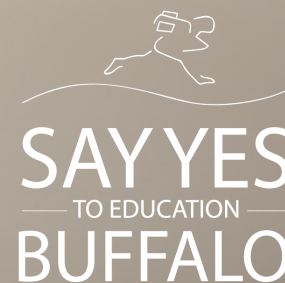


Say Yes Buffalo Report to the Community 2018-2019



Growing Opportunities, Awakening Leaders



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Growing Opportunities, Awakening Leaders

We asked students, parents and staff to share how Say Yes Buffalo is growing opportunities, awakening leaders!



"When we were homeless, I had to constantly remind myself not to fall apart. I want the best future for my kids. Sometimes parents go through things their own parents don't understand, but other people do; like my Say Yes Family Support Specialist. I want to be able to take my kids on trips, for them to attend college, and not to make the same mistakes I did."

—Laquita Hill, parent

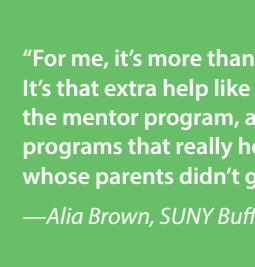
"I wouldn't have been able to go to Morgan State. I encourage all students to apply for Say Yes Buffalo's Scholarship whether it's for as SUNY, private, or HBCU. Say Yes lays multiple opportunities at your feet."

—Cameron Wilson, Morgan State University student
(civil engineering)



"Being the first person in my family to go to college came with tremendous responsibilities, especially financially. Without Say Yes I may not have been able to cover the cost of my attendance."

—Darisa Bridges, student at SUNY Erie (psychology)



"For me, it's more than just a tuition scholarship. It's that extra help like completing the FAFSA, the mentor program, and the summer academy programs that really help a student like me, whose parents didn't go college themselves."

—Alia Brown, SUNY Buffalo State (media production)



FROM THE SCHOLARSHIP BOARD CHAIR AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Say Yes Buffalo's 2018-2019 Report to the Community!



Bill Joyce

Chair of the Say Yes
Buffalo Scholarship
Board



David Rust

Executive Director of
Say Yes Buffalo

Please allow me to introduce myself—my name is Bill Joyce and I am the new Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship Board Chair. It has been a pleasure to serve on this Board for the past eight years under the stewardship of Alphonso O'Neil-White and I look forward to leading the Board for this truly special organization. I want to thank Alphonso for his unwavering support of Say Yes Buffalo's mission and his inspiring commitment to lifting up the bright young people of Buffalo through education. He has been a vital leader of this initiative and we owe a debt of gratitude to him for his leadership.

The work of Say Yes Buffalo is unique because its success is evident not only in

the way it has improved the quality of life for thousands of students in Buffalo through education, but because this first-class initiative is measurable and visible. The impressive and unprecedented outcomes of this organization, outlined within, have caught the attention of national philanthropies who see Buffalo's students as a worthwhile investment with great potential. Here at Say Yes Buffalo, we couldn't agree more.

We are thrilled to announce a \$3.6 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which will fund work aimed at drastically increasing post-secondary success for the students of Buffalo. As part of this initiative,

Say Yes Buffalo is working closely with local institutions of higher education, including Buffalo State College, Medaille College, SUNY Erie, Villa Maria College and the University at Buffalo. Each of these schools has hired college success counselors who will work individually with Say Yes students at their schools in order to increase retention rates and, ultimately, graduation rates. This important work will fall under the umbrella of the newly-established Buffalo College Success Network, which will convene and facilitate local knowledge to align existing college success programs under a single strategy to improve post-secondary access and success. You'll read more about this exciting new

program in this annual report.

As you may recall, last year, the *Say Yes...Forever* campaign launched, with the goal to fund tuition scholarships in perpetuity through a \$100 million endowment. Seeded by a \$25 million anonymous challenge gift and a \$10 million commitment from the State of New York, and in partnership with the team of volunteers who serve on the Say Yes Endowment Committee chaired by Nick and Courtney Sinatra, we are looking to raise an additional \$25 million from local sources (of which \$5 million has been committed to date), \$25 million from national funders, and \$15 million from state governments. Once raised, Buffalo's students will have access to a tuition-free college education for generations to come.

We are so proud to celebrate the success of the more than 1,000 Say Yes Buffalo scholars who have graduated with two- or four-year degrees and look forward to sharing their stories—and those of the more than 2,500 scholars who are on their way to graduating—with all of you, who have invested so much in their education and future. Here at Say Yes Buffalo, we share your enthusiasm for seeing the youngest among us earn college degrees, find gainful employment, and contribute meaningfully to the city they call home.

We hope you enjoy reviewing the work of the past school year enclosed in this report. We are proud of the

accomplishments of the Say Yes Buffalo partnership and look forward to continued gains in the future. As always, none of this work could have been possible without the unwavering support of our investors and partners. Thank you for joining us as we strive to make tuition-free college education available to Buffalo's students for many decades to come.

