



URBAN HEALTH INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

The mission of the Urban Health Initiative is to improve the health of and decrease disparities among diverse and underserved populations in Atlanta.

HIGHLIGHTS

3

Community Partners:
Mothers Against Gang
Violence

4-5

Event Spotlight: Garden
Buildout & Violence
Intervention Session

6-7

Program Recap: ACC
Program

8

Program Highlight:
Sprouting Readers

9-11

Programs and Initiatives:
Walk With A Doc & HCC

12

Team Member
Spotlight

VISIT WEBSITE FOR MORE

A Message from Dr. Moore

In our January newsletter, we highlight several ongoing initiatives and recent events that reflect our commitment to community outreach and health equity. As we begin the new year, the Urban Health Initiative sincerely thanks you for your continued support.

We are also grateful for our community partners who work alongside us to address health disparities and to serve the Atlanta community.

The Urban Health Initiative remains committed to fostering growth and positive change across Atlanta, and we look forward to continuing this work together in the year ahead.

Thank you.

Charles E. Moore, MD, FAACE



MOTHERS AGAINST GANG VIOLENCE



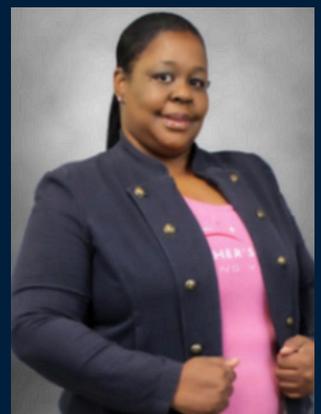
Mothers Against Gang Violence is a nonprofit organization in Atlanta, GA. They are a pillar in the Atlanta community, constantly working to reduce to the impact and prevalence of Gang violence in Atlanta. Founded by Ms. Takesia Shields, MAGV works to amplify the voices of families harmed by gang violence, promote healing, and advance community-led solutions that create safer environments for youth. Through partnerships with schools, the justice system, and local organizations, MAGV works to creates safe environments where youth can thrive.

MAGV believes that meaningful youth engagement starts with trust. Their approach centers relatable leaders, youth voice and choice, and safe, welcoming spaces where relationships come first. By prioritizing mentorship and connection, MAGV meets young people where they are and empowers them to grow. They are also continually evolving their programming to reflect the lived realities, cultural identities, and changing needs of the youth and families they serve.

While rooted in the experiences of mothers, MAGV intentionally includes fathers, grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, and other male caregivers. MAGV recognizes the vital role they play in shaping youth behavior and strengthening families.

Looking ahead, MAGV is developing a **Memorial Garden** that will serve as a space for healing, reflection, and connection for the entire community. This ongoing project kicked off with the Garden Buildout in partnership with the Urban Health Initiative, which will be highlighted in the next article.

Get Involved: Community members can support MAGV by volunteering time and skills, providing in-kind resources, partnering to expand services, supporting youth development initiatives, or offering financial support.



Ms. Tekesia 'TK' Shields

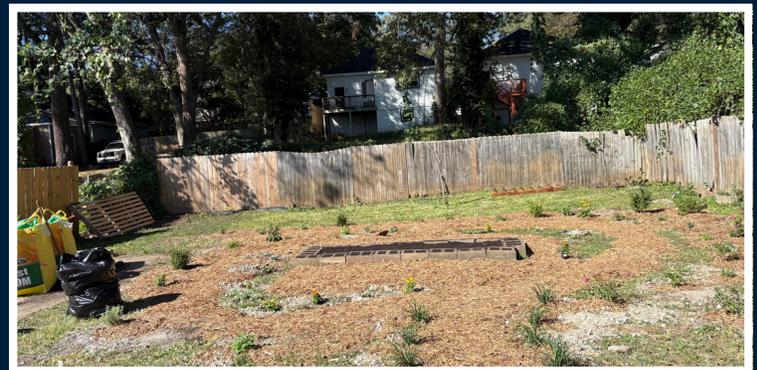
Garden Buildout with Mothers Against Gang Violence

“This garden will honor the lives lost to violence while creating a space where families and youth can heal, reflect, and come together in strength and remembrance. The garden will be co -designed with families, mothers, and youth to ensure that it reflects the stories, cultural identity, and resilience of community.”

-Mothers Against Gang Violence

The Urban Health Initiative partnered with Mothers Against Gang Violence for a Garden Build Out at the MAGV headquarters. Teen and adult volunteers came together to construct a memorial garden honoring victims of gun violence. The garden will also serve as an outdoor classroom and community space, providing fresh fruits and vegetables.

