



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



## VISION

We envision abundant pathways and strong villages for liberated youth to grow, thrive and achieve lifelong success

## MISSION

We are building a school to success pipeline by dismantling barriers for youth, connecting them to community resources and creating safe, culturally centered spaces and events to cultivate joy and purpose

## VALUES

- We believe that when Black youth are liberated, all youth will be liberated.
- We engage in trauma informed approaches
- We support the self-directed identity and goals of young people
- We work with a racial justice lens
- We cultivate a village response to systemic injustice

## DEAR COMMUNITY,

It's been almost three years since we created Love First Community Engagement as a direct response to the crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the George Floyd uprisings in 2020. As long-time frontline community organizers, we had seen over and over how nonprofits and government agencies undermine the expertise and power of our Black and brown communities when it comes to uprooting injustice and meeting the needs of our families and youth.

So we established our own nonprofit organization to embody a radically different approach, one that centers the self-directed identity and goals of Black youth and supports them through a trauma-informed and racial justice lens.

In 2022, we continued the programming we've become known for in the Twin Cities: community events that foster Black joy and direct financial support and service navigation for Black youth. But, with additional resources, we also grew our impact significantly, adding the Glow & Grow program and Glow Up Conference, and launching the Akoma Cohort with a 6-day tour of Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) for more than 20 Black girls.

We also transitioned leadership, with Satara stepping into the Executive Director role, while Chauntyll continued to provide her guidance and vision to our direction and programming. We're excited to share our 2022 Community Impact and look forward to continuing to work with you – our village – to build a school to success pipeline by dismantling barriers for youth, connecting them to community resources and creating safe, culturally centered spaces and events to cultivate joy and purpose.

In solidarity,

**CHAUNTYLL ALLEN**  
FOUNDER

**SATARA STRONG-ALLEN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# 2022 COMMUNITY IMPACT



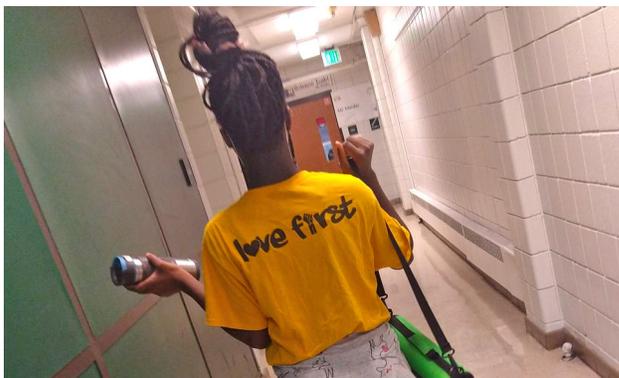
## BLACK JOY

To bring joy and hope to our young people, Love First holds free community events focused on art, activism and healing. **In 2022, we hosted or co-hosted 12 events** – from Uno tournaments to outdoor festivals with music, roller skating and free food – engaging youth from across the Twin Cities. We also lovingly assembled and distributed **more than 300 Black Joy bags** for Black youth and families filled with items like dominoes, incense and playlists to clear negative energy, inspire pride in our culture and elevate Black joy as resistance.



## PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Launched in 2022, the **Akoma Cohort** is an innovative and unique initiative providing experiential learning, educational travel and ongoing support to cultivate and guide a cohort of Black girls on their self-determined path to success, prosperity, and connection to culture and community. We kicked off year one of the Akoma Cohort by taking **24 girls on a six-day tour of Historic Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)** that are inclusive of scholars with lower GPAs. More than a one-time trip, this tour integrated Black history and culture, relationship building among participants and proactive support before and after the excursion to provide ongoing assistance and connection. As of early 2023, **more than half of the participants had applied to HBCUs and seven had been accepted.**



## DIRECT SUPPORT

Our Black youth possess skills and abilities that have been undermined by the stress and trauma of being immersed in systems of structural and institutional racism every day. Love First engages in street and network outreach and provides direct support to youth 16-24 years old. In 2022, we disbursed nearly **\$54,000 in direct financial assistance to Black youth for essentials like housing, food, and transportation.**



## BLACK GIRL BRILLIANCE

Our Glow & Grow program creates intentional space for Black girls to embrace and be affirmed in their unapologetic Black brilliance, joy and resiliency. Through **bi-weekly meetings** from January to May and October to December, Glow & Grow builds networks among Black girls and bridges opportunities in the community for them to step into their full power and chart successful futures on their own terms. In 2022, we also hosted our first **daylong Glow Up conference** that filled to capacity and provided connection and workshops on **creativity, wellness, and healing for more than 50 Black girls, aged 11 to 18 years old.**

"Being in a space where you feel comfortable and surrounded by those of the same background and ancestry holds a divine sense of courage and empowerment.

I had an awakening on this trip within myself, my culture, my education, and my friends who I now consider family."

*Maraya Lucio, Akoma Cohort | HBCU tour*



## glow & grow

"What I'll remember most is being around all Black sisters. Living in a community with nothing but whites, I felt connected and comfortable."

"The conference was motivating, encouraging, and brought a refreshing source of energy and knowledge."

*2022 Glow Up Conference Participants*

## FINANCIALS

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES- 12/31/22

#### REVENUES

Individual Donations	\$14,760
Grants	\$220,000
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>\$234,760</b>

#### EXPENSES

Programs	\$133,533.16
Administration	\$103,472.54
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$237,005.70</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>-\$2,245.70</b>

### THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

*Our work wouldn't be possible without the financial support of:*

- Wellness Collaborative
- F.R. Bigelow Foundation
- Headwaters Foundation
- Pohlad Foundation
- Dozens of individual donors

### THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

*And we can't do this work without the support and collaboration of community partners like Irreducible Grace Foundation and the Black Youth Healing Center; We Win Institute; Wayfinder Foundation; Midway Rise Up, Guns Down, Love Up; Twin Cities Skaters; and Racial Justice Network.*

## STAFF & BOARD



### 2022 STAFF

Chauntyll Allen, Founder

Satara Strong-Allen, Executive Director

### 2022 BOARD

Faith Dietz, Chair

Nekima Levy Armstrong, Treasurer

Carolyn Szczepanski, Secretary

Margaret Sullivan

Amelia Hansa

## CONNECT

### LEARN MORE ON OUR WEBSITE:

[www.lovefirsttc.org](http://www.lovefirsttc.org)

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