throughout every month, in this section, we will share with you all suggested MBK themes to emphasize during your MBK chapter meetings and assemblies for both elementary/middle school and high school.*

## ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL

### **I Am Royalty!**

The idea behind I Am Royalty! is to make kids feel like important members of the school community. It is the little things that make all the difference to students. Remember, children's emotions can get the better of them and start affecting their learning. Developing our students' personalities requires a strong and secure environment in which to flourish in academia. Check out this article titled, [6 Small but Mighty Ways to Make Your Students Feel Important.](#)



## HIGH SCHOOL

### **Self-Awareness**

We want our high school students to develop awareness, a key social-emotional skill that can help teenagers understand themselves and their place in the world. Self-awareness is a key part of social-emotional learning (SEL), which is the process of developing healthy identities and managing emotions. Check out this article titled ["Are We Facing a Mental Health Crisis for Boys?"](#)



“ I pledge to embrace today as a new day, a new beginning.

”  
**MBK PLEDGE**

# MBK STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## JOEL GONZALEZ

11th grader

Charles E. Gorton High School

### Question 1: What does MBK mean to me?

What My brother's keeper means me is having the opportunity to gather around other young men and have important discussions regarding the future. Through our conversations, we not only created friendships, but also heard each other and brought ideas that can benefit the school and community as a whole. The program is all about how we are brothers and encourage ourselves with positivity. This program has really taught me a lot and I'm grateful because of that.

### Question 2: As an active member of MBK, what do you want to experience within your MBK Chapter this school year?

For this new school year, I would like to travel around different schools around Yonkers primarily elementary and middle schools to introduce them to the program, what it offers, and how it can be beneficial for their future. More public speakers who can share about their career. Maybe someone from a bank so they can introduce us to credit and how to start building it

### Question 3: How does MBK at your school prepare you for the real world?

Ever since I've started with the MBK program, I've been able to improve my communication skills. Most of the time we have public speakers and then at the end we have a round talk where they're open to any questions that we may have. Not only am able to improve my communication skills but also do more public speaking at my school, I was chosen to be one of the MBK leaders and to be able to hold that position you need to be professional, responsible, dedicated and most importantly, you must know how to communicate and build relationships with people. All these things that we learn within the program, they're very good for us and like I said before, they're very beneficial, especially for the real world when we are looking for jobs, or if you want to manage your business.

*“ I will be consistent in what I stand for, diligent in educating myself and persistent in becoming that which I was destined to become.*

**MBK PLEDGE** ”

# MBK EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT



## MR. ROGER CRAWFORD

Lincoln High School & Barack Obama  
School for Social Justice

### Question 1:

*Why did you become a School Social Worker in the Yonkers Public Schools?*

I returned home to Yonkers Public Schools as a Social Worker in mid-2019 in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, after being offered an opportunity to return the school district that I started my Social Work Career back in the early-mid 2000's. I was originally employed as a Social Worker at PEALRS Hawthorne School where I completed my School Administrator Supervision internship .Yonkers Schools Social Workers and Student Support Staff embody a true self-less dedication to our Yonkers students and families. Upon my return I immediately experienced that sense of love, respect, and collaboration.

### Question 2:

*What does My Brother's Keeper mean to you?*

MBK embodies adult mentorship and modelling of daily life's challenges in the lives of our young male students in the City of Yonkers. MBK allows opportunities for elementary, middle, and high school boys of color to experience genuine human connections with mentors within their respective schools. Those connections are the foundations for self-reflection, self-correction, self-motivation, renewed purpose, and often times live saving choices for our boys or young men. Since my involvement in MBK on the secondary school level at Lincoln High School and during our past three Summer School sessions, I have attempted to make an impact in the form of modelling appropriate behaviors, challenging self-destructive thought patterns, shattering negative stereotypes, fostering accountability, and developing adolescent life skills. Those life skills have been in the form of pre-employment skills, employment application opportunities, financial literacy workshops, substance use prevention, and engaging with local law enforcement to reduce negative stereotypes or adverse experiences. Most importantly, MBK has allowed me to impact the lives of young men of color in generating hope, self-determination, and live path trajectory changes one student at a time.