Gratefully,



William Joyce,
*Chair of the Say Yes Buffalo
Scholarship Board*



David Rust,
*Executive Director of
Say Yes Buffalo*



"Without Say Yes I probably would have not been able to afford Daemen College, let alone a college of my choice; and my mentor is like another mother figure to me, she's family. I can talk to her about anything and she always keeps it real with me."

—Dayonna Johnson, Daemen College student (psychology) and participant in Mentoring Program



"Summer Camp is a place for children to become anything they want to be with the encouragement of the staff. When it comes to children they are our future, and I want them to be anything they want to be."

—Charmesa Brown, Director and Full Site Coordinator at William C. Baird Boys & Girls Club located on Bailey Avenue

TOP 10 HIGHLIGHTS 2018-2019



1. Say Yes...Forever Campaign Raises \$40 Million

The Say Yes...Forever campaign to fund the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship in perpetuity was launched in 2018. A five-year effort lead by campaign co-chairs Nick and Courtney Sinatra, the \$100 million campaign was seeded by a \$25 million anonymous challenge gift that must be matched with \$25 million each from local funders, national funders, and New York State. We are grateful to the more than 100 local donors who have committed nearly \$5 million to the \$25 million local campaign to date, especially First Niagara Foundation in Partnership with KeyBank for their \$2 million gift to establish the Gary M. Crosby Endowed Scholarship Fund and Delaware North/The Jacobs Family for their second \$1 million commitment.

2. Gates Foundation Investment Helps Launch the Buffalo College Success Network

The Buffalo College Success Network is here! Thanks to a \$3.6 million investment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Buffalo Public School graduates will now have curriculum, mental health clinics, and access to on-campus success counselors and near-peer mentors to ensure a successful transition from high school to college. The work of the Buffalo College Success Network will focus on increasing persistence so that more students will graduate with a postsecondary degree, bringing additional revitalization to our already booming economy. Special thank you to Buffalo State College, SUNY Erie, Medaille College, Villa Maria College, University at Buffalo and the Buffalo Public Schools for collaborating on this important effort.



3. Community Schools Receive "2019 Districts of Distinction" Award

In 2016, the Buffalo Public Schools and Say Yes Buffalo joined forces to bring the Strong Community Schools initiative to 13 struggling elementary and high schools. As part of the initiative, four Parent Centers also opened at high schools across the city. Through Strong Community Schools, the schools were positioned as a resource to the neighborhood—ultimately leading to improved student learning, increased parent engagement, and healthier students. Since that launch, Community School Saturday Academies have had more than 94,000 visits across four zones, and the Parent Centers have assisted over 25,000 parents. In 2019, the Strong Community Schools received the "2019 Districts of Distinction Award" from national thought leader District Administration. Say Yes Buffalo thanks the hundreds of partners who implement high quality programs, and the entire community for your active participation.



4. New Program Supports Students With Chronic Health Conditions

With generous support from the BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York Blue Fund, Say Yes expanded the types of services available to families in Buffalo's schools to support those students managing chronic health conditions. Now active in 10 schools, students dealing with asthma, diabetes, and trauma have access to wrap-around supports that include a specific focus on the medical condition(s) that might hinder their school performance. In the first year, 140 students were served with a goal to double that in year two.

5. Summer Camp Programs Grow

This past summer marked the fifth year that Say Yes partnered with Buffalo Public Schools, Erie County, the City of Buffalo, faith and community-based organizations to provide free summer enrichment camps to students ages five through 12. More than 1,300 students took part in the six-week camps which provide breakfast, lunch, a mix of academic enrichment, and fun meant to engage students to prevent summer-learning-loss. Thirty-one sites were active around the city and of those, 27 provided a full-day of programming. Funding for the camps comes from the Cullen Foundation, City of Buffalo, Erie County, the Buffalo Public Schools, and Say Yes Buffalo.



Welcome to



6. Citi Foundation Makes Third Grant to Internship and Career Pathways Program

We are thankful to Citi Foundation for their partnership and support of our scholars. The Foundation recently donated an additional \$100,000 for a total of \$600,000 toward the Internship & Career Pathways Program, that has grown tremendously over the past year. A total of 77 students were hired across 86 internships for the spring and summer of 2019. Over the summer, interns also participated in six professional development workshops to further enhance their skills in preparation for the workforce. At the conclusion of their internships and workshops, eligible students were able to receive a Chromebook to aid them in their studies. Thank you to Citi, all the employers that partnered with Say Yes Buffalo to hire students, and to the Say Yes Scholars for doing a great job!



