

# Love Us, Don't Harm Us.

## Black Youth Agenda

The Black Swan Academy's 2019 Black Youth Agenda was created in collaboration with middle and high school youth. This agenda raises the unique concerns of black youth living in the District of Columbia and aims to create positive systemic change through public policy and youth organizing at the local level. Together, we aim to:

### Let Me Vent!

INVEST IN THE MENTAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF YOUTH OF COLOR, ESPECIALLY THOSE IMPACTED BY VIOLENCE, ABUSE OR OTHER FORMS OF TRAUMA.



- Increase the number of mental health professionals in schools and within community.
- Fund training for educators and adults interacting with youth in public facilities on social/emotional learning, trauma informed care, de-escalation techniques, restorative approaches.

### Stop the Violence

ADDRESS VIOLENCE, BY INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY, AND MOVING BEYOND POLICING.



- Expand and fully fund the NEAR Act, in particular increase the number of "community violence interrupters" in Ward 7 & 8.
- Provide community led trainings to equip the public with skills around mediation, conflict resolution, de escalation techniques and healthy coping mechanisms

### Hope & Homes

ENSURE YOUTH, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS, HAVE THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO BE SAFE, SUPPORTED, HEALTHY AND TO THRIVE.



- Invest in shelters and affordable housing for youth.
- Amend McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to ensure homeless youth are being transported directly to school via school bus/car.
- Support schools and recreation centers in developing practices that provide youth with access to showers and groceries.



# LET ME VENT!

## LOVE US, DONT HARM US BLACK YOUTH AGENDA

**INVEST IN THE MENTAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF YOUTH, ESPECIALLY THOSE IMPACTED BY VIOLENCE, ABUSE OR OTHER FORMS OF TRAUMA.**

1. Increase the number of mental health professionals in schools and within community.
2. Fund training for educators and adults interacting with youth in public facilities on social/emotional learning and trauma informed care.



## DID YOU KNOW?!

**Over 30% of black girls and over 40% of latina girls identified feeling sad or hopeless for an extended amount of time.**

**74% of black high schoolers in D.C do not receive the mental health support they need.**

**In Ward 8 there are 51 officers, yet only 17 social workers.**

**100% of school expulsions are of black youth and nearly 100% of school based arrests are of youth of color.**

Over **800 youth of color** attempted suicide within the 12 month period of 2017. Youth of color in DC, particularly black youth often experience traumatic life events and yet lack the support necessary to cope and maintain their mental health. Instead, their outwardly displays of distress, sadness and trauma are either dismissed or criminalized. There are **twice the amount** of school resource offices in schools than social workers. Thus, it's not surprising that youth of color are least likely to get the support they need to cope with life's circumstances, yet they are most likely to be suspended, expelled and arrested.



# STOP THE VIOLENCE

## LOVE US, DONT HARM US BLACK YOUTH AGENDA

### ADDRESS VIOLENCE, BY INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY AND MOVING BEYOND POLICING.

1. Expand and fully fund the NEAR Act, in particular increase the number of "community violence interrupters" in Ward 7 & 8.
2. Support community led efforts that equip the public with skills around peace keeping; including mediation, conflict resolution, de escalation techniques and healthy coping mechanisms.



## DID YOU KNOW?!

According to the New Urban Institutional Analysis, some schools in DC, have as many as 16 gun related incidents in close range during the school year.

In 2018, 160 people have died by homicide, a 40% increase from 2017.

In 2018, Office of Police Complaints found that a total of 1,332 MPD officers used force, an 18% increase from 2017. Over 90% of the subjects of these incidents were Black.

There have been at least **35 deaths** in 2019 already. We know that intra- community violence is often linked to the lack of opportunities and the continued divestment of resources available to members of that community. Ward 7 & 8 are impacted the greatest from structural barriers that limit access to quality education, housing, transportation, employment opportunities and health care. Both wards have the highest percentages of households who are economically insecure and also have the highest ratio of violent crimes. Though there has been a **25% increase** in police presence this past year in D.C, violent crimes are continuing to increase. While, national public health models like "cure the streets" have resulted in upwards of **60% reduction in violent crimes** in jurisdictions similar to D.C. We must invest in the health and sustainability of communities of color in D.C, and move beyond policing.





# HOPE & HOMES

## LOVE US, DONT HARM US BLACK YOUTH AGENDA

**ENSURE YOUTH, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE HOMELESS, HAVE THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO BE SAFE, SUPPORTED, HEALTHY AND TO THRIVE.**

1. Invest in decent shelters and affordable housing for youth and families.
2. Amend McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to ensure homeless youth are being transported directly to school via school bus or car.
3. Support schools and recreation centers in developing practices that provide youth with showers and groceries.



## DID YOU KNOW?!

Nearly 250 black high school students in D.C. experienced housing instability within just a 30 day period of the 2017 "at risk behavior survey".

The latest youth census in 2017 counted 1,117 unaccompanied youth and youth heads of households experiencing literal homelessness or doubling up with friends or strangers.

47% of youth identified the cause of their housing instability as family conflict, 25% said economic conditions, and 12% said aged out of care.

Black residents, including black youth are disproportionately impacted by housing instability. A recent study reported, within a span of 13 years over **20,000 Black residents** had been displaced. The overwhelming majority of "literally homeless" youth in D.C are black, and more than **50% of homeless youth** identify as queer or trans. While experiencing housing instability these youth (and families) strive to maintain their education, their health, relationships and everyday responsibilities - yet face significant barriers do to policies and institutional practices that do not address issues of affordability nor accessibility. While city leaders have taken some steps to address these barriers; accessibility to transportation, safe housing and community spaces, health care, quality education and employment opportunities remains a challenge.