



ANNUAL REPORT '21

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

INTRODUCTION

March 19, 2020—the date that COVID-19 shelter-in-place measures began in the Bay Area—marked a change for Black to the Future (BTTF) in the midst of immense changes impacting the nation as a whole. In order to continue meeting the needs of the Black community we serve, BTTF had to act fast and respond to the new and different circumstances affecting our constituents. BTTF made a necessary shift to all its services, creating an online platform to receive referrals, complete intakes, and provide remote therapeutic services, violence prevention groups, educational support, and workforce assistance via Zoom.

Focusing primarily on assisting fundamental needs, BTTF's priority has been to ensure the health and safety of the community. We assisted families to acquire groceries, personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizer, household supplies, and housing assistance, to name a few.

This report serves as a snapshot of the services provided by Black to the Future in the 2020-2021 fiscal year and the outcomes to date.

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



FAMILY SUPPORT

The Family Support branch of BTF assists families with identifying housing, child care assistance, basic essentials, and advocacy. We continued to provide referrals for services and advocate for families in navigating educational support, housing issues, and several other circumstances that present challenges—all of which were heightened due to the pandemic.

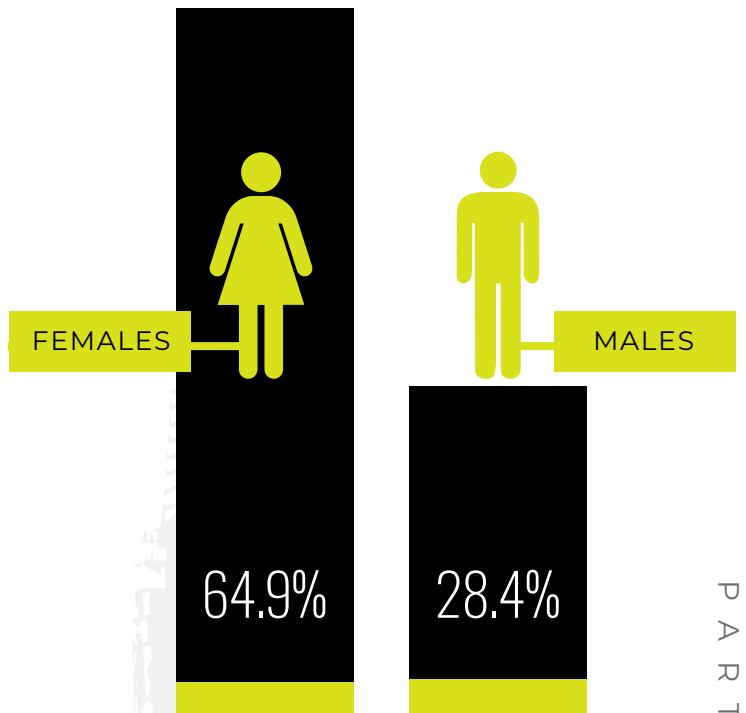
Family Support assisted over 200 people in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Family Support Coordinators worked diligently to ensure families received adequate services. In the midst of shelter-in-place restrictions, BTF continued to adapt and adhere to the safety and health measures ordered by the state to provide 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
- Virtual check-ins with participants via Zoom/FaceTime, phone, and email
- Food assistance (gift cards and physically distanced in-person food distribution)
- Unemployment assistance
- Support/referrals via online services
- PPE distribution

