



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

A CALL-TO-ACTION FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO



# INTRODUCTION

Black to the Future (BTTF) is unapologetically committed to improving Black San Franciscans' quality of life and enhancing educational and economic opportunities for our community by providing tools to effectively support the path to success.

This report serves as a snapshot of the services provided by Black to the Future in the 2019-2020 fiscal year and the outcomes to date.

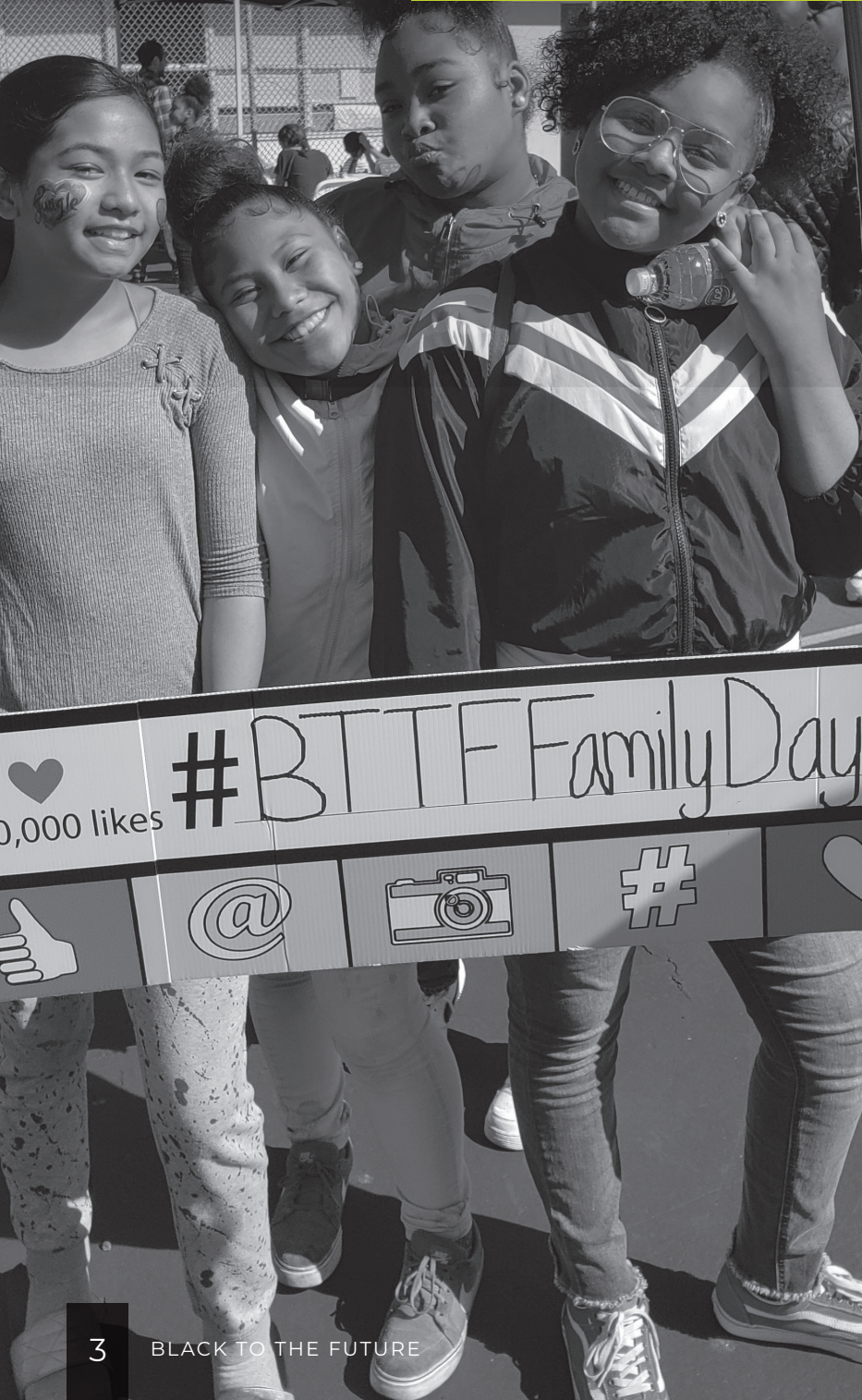
Upon the completion of its fourth year of programming, the BTTF collaborative has grown to include a total of 16 partner organizations. BTTF is city supported and community driven, and has continued to build strong and fruitful relationships, coordinate activities, and serve families through an array of services that target areas that have been identified as high need.