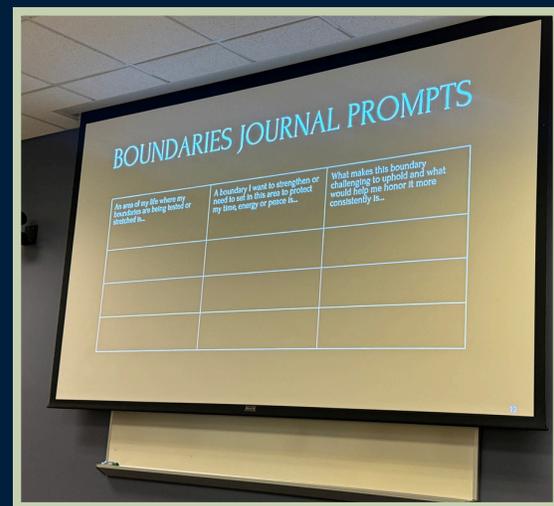
During the event, volunteers learned urban gardening techniques while giving back to youth in Atlanta communities. The build-out fostered teamwork, community connection, and a shared commitment to healing and growth.



Event Spotlight

Violence Intervention Wellness Experience Session

The Urban Health Initiative hosted a Violence Intervention Wellness Experience Session titled *The Art of Thriving During Uncertainty*. This powerful session was led by Kiera Walker, a community leader known for her work empowering organizations and fostering healing and transformation.

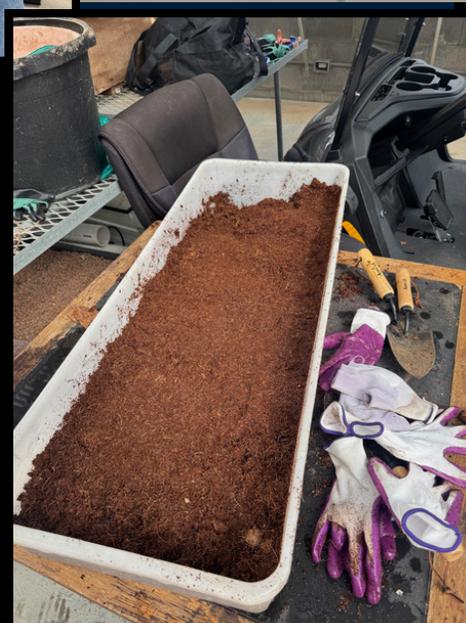
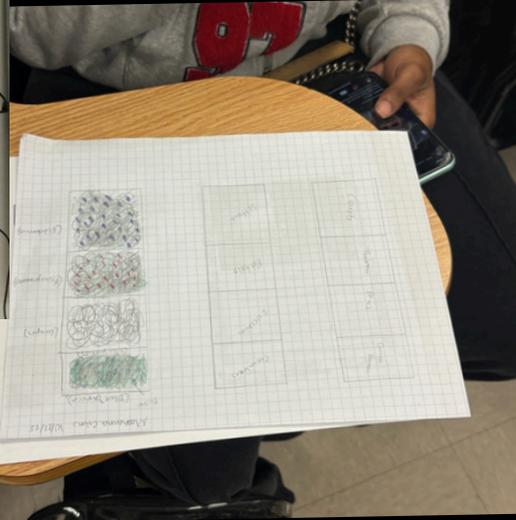
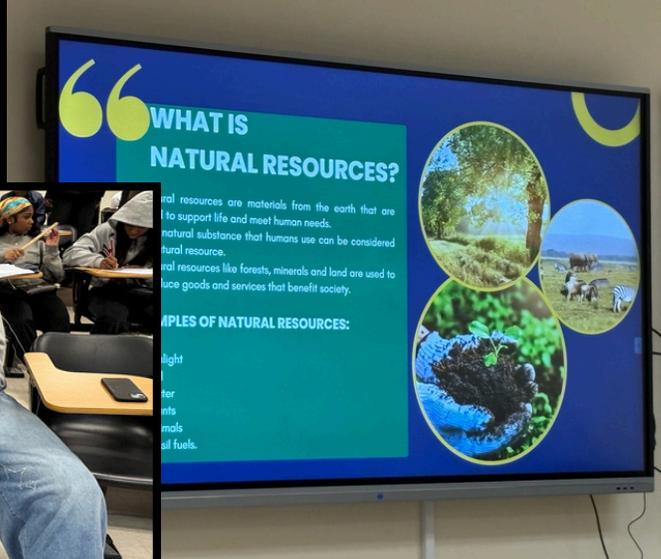
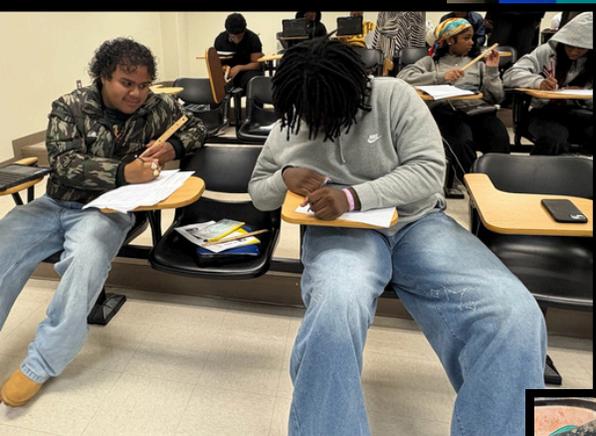
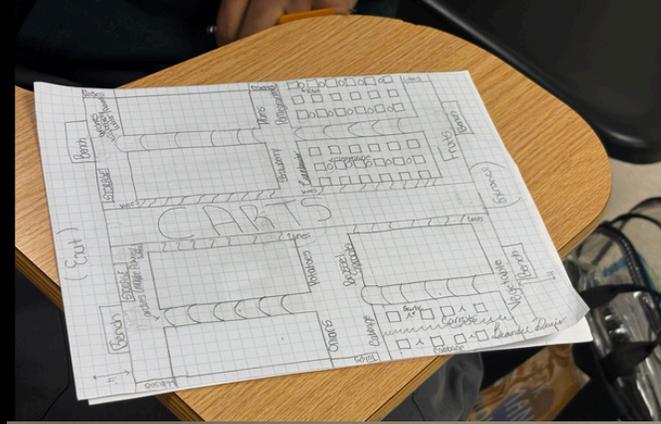