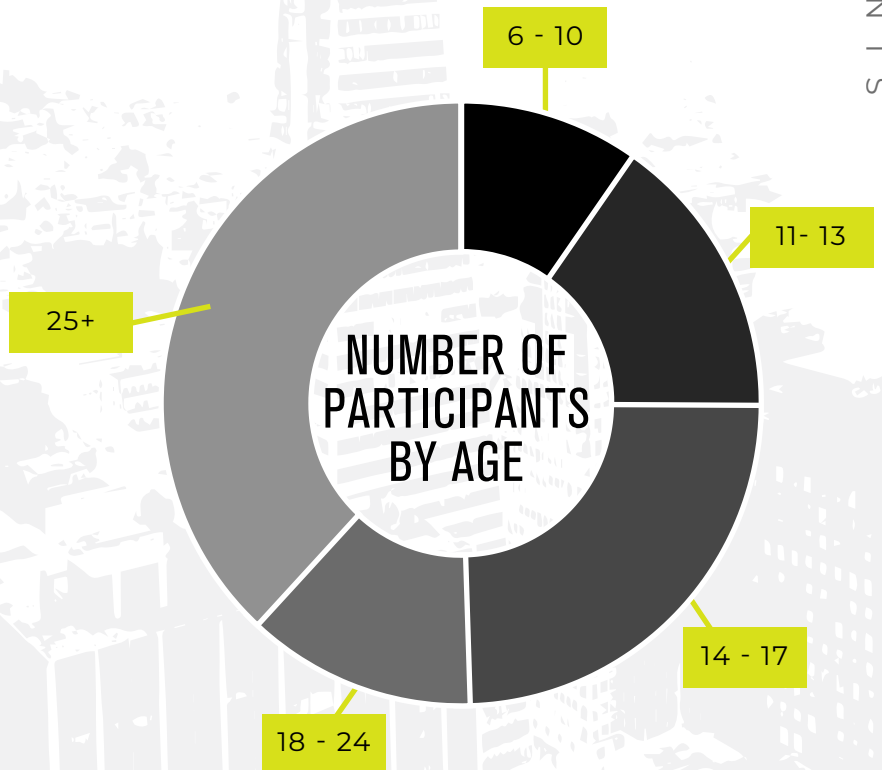
“After several referrals from different community agencies, Black To The Future stood out from the rest... Although nothing can fill the void or remove the emotional trauma that is associated with losing a loved one to violence, I can wholeheartedly say, Ms. Lakeisha has been instrumental in changing my tainted thoughts from, ‘The world is an evil place,’ to, ‘There are some good people in the world.’”

- Former Bayview resident / victim of violent crime



PARTICIPANTS

CLIENTS SUPPORTED BY FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM





Academic supports consist of one-to-one in-class assistance, one-to-one tutoring, and support with the higher education research and application process (e.g. HBCU/local college tours; SAT/ACT prep; college application assistance/review).

One-to-one in-class assistance is provided by BTF Student Success Coaches who support students academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. In 2021, five coaches supported 30 students across 20 elementary, middle, and high schools in the San Francisco Unified School District.

When all SFUSD schools opened back up on August 16,

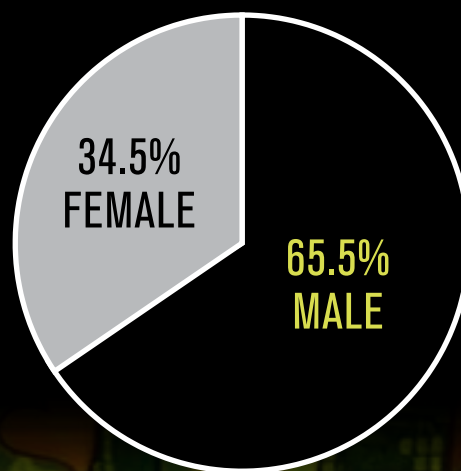
Student Success Coaches were able to return to school sites for one-to-one in-person support after over a year of supporting students remotely. Getting used to the flow of being back in a school setting after doing school from home for so long was a big adjustment for most. Some challenges Student Success Coaches faced were lack of interest among students; low class attendance; and students having difficulty staying on task and following instructions from staff and coaches. By consistently showing up for their students and trying different methods of student engagement, the Student Success Coaches saw significant improvements in their students' grades, behaviors, and overall attitudes about being back in school.

STUDENT SUCCESS COACH HIGHLIGHT

“During my time here at BTTF, I’ve had the opportunity and privilege of working with some of San Francisco’s brightest children. Working with a particular young man and his family has given me the opportunity to access and support someone who looks like me and who is dealing with similar obstacles I faced growing up as well. His guardian has not given up or waivered in her support or belief in me to help him. We are entering year three of our mentor/mentee relationship and his behavior and academics have been steadily increasing.”

