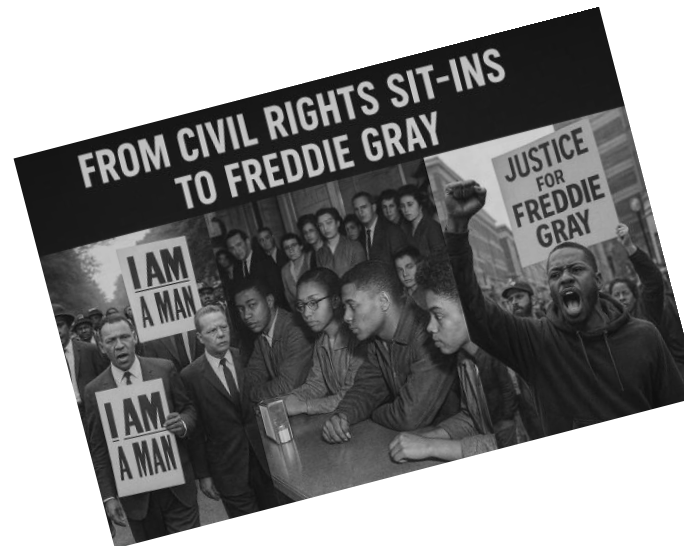


Voices Through Time

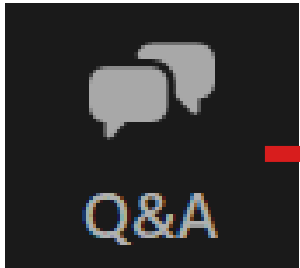
November 20, 2025



Tips for Engagement



- Introduce yourself!
- Talk with one another
- Share resources
- Respond to presenters



- Ask the presenters questions
- Upvote questions you'd like to see answered

- **Live captions** available in the panel by clicking on the “**CC**” at the bottom of the screen
- Who is with us today?
 - Type in the **Chat** to introduce yourself - name, organization, what do you hope to learn today?
 - For all participants to see your message, change to “All panelists and attendees” in the Chat

*** This webinar is being recorded, and will be sent out in one week with the slides.**



Today's Webinar

- A candid conversation about what young people need from you.
- Goal: Provide participants with information that will help them better support youth today
- Voices Through Time is a presentation that empowers Baltimore youth to identify the challenges facing their generation—and to imagine meaningful solutions. Through research and dialogue with students, school staff, and community members, the presentation explores how community and school environments may be blocking success, and what support systems are needed to help young people thrive. By centering youth perspectives, *Voices Through Time* sparks reflection, creativity, and action toward a more supportive future.



Dante McCray



- 21 years old, 2023 graduate of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School
- Dedicated to bridging the gap between young people and adults in Baltimore
- Full-time mentor at Dunbar High School, Youth Leader for For My Kidz (FMK), and leader in JOY Baltimore's Street Chronicles International Mentor Program
- Helps youth from all backgrounds discover their confidence, build discipline, and find their purpose.
- Facilitates conversations that build mutual respect and create stronger, more unified communities.
- Doesn't just talk at young people; he talks with them.

Joshua Sherman



- **17 years old, Junior at Coppin Academy, Principal's Honor Roll**
- **Involved with JOY Baltimore's mentorship program, Street Chronicles, and MERIT (a medical program)**
- **Passion for addressing health disparities comes from his lived experience**
- **Presented at Johns Hopkins Symposium on child mortality rate in women of color**
- **Goal to become a Nurse Practitioner, to make a real difference, to diagnose, treat, and advocate for patients who need someone who understands not just their symptoms, but their stories.**