Designed as a safe and supportive space for Violence Intervention Practitioners, the session guided participants through a calming meditation followed by an interactive workshop focused on self-care, emotional wellness, and healthy coping strategies. Participants appreciated the open dialogue, group discussions, and sense of connection throughout the experience. The Urban Health Initiative looks forward to hosting two more virtual wellness events in the future.





ACC PROGRAM RECAP





ACC PROGRAM RECAP



Fall 2025



This November we wrapped up the Fall Agricultural Careers Collaborative program at Benjamin E. Mays High School. The program was led by Taffany Hyatt, an agriculturalist who facilitates garden workshops and the development of community gardens around the state of Georgia. Under her instruction, engineering and environmental health students attended the ACC program sessions once a week. The students learned about the impact of agriculture on the environment, economy, climate, and food insecurity. The students particularly enjoyed conversations about careers and educational pathways in the fields of environmental health and agricultural engineering. They also enjoyed Taffany's way of connecting the course material to current events and bringing about interesting group discussions. Earlier in the year Mays High School received a grant from the Home Depot Foundation that will be used to reconstruct the onsite greenhouse and garden site. Toward the end of the session the students created designs for the school garden and greenhouse that will be used during the process.

SPROUTING READERS

The Sprouting Readers program had its first session at Dunaire Elementary School (Clarkston) in November with Joan Wilson and three 1st year Medical Students from the Community Learning and Social Medicine (CLSM) Program at Emory School of Medicine. The med students, Abby Recko, Jessica Schlewitt and Oluwajimi Adedoyin, read an African folktale to the children and we followed up with a discussion on social and emotional aspects of the book. Joan presented a STEM lesson on how seedlings germinate, which was a topic related to the story as well. The story and lessons were enjoyed by 25 kindergarden students at Dunaire.

The Sprouting Readers program has also been taking place at the Agape Youth & Family Center in NW Atlanta for the past 7 years. Our lead volunteer coordinator for Agape, Robert Hudson, led the children in a game of "Jeopardy," featuring questions about the featured book and nutrition lesson which followed the book-reading. We consistently serve around eighteen 2nd grade children at Agape each week. Our volunteer team at Agape is composed of undergraduate students from Emory and Georgia Tech. These same devoted volunteers also offer the program outdoors on select Saturdays at the Sara J. Gonzalez Park in NW Atlanta.

