MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2020, we launched Youth Guidance Kansas City as the first expansion to support both the Becoming a Man (BAM) and Working on Womanhood (WOW) programs. While Youth Guidance had previously expanded BAM outside of Chicago, Kansas City became WOW’s first expansion site. This move represented our team’s commitment to recognizing and addressing the unique needs of young men and young women.

As we begin our third year, the data is compelling: A preliminary impact report for the 2021-2022 school year showed that the majority of WOW participants reported fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, generalized anxiety, and social anxiety than at the start of the school year. Nearly three-quarters of BAM participants, in turn, showed significant improvement in social-emotional skills.

Our results are derived from the hard work of our counselors and program participants. This hard work has earned Youth Guidance KC both government and philanthropic support. Since Youth Guidance launched BAM and WOW in Kansas City, its positive reception in area schools has attracted additional funders. This has resulted in significant support from local government entities, like the City of Kansas City, Missouri, Jackson County, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, and philanthropic partners, like the Health Forward Foundation, Children Services Fund, and Argosy Foundation.

Expanding within the KC region: Following the success of BAM and WOW in the Hickman Mills C-1 School District, Youth Guidance partnered with the Kansas City Kansas Public School District and the Center School District to bring BAM and WOW to four additional schools during the 2022-2023 school year. These expansions have allowed Youth Guidance to serve approximately 613 students as we closed out the 2022/23 school year.

As we gaze forward, we are excited to deepen our reach in family engagement, youth workforce opportunities, and mental health conversations. We will continue our work supporting bright futures and improving the lives of individuals, families, and communities.