- Rashawn Joshua, BTTF Student Success Coach

SCHOOL SITE SUPPORT PROVIDED BY STUDENT SUCCESS COACHES



GIRLS 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. 25 girls participated in a host of classes, including Martial Arts, SAT Prep, Art, Spanish, and Fashion Design. Through the RazKids K-5 Reading Assessment, 11 of the 25 students completed skilled level up assessments in June. In addition to youth programming, three parent workshops were held. The workshops, titled “Homecoming,” “Healthy Fear Works,” and “Quit the Guilt,” were led by Jamie Greenwood from Jamie Living Inc. 14 parents were in attendance via Zoom, feeding their minds, bodies, and souls in a transparent, safe, healthy, and non-judgmental space.



BLACKSTARS RISING

For the third year, BTTF helped support Black Stars Rising, 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 virtual 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, 46 youth 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, BTTF has supported over 200 youth through Black Stars Rising.





HEALTH & WELLNESS ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS



Health and wellness had a busy year. The pandemic continues to raise not only mental health concerns but also elevates the mental health crisis in our community. BTTF has been actively responding to crisis situations, aiding in providing groceries, hot food, Uber rides, etc. to families in the community. The BTTF therapist has seen over 20 participants this past year with a consistent waitlist of at least 10 referrals.

There has been an increase of crime in San Francisco, including but not limited to shootings, armed robberies, burglaries, and fentanyl overdoses. The health and wellness service area hosts healing circles and provides mobile therapy services for not only our clients but for our communities at large.

In addition to the day-to-day supports mentioned above, we engaged over 15 clients consistently throughout 2021 whose families were impacted by gun violence or violent assaults. BTTF continues to support these families through group Zooms, trauma groups, and in-person healing circles. These approaches have fared very well with the community at large, as evidenced by the number of attendees that come to support their family members involved and community members asking how they can be a part of the program as well.

Health and Wellness continues to be the primary focus for BTTF as the rate of referrals continues to climb.

“I’ve experienced several identifiable challenges with clients this past year. Although most clients are able to regularly attend sessions, there are some clients who miss sessions often but continue to stress how in need they are of the services we offer. In this instance, I continue to keep them on my caseload. Another challenge that I experience with my clients is their access to technology. Some of my clients do not have access to a laptop for us to do a face to face meeting via Zoom. This results in having to do sessions via telephone which I believe is still effective, but less effective in comparison to Zoom sessions. I have also found that many of my clients struggle with awareness. Many of my clients come to sessions with a weekly chaotic story that occurred for them that week. This makes it difficult to address internal changes in the client. These are the most identifiable challenges I have noticed working with clients this past year.”

- Black to the Future Therapist



WORKFORCE

Our ability to provide traditional workforce services was strained during the 2020-2021 fiscal year due to the pandemic and shelter-in-place orders. We had to pivot service delivery to meet the needs of the communities we serve. This past year was largely spent providing essential resources such as food, barrier removal services for utilities, rent, and ancillary support to keep families going through the ups and downs of the pandemic. Because families have been focusing on basic needs, there has been little to no activity for direct Workforce Services, except for seven referrals from Family Support. Two out of the seven job seekers had a number of personal barriers that they were working through which slowed down the progress of connecting them to employment opportunities. However, the BTTF workforce team maintained connections and continued Workforce Services for these clients.

We were able to make several improvements on how we are connecting our participants to BTTF in 2021. Workforce has focused on meeting the immediate needs of the community and thereby keeping the connection warm and establishing a trusting relationship for future employment opportunities and resources. While the communities we serve are still in transition moving back towards work, there is still some hesitation to move towards the workforce and therefore we have found it profitable to keep helping participants “get ready to get ready” to return back to work or engage in training opportunities that will lead to higher paying wages and greater sustainability. We’ve provided digital and in-person offerings of our 16-week Pathways Training Program in Construction, Life Skills, Job Readiness Training, and Computer Literacy. This work has made a great impact on Black communities in some of the most underserved neighborhoods in San Francisco, and we are building traction and establishing connections that will lead to increased overall well being of our families.