Jeannette Simon

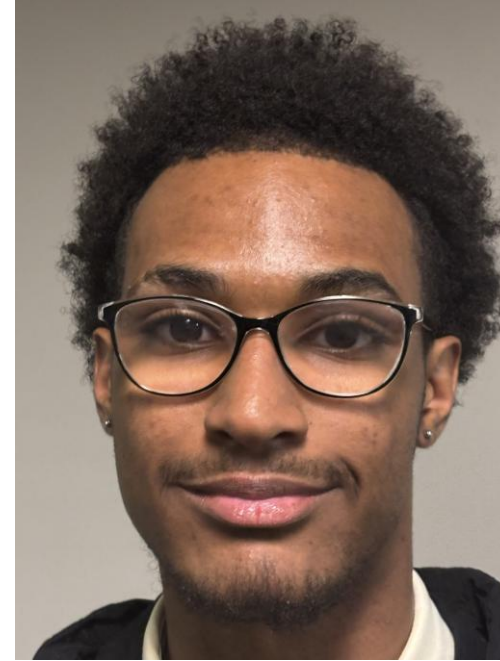


- **32 years of mentoring expertise**, providing technical assistance and trainings to programs at every stage of development
- **Founder and CEO of Ananizach LLC**
- **Director of the mentoring division for Concerned Black Men National**, secured over \$6 million in funding and serving more than 800 African American middle school boys across nine states
- **7 years with the Maryland Mentoring Partnership**
- **8 years developing and co-coordinating a corporate-sponsored mentoring program** at Mergenthaler Vocational High School
- **Collaborated with Dr. Michelle Kaufman at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**, serving as mentor advisor and interview, and earning co-authorship on four published articles
- **1989 Morgan State University graduate**
- **Devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother**

Opening Remarks



Dante McCray



Joshua Sherman



MEET OUR FOUNDER

Lonnie Walker

Turning Pain into Purpose: The Heart Behind J.O.Y. Baltimore

At J.O.Y. Baltimore (Just Our Youth), the mission runs deeper than service—it's personal.

Founder and CEO Lonnie Walker knows the struggles of vulnerable youth because he lived them. Born and raised in Red Hook, Brooklyn, Lonnie turned his own experience with homelessness into a lifelong commitment to empowering at-risk youth with compassion, dignity, and hope.

From Homelessness to Hope: Lonnie's Journey

Lonnie's path wasn't easy. Experiencing homelessness firsthand gave him a deep, unshakable understanding of the fear, loneliness, and instability so many young people face today.

Rather than let his struggles define him, Lonnie made them his purpose. In 2016, fueled by passion—and with nothing but an unemployment check—he founded J.O.Y. Baltimore to fight the growing crisis of youth homelessness in Baltimore City.

No grants. No outside funding. Just a vision: that no young person, no matter their background, gender identity, or circumstances, would be turned away.



Mission

At J.O.Y. Baltimore, we transform personal pain into purpose by empowering at-risk youth to survive, heal, and thrive. Through safe housing, mental health support, and career development, we build brighter futures for Baltimore's most vulnerable young people. No one is ever turned away.

Vision

We envision a Baltimore where every young person—regardless of their past—has the opportunity, support, and hope to create a successful future. J.O.Y. Baltimore is committed to ending youth homelessness, one life at a time.



Our Core Values

Compassion-Driven Service

We believe in meeting every young person with dignity, empathy, and unconditional support. At J.O.Y. Baltimore, compassion fuels our mission to create safe spaces where at-risk youth are seen, heard, and empowered to heal and grow.

Resilience and Empowerment

We transform adversity into opportunity. Through mentorship, housing, mental health care, and career development, we empower youth to build resilience, reclaim their futures, and thrive against all odds.

Inclusivity and Belonging

Every young person deserves to belong. J.O.Y. Baltimore welcomes all youth, regardless of background, identity, or circumstances—creating a community where diversity is celebrated and every voice matters.



Why Choose Our Program

Discover the benefits that set our program apart from the rest.



Mental Health Support

Professional counseling and support services for youth dealing with anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges.



Mentorship Program

Connect with experienced mentors who provide guidance, support, and positive role modeling for personal growth.



Bullying Prevention

Comprehensive programs to create safe spaces and teach effective strategies to prevent and address bullying.



Health & Wellness

Holistic health education and prevention services to promote physical and mental well-being.

