

HONORING HOMETOWN HEROES

GRAAHI

Lala

GRAAHI **20th** ANNIVERSARY

2002 | 2022





WELCOME

VANESSA GREENE, CEO

It is my distinct honor and high privilege to welcome you to our 2022 Virtual Gala and 20th anniversary. To say that planning this event in the midst of a public health and racial crisis has been a challenge would be a major understatement. However, after two cancellations and postponements, we are finally here. Thank you for taking the time to celebrate this important milestone in GRAAHI's history with us. We have prepared an outstanding program which will include great entertainment, historical reflections, award presentations, and the future direction of GRAAHI.

I am humbled by the experience to serve as the CEO of GRAAHI at a time such as this. With you as our friends, partners, and allies, I have no doubt that we are embarking upon unprecedented change. This is collective work and in our next chapter, collectively, we will accelerate the health equity journey and make significant strides in diversifying leadership in the healthcare sector and reducing disparities in infant/maternal health, heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, HIV, and mental health among African Americans and other vulnerable groups.

Thank you again for your friendship, partnership, and ongoing support. It is greatly appreciated!!

Enjoy the program,

Vanessa



GRAND RAPIDS

African American
Health Institute

GRAAHI Gala

APRIL 21, 2022

- Music** Collective Voices - "All I Do"
- Welcome** MC & Host Dr. Bernice Patterson
- 20 Years of GRAAHI** Paul Doyle & Dr. Khan Nedd with Christine Mwangi
- Legacy Awards** Paul Doyle & Dr. Khan Nedd
Dr. Walter Brame
- Address** Message from Diana Sieger
- Equity Champion Awards** Teresa Weatheral Neal
Christina Keller
Dr. Wanda Lipscomb
Tina Freese Decker
- Proclamation** "GRAAHI Healthcare Advocacy Day, Mayor Rosalynn Bliss
- Music** Collective Voices - "Golden"
- Hometown Hero Awards** COMMUNITY CATEGORY
- Kathi Harris
- Rev. Khary Bridgewater
- Lorenzo Bradshaw
- Cle Jackson
GOVERNMENT CATEGORY
- Brian Hartl
- Teresa Branson
- Margo Schlewitz
- Commissioner Robert Womack
HEALTHCARE CATEGORY
- Dr. Talawnda Bragg
- Dr. Lisa Lowery
- Liberty Jacques
- Aundrea Robinson
- Dr. Karen Kennedy
- Melissa Kamara Liggins
- Nastacia Robert
- Tasha Blackmon
- Valissa Armstead
- Entertainment** Xpressions of Praise Dancers - "Hero" by Mariah Carey
- Gratitude** MC & Host Dr. Bernice Patterson
- GRAAHI Overview** Vanessa Greene - Present and Future Goals of GRAAHI
- Special Message** Message from Dr. Bill Pink
- Closing Remarks** MC & Host Dr. Bernice Patterson - Closing Remarks
- Music & Credits** Collective Voices - "Someday" + Closing Credits

LEGACY SPONSORS



**Spectrum
Health**



GRAND RAPIDS
community
FOUNDATION



**GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**

PILLAR SPONSORS

Genentech
A Member of the Roche Group

 **MERCY HEALTH**
A Member of Trinity Health

 **W.K.
KELLOGG
FOUNDATION™**

 **HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**
Caring today for a healthy tomorrow

GRAAHI Gala

SPONSORS, PARTNERS
& FRIENDS OF GRAAHI

WELLNESS SPONSORS



Dr. Khan Nedd

EQUITY SPONSORS



Greg & Meg
Willit



MISSION SPONSORS



CORPORATE SPONSORS

Grand Rapids Public Schools
Grand Rapids Community College
Priority Health
Meijer
Gordon Foods
Brown Hutcherson Ministries

Mars Hill
Hawkins & Co, CPA
Grand Rapids Black Nurses Association
Cascade Engineering
Peter Knoester, MD



20th ANNIVERSARY
2002 | 2022

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF GRAAHI

Twenty years ago, GRAAHI was born out of a need to dismantle health disparities due to widespread studies showing that African Americans experienced the most and worst health disparities in Kent County and the US in general compared to all other racial/ethnic groups. Although great progress has been made over the past 20 years, the COVID-19 pandemic and national reckoning on racial justice amplified that health equity is still not a reality. There has never been a time in which African Americans have not suffered disproportionate burdens of death and disease.