2020-2021 SERVICES PROVIDED

TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	DURATION OF TRAINING “WEEKS”	NUMBER OF CLIENTS IN ATTENDANCE
Job readiness training	12	5
Construction	12	5
Private Sector position	0	2
Environmental Certificates	5	5
Culinary/Hospitality	0	0
Youth Workforce Development	0	0
Barrier Removal		4

The data above does not reflect the number of additional participants who were assisted with basic essential needs throughout the pandemic.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Violence Prevention refers to the reduction in the frequency of new cases of violent victimization or perpetration through direct efforts to remove or reduce the underlying causes and risk factors. As partners of BTF we are tasked specifically to provide services to reduce violence in the Black community. This is done through a collaboration between a cohort of African American(AA)-centered Violence Prevention organizations to work with children, youth, and families as well as to support other BTF service areas who are providing services

for the betterment of the Black community.

To this end, each partner has entered into a contract with BTF to service the Black community in order to reduce, intervene, and prevent incidents of violence.

This is done in four major areas:

- 1. Prevention**
- 2. Intervention**
- 3. Restoration**
- 4. Collaboration**

EXPLANATION OF SERVICES	HOW THIS IS DONE
PREVENTION: The action of stopping something from happening or arising.	Violence Prevention service area will work to prevent incidents of violence within the AA community by holding workshops, presentations, classes, roundtables, VP sessions, mentoring (group or one on one), and when necessary town hall.
INTERVENTION: The action or process of intervening (come between to prevent or alter a result or course of events).	Violence Prevention service area will work to intervene in incidents of violence within the AA community by providing workshops, presentations, classes, roundtables, VP sessions, mentoring (group or one on one), and when necessary town hall. Exposing victims and perpetrators to healthier alternatives, resources, and conflict resolution skills.
RESTORATION: The action of returning something to a place or condition (Healthy and Peaceful).	Violence Prevention service area will work to help restore the AA community to a healthy state of peace, togetherness, accountability, forgiveness, care, healing and love.
COLLABORATION: The action of working with someone or group to produce or create something.	Violence Prevention service area will work with the BTF partners to provide Violence Prevention services to the AA community. This will be done by attending and participating in all required meetings, workshops, conferences, retreats, Zoom calls, etc(or have a representative for said organization present).

Although services had to be provided virtually this year, Violence Prevention groups were held with ten Martin Luther King Middle School students. Prevention of violence and other ways to handle stress, grief, and anger were topics of discussion. Check-ins occurred on a regular basis virtually, via phone and text for students to continue to feel a sense of belonging and stay on track emotionally and academically. Gift cards were distributed to students who completed various assignments from previous discussions.

Violence Prevention also hosted an array of services through the Redirection Program, working with

11 young men who are interested in owning their businesses. Support included job readiness training and help with obtaining their drivers' licenses. These young men also had the opportunity to speak on community violence prevention panels with the mayor and chief of police; hear from guest speakers; and attend various meditations to assist with known "turf beef."

The Violence Prevention team will continue its efforts to show up and support students and families with finding ways of dealing with stressors and traumas among the community.



ASSESSING OUR IMPACT

Ensuring that BTF has 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

We've been able to capture engagement numbers by obtaining information from each service area on a monthly basis, and keeping track of attendance from 1:1 academic support and mental health services. Although there's been a shift in the way services are provided, we've continued to spread the word of BTF's adapted services through various social media platforms, fliers, email threads, community presentations, and targeted outreach efforts. Throughout 2021, families were able to attend virtual events and receive virtual supportive services without needing to account for transportation or other coordination restraints, which allowed for an increase in participation.

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

To date, our most significant challenge has continued to be closing the gap with technology. Various families live in parts of San Francisco where wireless internet access is limited, which hinders their way of connecting, whether it be for school, therapy sessions, or attending events/groups that are held virtually. Although BTF has provided many families with various technology tools to get online and be present, the lack of further resources such as housing, housing assistance, or outstanding utility assistance continues to be a barrier.

In order to be sure the BTF collaborative continued to operate in a unified way despite our inability to be together physically, we held a virtual retreat. This year's retreat, hosted by Blaze Consulting Group, focused on self care during these trying times. The facilitator from Blazegrounded us, had us reflect on our work during the pandemic, and helped us consider where we are headed as we approach what may seem like the "new normal." BTF health and wellness kits were given to each BTF partner, along with various tools for self care.

As we move into 2022 and beyond, BTF will continue our efforts to keep community engagement at the forefront while staying safe as we continue to provide services during the pandemic. Please know that Black to the Future is here, and is dedicated to providing service to the Black community of San Francisco that helps them move towards self sufficiency.



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