MENTAL HEALTH



MENTORSHIP



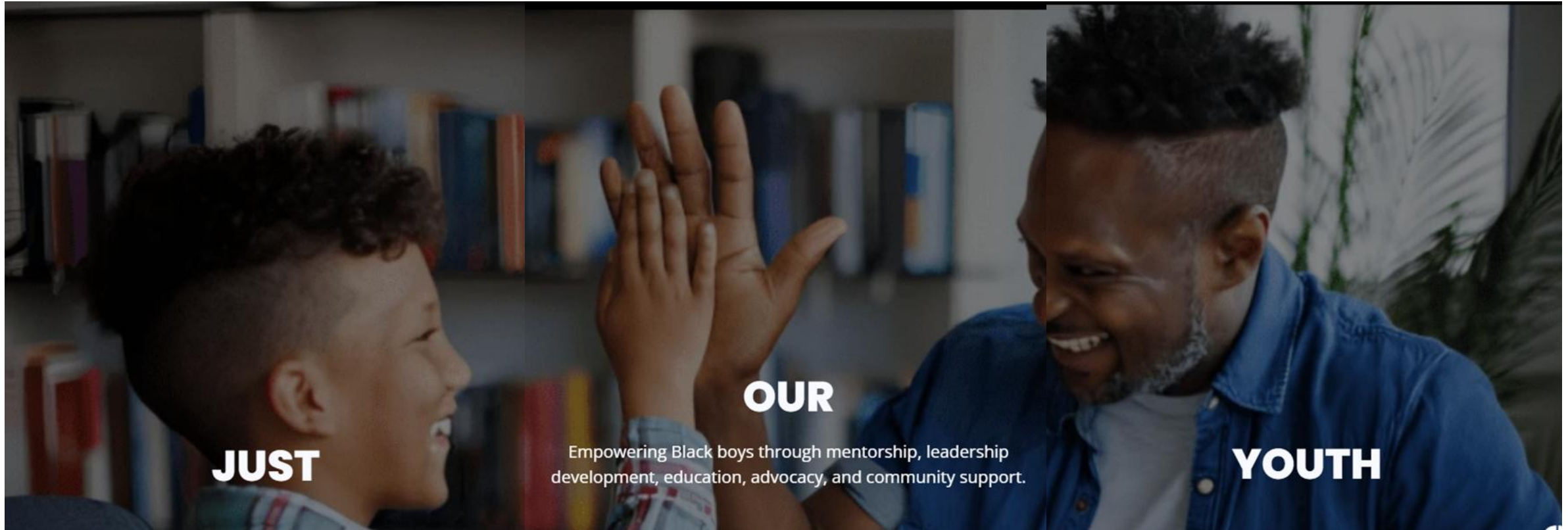
BULLYING



HEALTH & WELLNESS



Empower, Inspire, and Transform!



JUST

OUR

Empowering Black boys through mentorship, leadership development, education, advocacy, and community support.

YOUTH



STREET CHRONICLES

FROM THE STREETS TO THE BOARDROOM

LOOKING FOR A MENTOR?
LOOKING FOR SUPPORT?
WE GOT YOU,

THIS IS THE PLACE TO BE.
A PROGRAM DESIGNED
FOR YOU AND BY YOU



HOUSING



EMPLOYMENT



SCHOLARSHIP-
OPPORTUNITIES



EDUCATION
SUPPORT



HEALTH &
WELLNESS



ENTREPREN-
URSHIP

EVERY MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY | 5PM-7PM

LOCATION:
226 N. PACA STREET

A COLLECTIVE PARTNERSHIP OF BLACK MALE LED ORGANIZATIONS
INTERGENERATIONAL

Street Chronicles

From the Streets to the Boardroom

Street Chronicles is a mentorship and leadership program that empowers Black and Latino youth through guidance, discipline, and real-world exposure. The program blends street experience with professional development to help young men build confidence, purpose, and a clear path toward success.

Key Highlights

Intergenerational mentorship and positive male role models

Leadership, communication, and life-skills development

Professional exposure: business owners, entrepreneurs, and community leaders

Cultural pride, identity building, and brotherhood

Real-world experiences: fine-dining, theater, service projects, community outings

Focus on mindset, discipline, accountability, and growth





“

**IT TAKES ALL OF US
TO MOVE THE
NEEDLE FORWARD.**

LONNIE WALKER

Founder



<https://joybaltimore.org/>

Why We Choose This Conversation

Does Anybody Really Listen?

The biggest gap when it comes to supporting Black youth in Baltimore? Adults don't really listen. Like, they say they care, they say they want to help, but then they don't ask us what we actually need. Or worse, they ask and then don't believe us when we tell them the truth. It's like they already made up their minds about what our problems are before we even open our mouths. And that right there—that's the gap. That's what makes real support feel impossible.

We're dealing with real stuff out here. Trauma. Violence. Grief. Stress that most people our age shouldn't have to carry. But when we go to school counselors, half the time they don't look like us. They don't get where we're coming from. So we don't feel safe opening up. And even when we do try to talk, it feels like they're just reading from some script, checking boxes, not actually *hearing* us.

Then there's the creative side. So many of us are out here doing amazing things—music, fashion, tech, activism—but the programs that are supposed to support us? Either they're broke and underfunded, or they're not even built with us in mind. They're built for who adults *think* we are, not who we actually are.

And don't even get me started on those meetings and news panels where grown folks sit around talking about "saving" Black youth. Like we're some kind of problem that needs fixing. We're not a problem. We have ideas. We have leadership. We have solutions. We just need people to actually trust us and give us the mic instead of talking over us.