In response to the City and County of San Francisco and Health Officers of the Bay Area's COVID-19 pandemic stay-at-home order, BTTF adjusted program and services delivery. Through the utilization of technological solutions, BTTF successfully shifted from in-person programming to a remote service model in order to continue to support families, staff, and one another through these unusually trying times.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, BTTF will continue to refine and adapt service delivery models based on shifting circumstances to continue to best serve Black San Francisco residents.



# FAMILY SUPPORT



The Family Support branch of BTTF assists families with identifying housing, child care assistance, after-school programs, and advocacy. We provide referrals for services and advocate for families in navigating educational support, housing issues, and several other circumstances that present challenges.

Well over 130 participants received support through this branch of BTTF over the course of the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Family Support Coordinators worked diligently to ensure families received adequate services. Although the 2019-2020 year took an unanticipated turn due to COVID-19, BTTF was able to adapt and continue providing essential services to participants.

Black to the Future Family Support continued to assist and support the Black community during the pandemic in the following ways:

- Online intake forms
- Daily virtual check-ins with participants via Zoom/FaceTime, phone, and email
- Food assistance (gift cards and socially distanced in-person food distribution)
- Unemployment assistance
- Support/referrals via online services

Dear Program Director,

I am a former resident of the Bayview community and a mother of three.

Last year during this time our family suffered a tragic loss. The result of this horrifying tragedy caused my three children and me to be displaced from our home, severe emotional trauma, and mental distress... (to name a few).

After several referrals from different community agencies, Black To The Future stood out from the rest. I received a call from Ms. Lakeisha asking if I would meet her at her office for intake. Due to fear, I reluctantly agreed to meet Ms. Lakeisha in person. I openly expressed my fear and concerns of my personal information being leaked out to people in the community especially to those who know or may know someone who knows the perpetrator and/or perpetrators responsible for turning me and my children's lives upside down. Ms. Lakeisha assured me she would keep my information protected and she would do everything she could to help me and my three children.

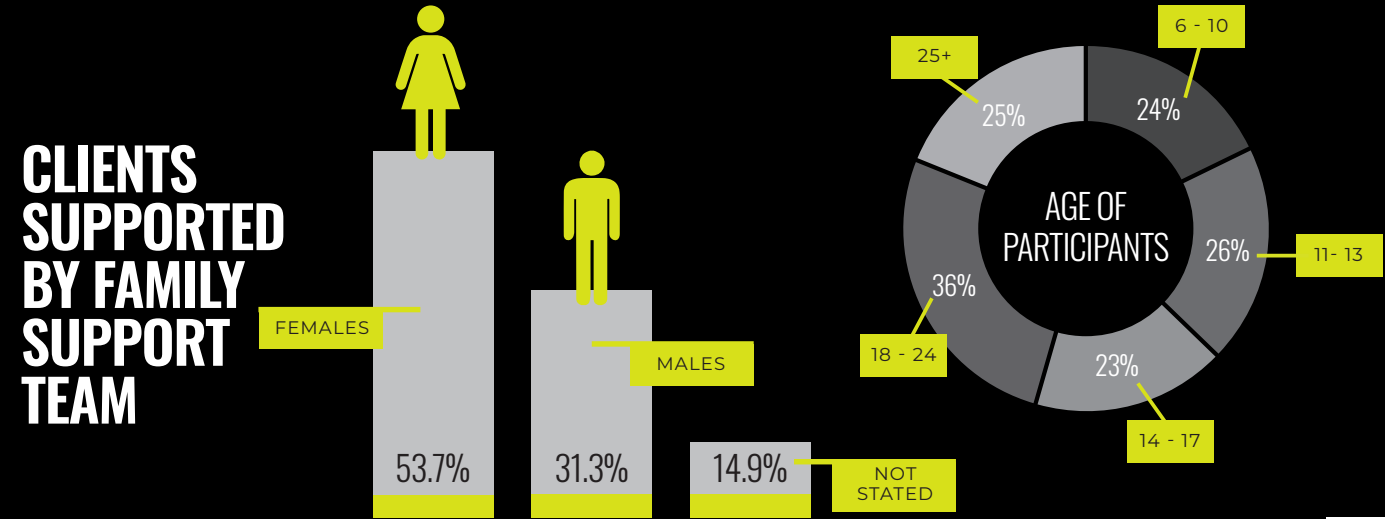
Close to one year later, Ms. Lakeisha has continued to keep her promise. Not only did she keep her word in protecting my personal information, she made it a point to reach out to me on weekends and holidays to make sure my children and I were not alone as we traveled from place-to-place with our belongings in our car. Ms. Lakeisha helped provide a safe haven for my children and me until permanent housing was secured. She assisted us in getting food and other monetary gifts to help lighten the burden.