“ I will lock arms with my brother in unity.

”  
**MBK PLEDGE**



# MBK EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

## CONTINUE.



### MR. ROGER CRAWFORD

Lincoln High School & Barack Obama  
School for Social Justice

#### Question 3:

**What advice would you have for new Yonkers staff working in local MBK school chapters?**

Advice that I would respectfully give to any new Yonkers Public Schools staff embarking on an MBK Mentoring journey would be to first ask or self-reflect on the question of how can I genuinely and positively affect the lives of young boys or young men? Additionally, I would then recommend learning the history of the MBK Alliance and off course the history of MBK Yonkers since the inception in 2016. Finally, I would recommend that you examine the six fundamental MBK Milestones as laid out in the MBK Yonkers Action Plan. Then begin to critically examine how you and the MBK School Committee can create a school-specific action plan throughout the year with monthly steps/measures to achieve at least one of those six milestones that apply to your specific school or age group of boys for the school year.

- Milestone One: Entering School Ready to Learn
- Milestone Two: Reading at Grade Level by 3rd Grade
- Milestone Three: Graduating from High School
- Milestone Four: Completing Post-Secondary Education or Training
- Milestone Five: Successfully Employed
- Milestone Six: All Youth Remain Safe from Violent Crime

“ I will encourage my brother to achieve his dreams and to never compromise his values. ”

**MBK PLEDGE**

# JOYNER'S CORNER



**MR. GREG JOYNER**

MBK Program Coordinator



*Raheem Azeez (Obama SSJ), Samuel Rodriguez (Lincoln HS), Lenny Toribio (Roosevelt HS-ECS) and Corbin Wright (Gorton HS).*

Greetings from the newly created Joyner's Corner,

I wish all School Leaders a happy and successful school year 2024-25. This year is dedicated in memory of the "Mother of the Movement," Ms. Elaine Shine, to recognize all of the work she did in supporting and providing opportunities for Yonkers MBK and MSK families.

The movement continues, and the baton has been passed to our new Superintendent, Mr. Anibal Soler Jr. Under his tutelage and leadership, MBK will continue to expand and grow, offering opportunities to boys and young men of color in our schools and community.

Shout out to this year's NYS MBK Fellows: Raheem Azeez (Obama SSJ), Samuel Rodriguez (Lincoln HS), Lenny Toribio (Roosevelt HS-ECS), and Corbin Wright (Gorton HS). Best of Luck in your Internship!

Look out next month for the feature on Tyler A. from Paideia School 24.

## #MBKALLDAY

“ I will protect the bond of our brotherhood by showing my brother respect, love and support in the strongest of times and the darkest of days. ”

**MBK PLEDGE**

# IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## MONTHLY CHAPTER LEADER MEETINGS

Thank you to all the MBK Chapter Leaders who attended our first MBK Chapter Leader meeting on September 27, 2024. Our next MBK Chapter Leader meeting will take place in-person at **Robert Halmi Academy of Film and Television** on **Wednesday, October 30, 2024 from 10 AM – 12 PM.**



**WE WANT TO  
HEAR FROM  
YOU!**



## MBK MONTHLY SCHOOL SHOWCASE

Next month, we are highlighting the great MBK work that is being done at your school. In your MBK One Drive Account, there is a folder for MBK Photos. Upload the amazing work taking place, and we will reach out to you to learn more and showcase the great work you are doing next month!

## EACH ONE-REACH ONE MENTORING PROGRAM

Our Each One-Reach One Mentoring Program has launched! Thank you all who have volunteered to mentor our young men of color. We are still looking for volunteers, and will always be looking for volunteers throughout the school year. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, sign up here: [tinyurl.com/MBKYonkersMentor](https://tinyurl.com/MBKYonkersMentor)



“

*I commit to becoming a change agent in our community.*

”

**MBK PLEDGE**

# MBK MILESTONE KEY PRINCIPLES

## MILESTONE #1: ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO LEARN

The earliest years of a child's life are critical for building the foundation for success in school and beyond. During these years, children's brains develop rapidly, influenced heavily by their experiences.