7. New Program Targets Pre-K Students' Development

Say Yes in partnership with Buffalo Public Schools and Help Me Grow WNY screened 70% of all three- and four-year-olds entering the Buffalo schools for the 2018-19 school year to help assess their social-emotional growth and development. Parents with students who are determined to be off-track are connected to community and school-based supports to address any challenges identified and ensure their children start their school careers ready to thrive.

8. More Parents Received Support Through Buffalo Public Schools

Since 2016, in partnership with Buffalo Public Schools, Say Yes Buffalo and dozens of community partners, Parent Centers at Lafayette, East, Bennett, and South Park high schools have served over 25,785 parents through 9,548 engagement activities. Through Parent Academy and Adult Education workshops and frequent engagement activities throughout the year, parents are informed, supported, and equipped to support themselves and their students. Free meals are offered at all Parent Academy workshops, Adult Education classes, and parent & family engagement activities. Since 2016, 21,192 meals have been served to thousands of parents and families.





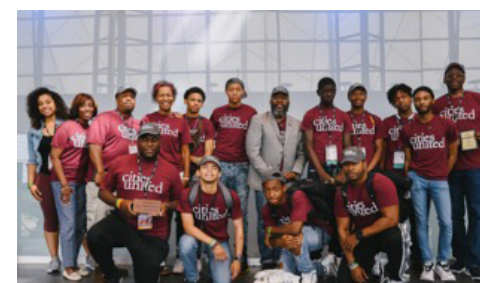
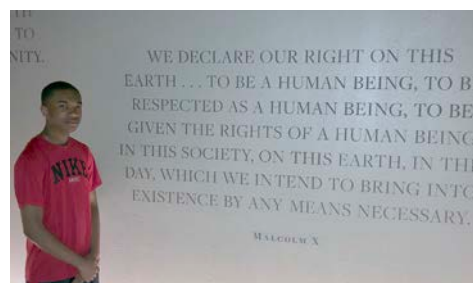
9. 2019 College Kickoff A Success!

On one of the first Saturdays this summer, nearly 200 high school seniors filled Bennett High School to learn what they could expect from the college experience. Thanks to our many college partners, staff, and the Buffalo Public Schools, our students will be better prepared for this next step in their educational journey.



10. Breaking Barriers Participating in Cities United National Convening

From August 20-23, a delegation of young men from the Say Yes Buffalo Breaking Barriers Youth Leadership Council attended the Cities United National Convening in Hampton, Virginia. The goal of the convening was to further establish policies and strategies that reduce homicides and shootings of young men of color. The students were introduced to mayors from around the nation, and other young people who are committed to restoring hope, building pathways to justice, employment, and education and increasing opportunities for boys and young men of color. Students also participated in the 2019 Commemoration of the First African Landing which remembered the first enslaved Africans brought to America 400 years prior, at Point Comfort, Virginia.





ABOUT SAY YES BUFFALO

Say Yes Buffalo is a landmark partnership that brings together the Buffalo Public School District, parents, the Buffalo Teachers Federation, the Buffalo Association of Administrators and Supervisors, higher education, the City of Buffalo, Erie County, Say Yes to Education, Inc., and a diverse group of Buffalo area corporate, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations to organize people, time, money and resources to provide holistic, year-round support to Buffalo Public School District students throughout their K-12 years and beyond. Say Yes Buffalo and its partners believe every student can graduate high school and college when given the proper supports, resources and opportunities.

Say Yes Buffalo partners facilitate comprehensive supports, including tuition scholarships to one of more than 170 colleges and universities for those who meet residency, graduation and admission requirements. These supports are aligned with what research indicates is needed to enable every child in the program to achieve his or her potential and include:

- After school and summer programming
- College preparation supports
- College scholarships
- Health care
- Legal services
- Mental health care
- Mentoring
- Paid internships
- Social services and family supports

When it was announced in December 2011, Say Yes Buffalo became the second Say Yes chapter to partner with an entire city school district. Other cities where Say Yes has had a presence are Cambridge, MA; Hartford, CT; New York City, NY; Philadelphia, PA ; Syracuse, NY; Guilford County, NC and Cleveland, OH.

PROGRAMS & SUPPORTS FOR BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS PK-12

The Say Yes Buffalo Partnership brings student and family support services directly into school buildings, making them easier to access. The programs and services explained here are available to assist Buffalo Public School students reach their full academic potential, and prepare them for high school graduation, college and career.



Social Services & Health Home Care Coordination

Say Yes Buffalo school-based staff, called Family Support Specialists (FSS), provide services to every school building. They are responsible for working with students struggling with attendance or behavior problems and their families to get back on track. FSS connect students and their families to health, mental health, after school, and basic needs programs. They also provide individual and group mentoring for the student and/or family to assist with navigating school processes including registration, enrollment and parent-teacher conferences. Service is provided to students and families through two programs, school-based preventive services, and health home care coordination.