In addition to all she has done, she has even offered to assist me in pursuing a career change if I desire.

Although nothing can fill the void or remove the emotional trauma that is associated with losing a loved one to violence, I can wholeheartedly say, Ms. Lakeisha has been instrumental in changing my tainted thoughts from "the world is an evil place" to "there are some good people in the world."

With sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude, I'd like for your agency to know Ms. Lakeisha is "one of the good" in this world we live in.

Sincerely,  
Former Bayview resident





# STUDENT SUCCESS COACH REFLECTION

“Thinking back on some highlights from August to February, I’m thinking about three students I had who made the most improvement. When I started working with two of them within the same classroom, they were constantly fighting and throwing fits to get out of doing work, but I was eventually able to get them to get along and work together. This made my visits a lot more smooth and efficient, because I was no longer physically chasing after one of them. We were able to get through all of their work collectively. It was also rewarding to see two other students that weren’t technically on my caseload want to do better behaviorally and get their work done in a big group with me because they liked how I interacted with their friend.

My 7th grader at the time has improved so much more as her behavior and focus in class had become a priority for her. She’s finally taken heed to the numerous times I’ve told her to worry about herself and her academics instead of what others are doing and their “drama.” I made a lot of progress with all of her classmates as well, being that I can’t help myself and end up supporting her entire class in one way or another. Their teacher insists I share my opinions on their behavior and give them advice, so I feel like the realness I speak to them and getting them comfortable with my presence not just as her mentor, allowed me to maintain a lot of control in their classroom that their teacher wasn’t able to do. I was proud to be able to help the boys with their math and for them to actually understand what I was teaching them, because their teacher moved too fast.

**The overall highlight of the year has been the trust and the authority the staff at all of my school sites have given me because of how well I work with my students. They know they can depend on me to step in and fix any situation that arises not only with my students but with their entire class. The relationships I’ve made with all the staff and student body make me feel like I’m a part of each of those schools and not just one student’s mentor.”**

**- Kierra Smith, Black to the Future Student Success Coach**

Black to the Future educational supports consist of 1:1 in-class assistance, 1:1 tutoring; and supporting youth with the higher education research and application process (e.g. HBCU/local college tours; SAT/ACT prep; college application assistance/review).

1:1 in-class assistance has been provided by BTTF Student Success Coaches who have supported students academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. Four coaches supported 30 students across 12 elementary and middle schools in the San Francisco Unified School District.

The coronavirus pandemic shut down all in-person services, requiring Student Success Coaches to shift their support to a virtual setup. Coaches took the time to check in with their students by phone, doing wellness check-ins and assisting them through virtual platforms, such as Zoom, to ensure they were staying on top of their work. A few challenges arose due to students’ lack of access to technology and 1:1 in-class support to ensure they were on task. The coaches wrapped up the school year as best as they could and provided support to those students who were able to gain access to various resources provided by BTTF as well as SFUSD.