Thank you to our volunteers! (listed below)



Abby Recko



Robert Hudson



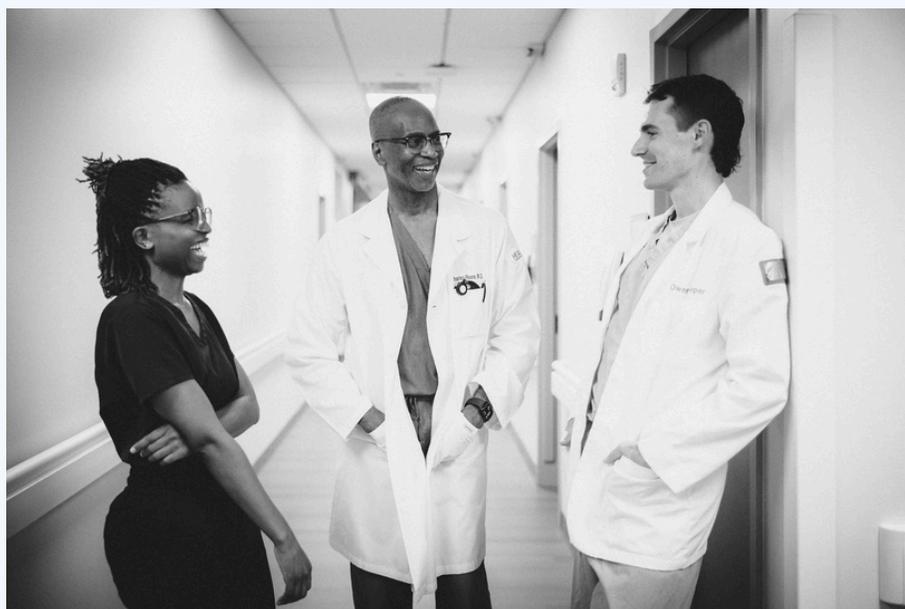
Sanjit Hajgude and Joshua



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

WALK WITH A DOC

Walk With A Doc is a global health initiative that promotes community wellness and healthy living. The Urban Health Initiative hosts its own chapter, bringing together Emory University health professionals and community members, for guided walks and conversations around a variety of health topics. These walks create opportunities for participants to receive informal health guidance, connect with professionals in a relaxed setting, and build relationships with others in their community.



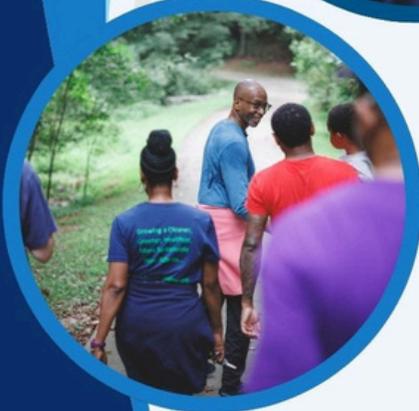
PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

WALK WITH A DOC

Walk With A Doc brings community members together for movement and conversation. Walk alongside healthcare professionals, ask questions, and connect with others in your community.



Join us at Lionel Hampton Trail

Saturdays @ 9am

366 Willis Mill Rd, Atlanta, GA 30310



walk with a DOC
educate. exercise. empower.

Volunteers Needed



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Urban Health
Initiative

Health Career Collaborative with Benjamin E. Mays High School

Calling all Healthcare professionals and students!

This is an opportunity for you to

- inspire the next generation by sharing your story
- educate the youth about healthcare careers and pathways that they may not be familiar with
- mentor students as they explore their future goals

Scan the QR code to sign up!



**All health fields are welcome.
We Need You!**



ADRIANA WILLIAMS

Adriana Williams is the Community Engagement & Program Operations Specialist at the Urban Health Initiative. She is currently completing her National Service Year with AmeriCorps and the One World Link Organization. Adriana joined UHI in October 2025, and supports community partner collaboration, mailing list management, data analysis, and project coordination.



Adriana is an alumna of Georgia State University, where she earned her Master of Public Health degree. She is passionate about public health, disease prevention, addressing social inequities, and improving access to healthcare across the state of Georgia. Adriana previously interned with Georgia State University's Center on Health and Homelessness. She researched public restroom access and the stigmatization of unhoused individuals in Atlanta. Adriana hopes to continue contributing to meaningful and impactful public health efforts.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Health Career Collaborative program at Benjamin E Mays High School will have its Spring kick off on January 15, 2026.



Sprouting Readers continues at Dunaire Elementary School and the Agape Youth and Family Center for the Spring semester



The Walk With A Doc program takes places every Saturday at 9am.

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who supported The Urban Health Initiative this year. Your support means so much to us! We look forward to the year ahead.

Happy New Year!