

Vaughn: Building Leaders Advocating for Change (B.L.A.C. Inc.) is helping our youth succeed in DeKalb

B.L.A.C. Inc. invites community to Dec. 14 showcase to celebrate area high school graduates and their plans for the future

By Michele Vaughn - Kishwaukee United Way
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Building Leaders Advocating for Change is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide mental health, community service, leadership development and academic support to at-risk youth and young adults in DeKalb and surrounding areas.

They began their services in 2018 and received 501c3 status in 2020.

BLAC Inc. is intentional about changing the lives of many at-risk, overlooked, underserved and vulnerable young men and women in DeKalb. The organization provides innovative ways to gain teenagers' trust, break the silence, start healing, enhance the quality of life and prepare for the future.

BLAC Inc. offers interactive seminars, field trips and community service events annually. The organization takes pride in supporting those in need by being youth advocates. Their goal is to continue bridging the supportive service gaps for at-risk youth and young adults while building their leadership and academic goals.

Between their various programs, such as mental health Teen Talk, STEAM workshops, after-school programs, mentoring workshops and summer camp,

Kishwaukee United Way Executive Director and President Michele Vaughn, Ed.D.
(Photo Provided by Kishwaukee United Way)

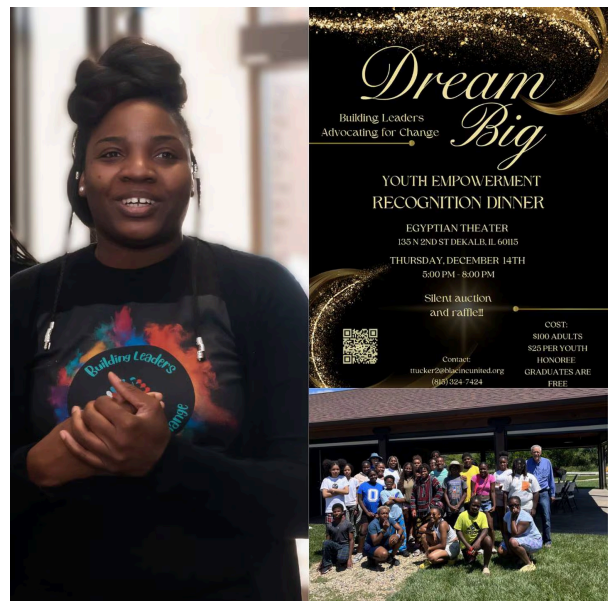
BLAC Inc. has served more than 100 DeKalb residents so far. They have holistic services and accept everyone, regardless of their background.

With the approval of a memorandum of understanding with DeKalb School District 428, BLAC Inc. now has a bridge program between in-school and after-school programs

This organization is clear about its WHY and leads with integrity.

Most recently, the organization was recognized as a finalist for the 2023 Nonprofit of the Year award by the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the organization received the Citizen Appreciation Certificate from the Office of The Chief of Police City of DeKalb, was named Hometown Hero (WDKB 94.9), and recognized by Facebook's parent company, Meta, for improving STEAM education for youth.

On Dec. 14, Building Leaders Advocating for Change (B.L.A.C. Inc.) will host its inaugural Dream Big Youth Empowerment Recognition Dinner at the Egyptian Theatre, 135 N. Second St., DeKalb.



The event will honor the class of 2023 high school graduates and their continued leadership as they pursue their higher education dreams. Because of the support from the local community, a scholarship will be awarded to help with first-semester books and supplies. Select youth will have the opportunity to speak about their experience and how BLAC Inc. has made a positive impact in their lives.

This event also will recognize current participants and showcase their accomplishments. While this event is a fantastic source of recognition and community spirit, the sponsorships tied to this event support a portion of the B.L.A.C. Inc. budget and related programming.

The public is invited to join in recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of young men and women as they embark upon a journey toward higher education.

This organization takes great pride in being a part of their journey and now would like to extend an invitation to the DeKalb community.

To learn more about BLAC Inc. please visit www.blacincunited.org.

- *Michele Vaughn, Ed.D., is executive director and president of Kishwaukee United Way.*