# GIRLS SATURDAY ACADEMY

Girls Saturday Academy, which is held every spring, was held virtually this year to provide the students with a sense of connection that they missed due to the pandemic. 35 girls participated in a host of classes, including Martial Arts, SAT Prep, Art, Spanish, and a special fashion design workshop. In addition to the youth programming, a few parent workshops were held. Parents were more engaged during this virtual experience and displayed a sense of gratitude for the staff. Parents appreciated the opportunity to be in fellowship among one another and were able to cross reference shared experiences.

# BLACK STARS RISING

Black to the Future helped support the Black Stars Rising cohort for the 2nd year. Black Stars Rising is a cohort-based high school readiness and success program designed to prepare rising African American 9th-, 10th-, and 11th-graders for STEM careers through direct math and science instruction, career exposure, credit recovery, early college coursework, and an introduction to workplace readiness skills.

Students received support over the course of a six-week summer program. Additionally, case management and quarterly check-ins led by SFUSD staff are provided to students during the regular school year. Although the cohort was held virtually in the summer of 2020, there were 70 youth who attended summer school and completed the introduction to workplace readiness program. Those who completed the program received a \$599 stipend from Black to the Future upon completion. Since 2018, Black to the Future has supported over 165 youth.



# HEALTH & WELLNESS ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## BTF HEALTH AND WELLNESS CONTINUES TO ASSIST YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL BEING BY TEACHING AND DEMONSTRATING HEALTHY HABITS.

Healing for our Families and Our Nation has continued to host healing circles, providing a space for community members to discuss complex topics and serving as a resource for Black to The Future clients throughout San Francisco. Topics discussed include self-care, anger management, stress reduction; fear, doubt, and insecurity; managing court appointments; advocacy; family strengthening; and empowerment.

Health and Wellness assisted over 600 participants pre and post pandemic through various offerings such as healing circles, Rites of Passage, Mother's and Father's Day Brunches, and emergency hotel Vouchers for those affected by violence or homelessness. Due to the pandemic, a shift in services happened among the health and wellness services to address the influx of demand for mental health services. Participants were able to seek mental health support from the comfort of their own home, which allowed more participation during activities and 1:1 therapeutic services.

Several healing circles were held at Ella Hill Hutch and Ocean View in San Francisco this year pre-pandemic. Once shelter in place began, the healing circles were held virtually on Zoom.

Mothers who were not as engaged were now becoming more engaged and appeared to appreciate being able to adapt to using this technology without having to leave home. Many have mentioned that not having to travel allowed them and their family members to participate. BTF engaged with the mothers to embrace this "new normal." Some shared that this technology supports therapy sessions for them and their family members during these challenging times. There were discussions around how to stay safe with masks, gloves, and washing hands; how to make hand sanitizer; food resources; and other BTF services.

This year's annual Mother's and Father's Day Brunches, which were held virtually, had over 140 attendees between the two events. The purpose of this annual event is to provide a healing space for mothers and fathers who have lost children to violence. This not only allowed those who were affected by violence a chance to come together, but did the same for those who have been affected by the pandemic and missing a sense of connectedness.