Unprecedented progress requires unprecedented action. As we turn the page to the next chapter of GRAAHI's journey, we must act with fierce urgency to eliminate health disparities. We are mindful of those grieving the loss of loved ones.

We must not only center equity in our response to the COVID pandemic, but also work to address the root causes of health disparities in this country.

To read more about GRAAHI and our founders, go to graahi.com/legacy



April 21, 2022
GRAAHI
Healthcare
Advocacy Day

Crafting a Legacy



REV. DR. WALTER BRAME

Executive Director, GR Urban League (1979-92)

Professor, GRCC & Pastor, Brown Hutcherson Ministries

Catalyst for racial and social justice in Grand Rapids, responsible for creating foundations of support and collaboration within the community.



DR. KHAN NEDD

Founder/Chief Medical Officer, Infusion Associates

Medical Director/Board Member, GRAAHI

Devoted to addressing healthcare disparities, as well as extensive work on the issue of healthcare diversity through research and advocacy.



PAUL DOYLE

Founder/CEO, Inclusive Performance Strategies

Board Chair, GRAAHI

Focused on fostering Diversity, Inclusion and Equity through strategic partnerships and progressive improvement.



People who are leaders and those who leave legacies are just ordinary people, who are not satisfied with the 'ordinary.'

- Dr. Walter Brame



Equity Champions

CHAMPIONS OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We are proud to spotlight four dynamic leaders who are dedicated and committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and utilize their influence to impact positive change. GRAAHI is honored to consider them partners in making West Michigan a thriving community for ALL.

WHAT IS HEALTH EQUITY?

Health equity is the principle underlying a commitment to reduce—and, ultimately, eliminate—disparities in health and in its determinants, including social determinants. Pursuing health equity means striving for the highest possible standard of health for all people and giving special attention to the needs of those at greatest risk of poor health, based on social conditions.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Creating systemic and truly impactful change takes awareness, collaboration and the willingness to work past painful conversations and processes to create equitable and just systems for ALL people.





TINA FREESE-DECKER

CEO of Spectrum Health

Committed to fostering trust within the organization and communities through authentic, transparent communication and building a health system that celebrates and reinforces diversity, equity & inclusion.



TERESA WEATHERALL NEAL

Former Superintendent, Grand Rapids Public Schools President and CEO of LEAD 616

Dedicated to enhancing & empowering members of the educational communities and its stakeholders to create greater access and equity.



CHRSTINA KELLER

President/CEO of Cascade Engineering

A champion for anti-racism, Keller leads Cascade to invest in community by focusing on social & environmental issues, while creating a welfare-to-career program helping employees transition off government assistance.



DR. WANDA LIPSCOMB , PHD

Sr Associate Dean, Diversity & Inclusion Assoc. Dean, Michigan State Univ. College of Human Medicine

A voice for inclusion, Lipscomb is the current Co-Chair of the MSU DEI Steering Committee creating a framework for MSU to broadly address diversity.



NOT ALL
HEROES
WEAR CAPES



COMMUNITY HEROES



KATHI HARRIS

Founder, PROACTIVE; Founder and Executive Director, The Proactive Project, Inc.

Advocates and educates community about COVID-19, skilled trades programs and voting rights.



REV. KHARY BRIDGEWATER

Cofounder and Managing Director of Norstell Capital, LLC; Director of Inspire Equity Foundation

Supervises Kent County Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships Team for COVID-19 collaborative action.



LORENZO BRADSHAW

Principal, Brookwood Elementary School, Kentwood Public Schools

Secured and distributed PPE, hosted multiple testing and vaccination sites, focusing on SE Grand Rapids.



CLE JACKSON

President, Greater Grand Rapids NAACP

Led collaborative, community-wide efforts to communicate, educate, vaccinate and provide financial, rent & food assistance to those most vulnerable.

Hometown Heroes

Not all heroes wear capes, some wear aprons, scrubs or uniforms. These past two years have been challenging for all of us, but especially challenging for those in healthcare and those on the frontlines of providing products and services we need.

These heroes have selflessly served their community and we cannot be more proud they are a part of our growing circle of CARE.