## MILESTONE #3: GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL

A data system that tracks the allocation of resources across schools can highlight disparities and opportunity gaps for students in your community.

## MILESTONE #5: ALL YOUTH OUT OF SCHOOL ARE EMPLOYED

Employers in high-demand sectors can reduce training costs by working with post-secondary education institutions to ensure their curriculum prepares students to be work-ready from day one of employment.

## MILESTONE #2: READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY THIRD GRADE

To thrive, all children must receive high-quality, evidence informed, and continuous support for active learning. To ensure that we move the needle on child outcomes and the quality of instruction in the classroom, we must invest in support for intensive and effective professional development to early educators responsible for the education of young children.

## MILESTONE #4: COMPLETE POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING

Cities that are globally competitive attract businesses and families when more residents pursue and successfully obtain post-secondary degrees and credentials.

## MILESTONE #6: ALL YOUTH REMAIN SAFE FROM VIOLENT CRIME

The trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve can be strengthened through deliberate efforts to facilitate racial reconciliation, enhance procedural justice, and reduce implicit bias.

*“ Today, with confidence and conviction, I affirm that I am  
My Brother's Keeper!*

*”*

**MBK PLEDGE**

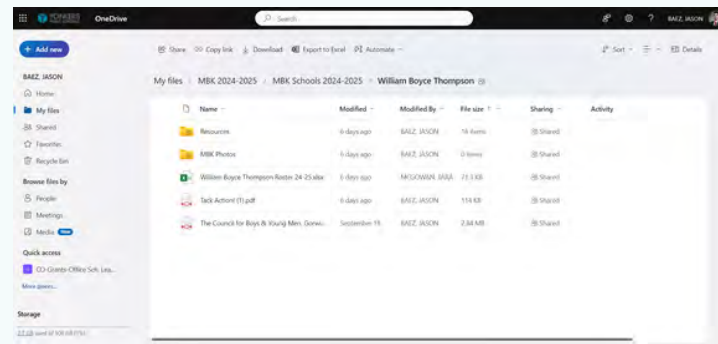


# MBK RESOURCES

## MBK ONEDRIVE ACCOUNT



Your MBK OneDrive account is your resource hub! All MBK Chapter Leaders and school administrators should have received an email that grants you access to your MBK OneDrive account. Your account currently has the Council for Boys and Young Men Model curriculum, roster spreadsheet, resources, and a folder where you can upload MBK photos during the 24-25 school year.



## MENTORING ARTICLES

[Every Student Needs a Mentor. How Schools Can Make That Happen](#)

[5 Principles of Effective Mentors](#)

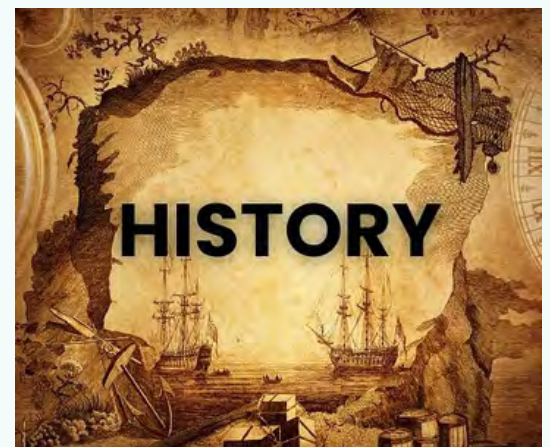
[The Good Mentor](#)



## HISTORICAL VIDEO



On May 30, 2014, former President Obama discussed with his MBK Taskforce his 90-day report on the My Brother's Keeper Program. Check out this impact video [here](#) to learn more about his vision for the program more than ten years ago.



“

*Diligent in educating myself.*

MBK PLEDGE

”

# MBK SOCIAL MEDIA POST OF THE MONTH



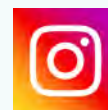
[Opinion: Celebrating New York's commitment to young men of color](#)



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MBKYonkers



Lastly, remember to use the #Hashtags:  
#YonkersMagic  
#MBKYonkers  
#MBKModelCommunity



[Get Involved. Become a Mentor](#)



“We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.”