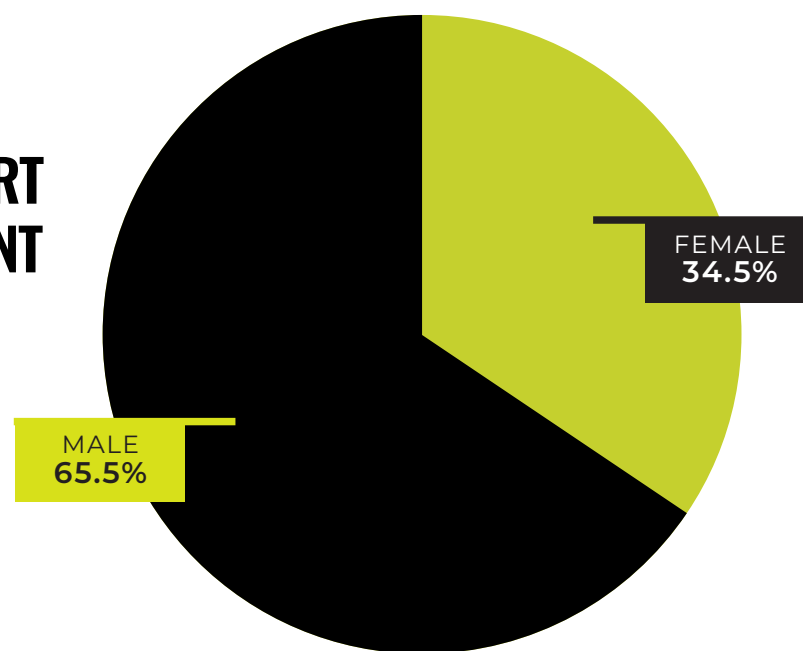
Sojourner Truth Foster Care Agency facilitated a monthly Rites of Passage ceremony for girls between the ages of 8 and 17 years old to develop positive self-image and to learn about and honor their histories and identities. This year's attendance was very low due to the pandemic, however, the shift in services held virtually still allowed several youth to participate to the best of their ability. Six girls were in attendance this year and completed four, 1-hour sessions. The sessions were the following:

- Session 1: The Five Major African Initiation Rites of Passage (Rite of Birth, Rite of Adulthood, Rite of Marriage, Rite of Eldership, Rite of Ancestorship)
- Session 2: Leadership, Empowerment, & Life Skills
- Session 3: African American History (Main focus is Social Justice/Protesting)
- Session 4: African American Literature, Culture, & Folklore (Performing Art, Novel, Poetry, Drama, Short Story), Visual Art (Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, Photography, Video, Filmmaking) and Favorite Black Film/TV Show & Art

Those who completed all four sessions were thrown a completion ceremony which was held June 30, 2020. During the ceremony they were awarded various gifts, including gift cards, stipends, and/or a Chromebook.

## SCHOOL SITE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY STUDENT SUCCESS COACHES:

This data represents an increase in academic support provided to male students in the 2019-20 school year.



# WORKFORCE

Black to the Future workforce services have continued to support individuals to break barriers by assisting the community with job readiness training, linkage to various employment opportunities, and youth employment opportunities.

Below is a visual breakdown of services provided over the 2019-2020 fiscal year:

## 2019-2020 BTF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	DURATION OF TRAINING "WEEKS"	NUMBER OF CLIENTS IN ATTENDANCE
Job readiness training	8	16
Construction	12	42
Private Sector position	Permanent employment	11
Environmental Certificates	12	42
Culinary	0	0
Youth Workforce Development	Summer Jobs	16



# ASSESSING OUR IMPACT

Ensuring that we have a positive impact on the well being and growth of the youth and families we serve is a priority. Some of the ways we measure our success include:

- Engagement numbers
- Interest levels
- Attendance
- Attachment/sense of connection
- Teacher/School feedback
- Caregiver feedback

Working collectively, we have been able to capture engagement numbers by obtaining sign-in sheets at various events and keeping track of attendance from 1:1 academic support and mental health services. Although there was a shift in the way services were provided, we were able to spread the word of BTF's adapted services through various social media platforms, fliers, and email threads. Families

could attend virtual events and receive virtual supportive services without needing to account for transportation or other coordination restraints, which allowed for an influx in participation.

Families and individuals have continued to express their gratitude during 1:1 meetings with Family Support Coordinators and Student Success Coaches during events, activities, and over-the-phone wellness checks.

To date, our most significant challenge has been identifying and implementing ways in which BTF can continue to provide students and families with the same level of services during distance learning. Given the shelter in place orders affecting our community and limited resources available, Black to the Future is working to ensure students continue to receive adequate educational services and technology to support them during this transitional time.

**Black to the Future will continue efforts to keep community engagement at the forefront while staying safe during this unprecedented pandemic. Please know that Black to the Future is here and is committed to serving the Black community of San Francisco in leading them towards self sufficiency. We are in this together!**



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