GOVERNMENT HEROES



BRIAN HARTL

Director, Center for Community Health Strategy, Kent County Health Department

Coordinated KCHD's data on cases & vaccines, contact tracing efforts & helped to establish accessible neighborhood clinics with community partners.



TERESA BRANSON

Chief Inclusion Officer, Kent County

Served as deputy incident commander for Kent County Health Department's COVID-19 Incident Command Team & chaired the County's Race, Equity, and Inclusion Team.



MARGO SCHLEWITZ

Manager, Community Health Center, University of Michigan Health-West

Implemented COVID19 testing program & clinics providing 10,000+ vaccines to Black, Asian & Latino communities.



COMM. ROBERT WOMACK

Kent County Commissioner

Promoted grant opportunities and led bi-partisan cooperative government groups to create sustainable improvements in our community.

Hometown Heroes

HEALTHCARE HEROES



DR. TALAWNDA BRAGG

Internal Medicine Hospitalist, Spectrum Health Medical Group

Frontline physician, served as community leader focused on COVID-19 education, prevention, & vaccination efforts.



DR. LISA LOWERY

Section Chief, Adolescent Medicine Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, Spectrum Health

Member of the GR Black Vaccination Community Resource Committee - West MI NNICE.



LIBERTY JACQUES

Director of Infection Prevention and Control, Mercy Health West Michigan

Developed and co-led the Mercy COVID-19 response including outpatient testing centers & embedded clinics.



AUNDREA ROBINSON

President, Grand Rapids Chapter National Black Nurses Association

Collaborated with Kent County to provide COVID-19 vaccinations onsite for the elderly and disabled.



DR. KAREN KENNEDY

Primary Care Regional Medical Director, Mercy Health Physician Partners

Front-line patient care, instrumental in the planning, strategy and execution of COVID vaccinations.

Read the full biographies to to graahi.com/gala2022



MELISSA KAMARA LIGGINS

Senior Director, Inclusive Communications, Beaumont Health, Spectrum Health

Created community-centered platforms for COVID outreach & education targeting underserved communities.



NASTACIEA ROBERT

Director of Contact Center & Access Services Operations, Spectrum Health Hospitals

Created sustainable neighborhood-based clinics within local high-risks communities, promoting holistic health resources.



TASHA BLACKMON

President and Chief Executive Officer, Cherry Health

Developed rapid response testing and vaccination clinics and expanded services to more than 55,000 patients & the community at large.



VALISSA ARMSTEAD

Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Beaumont Health Spectrum Health

Established & co-led Spectrum's Community Vaccination Pop Up Clinics focused on underserved communities.

“ So when you feel like hope is gone, look inside you and be strong and you'll finally see the truth, that a hero lies in you. ”

GRAAHI Gala

SPECIAL THANKS TO...



Host
DR. BERNICE PATTERSON
GRAAHI Advisory Board member, Educational Consultant and our Favorite Hostess who brought humor and energy to our program.



Dream Team
GRAAHI TEAM & VOLUNTEERS
Vanessa Greene, Leisa James, D'onna King, Barbara Lash, Vicki-Lynn Homes, Christina Johnson, Misti Stanton, Cassonya Carter & Christine Mwangi form the dream team that made it all happen.



Dining
LE KABOB
Delicious signature favorites and sweets from locally-owned restaurant delight our tastebuds.

Production

COMMUNITY MEDIA CENTER
Joe Zook, producer, and the whole team at GRCCMC helped us craft an evening to remember.

Gift Bag
MERCANTILE BANK

Curated by GRAAHI Advisory Board member, Misti Stanton, this thoughtful and fun Swag Bag features gifts from black-owned businesses.



COLLECTIVE VOICES



The evening's entertainment is a multi-talented band fronted by phenomenal vocalists, Ashlie Jones, Clarence Xavier Davis, Kirsten Pimpleton, and Millacie Jones.



XPRESSIONS OF PRAISE



Building character & self-esteem through the Art of dance, drama, etiquette, exercise and music, tonight's dancers performed a special honor to our Hometown Heroes.



WITH GRATITUDE, OPTIMISM AND
DETERMINATION WE TAKE ON THE
CHALLENGE OF THE NEXT 20 YEARS.

Give financially. Give of your time. Give of your expertise.

**JOIN US
IN ERADICATING HEALTH DISPARITY**

graahi.com/donate