That's it. That's what's missing. Trust. And someone willing to really listen.



Question

What's one thing at school that makes you feel like your voice doesn't matter — and what would change that?

“All school rules are made up by adults. Listen to the youth just to see what they have to say” 16 yrs

“Sometimes, teachers and staff already made up their minds about who I am before I say anything” 16 yrs

Solution: *“I wish they would listen without having to put their own judgement in, or maybe have more student led meetings where we can actually speak about what is going on instead of just being told what to do” 16 yr old*



Question

Outside of school, what's something in your neighborhood or home life that makes it harder to succeed in class or plan for your future?

"I live over in West Baltimore, There is always police sirens noise and sometimes arguments outside. It is always so hard to focus or sleep. My mom works two jobs and I take care of my little brother. By the time I sit down for homework, I am already drained" 16yrs



Question

What helps you feel safe, respected, and motivated — and what shuts you down or makes you want to give up?

“What helps is when teachers treat me like a person and not just a student ID. When they check in, say what I did right or just talk to me like an adult, I feel respected. What shuts me down is when I get yelled at in front of the class or when people assume the worst of me because of my appearance” 16 yrs



Question

How do you build trust and connection with students, especially those who seem disengaged or frustrated?

“I treat students like the young adults they are. I try to meet them at their level, literally and emotionally. I also keep it real-I share a lot of myself.” 32 yrs



Question

What do you think youth wish adults understood about their lives, struggles, or dreams — and how can we listen better?

“ I think students feel misunderstood overall. We can listen better by simply listening” 32 yrs

“There is a big change in this present generation, especially in technology,” 64 yrs



Questions?



MENTOR

Closing Thoughts



Contact Our Panelists

Dante's Email: mccraydante79@gmail.com

Joshua's Email: joshsherman2527@gmail.com

Jeannette's Email: japsimon@ananizach.com



ANANIZACH.COM



Additional Resources

Affiliates

MENTOR Affiliates can support with training, resources, public awareness and advocacy. [Find your local affiliate here.](#)

Mentoring Connector

Recruit mentors by submitting your program to the [Mentoring Connector](#).

National Mentoring Resource Center

Check out the [OJJDP National Mentoring Resource Center](#) to access evidence-based mentoring resources and to apply for no-cost training and technical assistance.

Mentoring Program's Guide to Youth Participatory Action Research

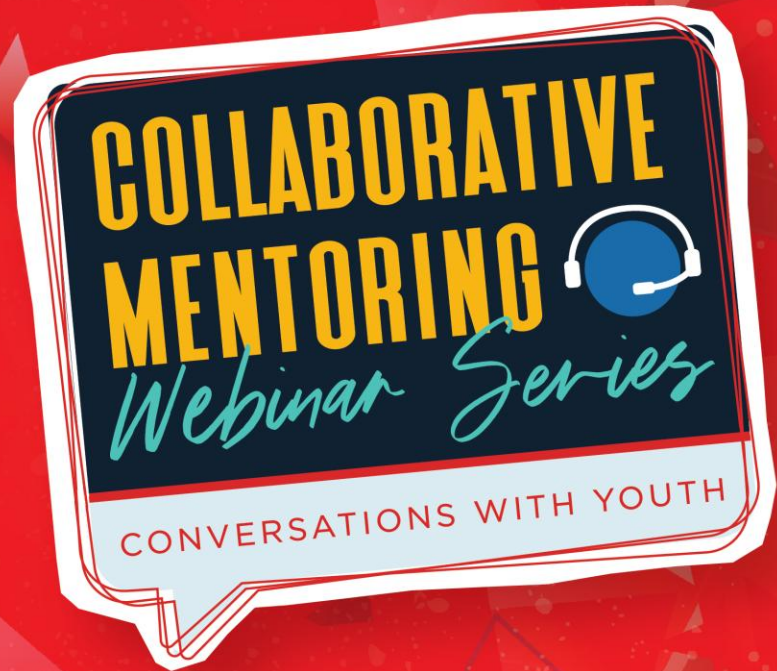
In the guidebook, readers can discover more about the background and benefits of YPAR, information on the process and guidance for using the approach, planning worksheets for adults in mentoring programs to get started, and more!



Remember!

- Please take **3-4 minutes to complete the anonymous survey** to let us know how we did!
- Within a week, you will receive an email with information on how to download the **slides, recording, and resources** on the CMWS webpage on MENTOR's website.





Join Us Next Month!

**Conversations with Youth
December 18
3 – 4:30 PM EST**