



Rootead Enrichment Center Annual Report FY 2023-24

Reclaiming the village through cultural liberation by holding space for internal transformation, birth justice, and healing arts.

Greetings Community!! This past year was such a learning year for Rootead. We tried a new leadership style, we expanded our footprint, we rolled around inside of strategy and future ideation of Rootead, we hired more staff and welcomed interns! We are collectively learning, growing and re-indigenizing the work. It is so, so rewarding and so, so hard! Healing isn't cute. Healing is our birthright and it is so necessary for future generations. We hope to be a community resource to healing in whatever way or shape that you need. Lean in! We are here for it!

*one love
-Kama Tai Mitchell*



Operations

In the past fiscal year operations/facilities has:

- » Contracted with a Black owned local technology company.
- » Implemented a migration from Google Suites to Microsoft 365.
- » We've improved our technology by providing all employees with work computers to provide more efficiency, organizational security, and synchronization.
- » Installed ADT security system
- » Installed cameras
- » Implemented an HR file audit
- » We implemented Trello to increase communication across the organization
- » We hired some great new staff
- » Hosted our first annual African Masquerade fundraiser
- » Began offering medical and dental insurance to full-time employees

Staff

Adia Brown, Carmen James, CoCo Marie, Heather Mitchell, Jessica Mancino, Jodi Glover, Kama Mitchell, Nikki Horner, Nora Kay Mugan, Omeka Bradford, Teleshia Parker, Tia Davis, Vanessa Moon, Will Stewart

Board

Amy Mervak, Chelsie Downs-Hubbarth, Danielle Flint, Dell Darnell

Birth Justice

In the past fiscal year Birth Justice has:

- » Increased Village Playdates weekly attendance from 1-5 families at the beginning of the year to 6-8 families at the end of the year
- » Increased the number of doula clients from 30 individuals for FY22-23 to 50 individuals FY23-24
- » 90% of clients were BIPOC
- » 96% of clients received full scholarships for doula care



“Attending the Motown Birth and Breastfeeding Conference was truly an inspiring experience. Being able to be connected with so professionals in the field to talk about maternal health encouraged me in my own journey to becoming a Lactation Consultant. My favorite part of the conference was the bus tour. Seeing the positive impact in the Detroit area for black maternal health with the several organizations. I am grateful for the opportunity giving to me from Rootead to be an advocate so that I can implement positive change in black maternal health in Kalamazoo.”

-Teleshia Parker Red Birth Green Community Doula and Birth Justice Manager



“She stayed during my 70 hour labor process and I am so grateful for that. Make sure all doulas are available for deliveries as [my doula] was for mine! It truly helped my experience as a first time mom. I wasn’t left alone and that made me feel better throughout the process of delivering.” -RBG Doula Client

“I can’t believe something like this exists. I need this kind of support because I don’t really have it from my family and friends this time around.” -1st time doula client expecting her 4th child



“He loves his friends, hearing the music, doing crafts, story time, all of it. He doesn’t talk much but he can say “Rootead,” it was one of his first words! I love that it’s safe, welcoming, inclusive, not just in words, but we can actually be ourselves here.” -Casey, Village Playdate Parent



Community Healing

In the past fiscal year Community Healing has:

- » Launched new initiatives including; Speak Freely Fridays, Hip Hop Kettlebell, Community Yoga, Somatic Movement with Kama, Grief Circles, and West African Dance with Heather.
- » Black & Brown Therapy Collective: 225 applicants over the year, and clients received a total of 323 covered sessions from May 2023 - April 2024 totaling roughly \$32,607
- » Roots of Liberation: 10 cohort members with 90% of them being BIPOC



"The Black and Brown Therapy Collective has greatly impacted my child's life and mine. As a single mother raising a young male, it gets hard every day trying to get my child to open up to me. Insurance wasn't enough to cover therapy service for my child. The Black and Brown therapy collective step in at one of the hardest moments as a parent in my young son's life. Thank you Black and Brown therapy for helping me help my child." -A BBTC Client

"My favorite part about today was the breathing techniques we learned and understanding how our body reacts to the different parts of grief." -A Grief Circle Participant



"I love, love the community and working out in a safe, inclusive space!" -A Hip Hop Kettlebell Participant



"The therapy [has] brought peace, joy, and hope to my life. It has been the best thing for my life! -A BBTC Client





Suzanne Upjohn
Delano Parish
Foundation



Youth Enrichment

In the past fiscal year Youth Enrichment has:

- » **RIY:** Rootead In Youth served an average of 16 families each of the three, 6-week sessions.
- » **RYDDE:** Season 6 of Rootead Youth Drum & Dance Ensemble has grown to 21 dancers and drummers. They had sixteen community performances including The Doo-Dah Parade, RAD Fest, and Kalamazoo Foodways Symposium. Their biggest performances were Milwood International Night and the RYDDE Winter Showcase.
- » **RYA:** Rootead Youth Ambassadors launched and has nine participants.



This year has been such an amazing experience having Mr. Will come into our classroom for Books & Boogie with our 3-year-olds! As a first-year teacher, it was super special to get to see so much enthusiasm, joy, and happiness brought into our classroom by his visits. The students absolutely loved [his visits], so much so they always remembered the day and who was coming! The positive, upbeat activities were so educational and fun! Mr. Will allowed our students to have such memorable and impactful experiences. It has been such a privilege to have such a wonderful experience. Thank you so much!
-Hannah Gagneur, KRESA
Head Start Lead



"[RIY] is very engaging and age appropriate. The staff are very patient and work well with kids! I also love the complimentary tea!"

My son has thoroughly enjoyed summer camp. He keeps saying how much he wishes he could go for the whole summer. He loves the dancing and drumming and I personally love how good everything at Rootead feels. All of the instructors have been amazing and we are definitely hoping to participate in more events! -Summer Camp Parent