Mental Health Care

Mental health counseling is available to students within their school buildings. Participation in counseling can be self-identified or referred by teachers, parents, and other school building administrators. Services are provided by licensed clinical mental health professionals and are billed to the student's health insurance (for example: private insurance or Medicaid).

In-School and Mobile Health Care

Some schools have in-school health clinics that provide students with basic health care, including physical screenings and immunizations. Mobile Health Buses are parked at various school locations to provide primary and reproductive health care to students where in-school services are not available. Services are provided by licensed medical professionals and are billed to the student's health insurance (private insurance or Medicaid). Families who do not have health insurance will receive help with getting it.

Legal Advice

In partnership with the ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project, free legal advice is available for all Buffalo Public School students and families on non-criminal legal matters, year-round. Clinic hours are as follows on days when school is in session: Wednesdays at the BPS Adult Education Center, 12:00-2:00pm and Thursdays at East Community High School, 3:30-5:30pm. During summer months legal clinics operate at the Adult Education Center on Wednesdays from 12:00-2:00pm.

Summer Camp

Free summer camp is available for Buffalo Public School students in pre-kindergarten through 6th grade. Summer camp combines academics with fun enrichment activities and are located throughout the city at churches and community centers.

Early Childhood Development

In partnership with Help Me Grow WNY, resources are available to families for the monitoring of child development from birth to six years as well as ongoing support during those years to keep children on track and growing strong. Help Me Grow also provides free support to families, caregivers, and educators to help identify young children at risk for developmental or behavioral challenges. This connects them to community-based services and supports that address any issues identified. Visit www.helpmegrowny.org for more information.

Strong Community Schools

A Community School brings together school and community resources to improve student learning, create stronger families, and healthier communities. It integrates academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement. Twenty-one schools have become a hub of information and resources to meet the needs of students, parents, and community members. For a full list of Community Schools activities, visit www.buffaloschools.org/communityschools.

Parent Centers

BPS Parent Centers are located at four Community High Schools (Bennett, East, Lafayette, and South Park). The Parent Centers provide families with education, resources, and programming that build parents' knowledge, skills, and networks for supporting and partnering in their child's education. To achieve this goal, a variety of activities, services, and learning sessions are offered daily. In addition, the welcoming atmosphere attracts adults for relaxation and self-care for children in our purposeful play areas. For more information visit www.buffaloschools.org/Page/3630.

Boys and Men of Color

The Say Yes Buffalo "Breaking Barriers" Youth Leadership Council is a program of the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable's Boys and Men of Color Initiative. This program is aimed at accelerating positive outcomes for boys and young men of color across the cradle-to-career continuum. Participation is open to young men of color ages 12-24 years. Participants agree to a one year commitment where they learn how to elevate their voices to advocate for social justice, racial equity, and policy change in our community. For more information, visit www.breakingbarriersbuffalo.org.

College and Financial Aid Application Supports

Free services are available to students applying to college and for financial aid. Through the FAFSA Completion Project and the NYGEAR UP Program, students can get one-on-one help deciding what colleges to apply to, how to prepare a great application, and how to prepare and apply for financial aid. Services are available in every public high school building. Talk to your school's Guidance Counselor or call the FAFSA Completion Office at 716-645-1116 or visit www.cscbuffalo.org for more information.



PROGRAMS & SUPPORTS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Once a Buffalo public or charter school student graduates from high school and enrolls at any SUNY/CUNY or Say Yes partner private college, they become a Say Yes Buffalo Scholar. As a Scholar, they are eligible for additional supports and services after they graduate from high school.



College Kickoff for Incoming Freshmen

Each summer, Say Yes Buffalo hosts a free “College Kickoff” event to introduce students to what to expect when they get to college, and give them the tools to be successful once they begin. All graduating high school seniors are eligible to attend.

Internship & Career Pathways Program

Buffalo Public School graduates who have completed their first year of college are able to apply for paid internships at companies and organizations throughout Western New York. Students are supported with coaching, workshops and trainings on topics such as resumes, preparing cover letters, interviewing skills, and networking. These opportunities have been cultivated specifically to provide a direct pipeline from college to career after students earn their degree. More information is available at SayYesToYourCareer.org.

Scholar Mentoring Program

Buffalo Public School graduates entering their freshman year at a Western New York college or university can apply to be matched with a mentor. The pair meets consistently for 18 months, and the mentor guides the student through the transition to college.

Summer Success Academies

Say Yes Buffalo scholars who attend Buffalo State College, SUNY Erie or Medaille College have the opportunity to enroll in free summer programs prior to the start of their freshman college year to help put them on track to be successful once they officially start classes. Students are eligible to be paid for participating through the City of Buffalo’s Mayor Summer Youth Employment program.



SAY YES BUFFALO SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Say Yes Buffalo provides scholarships and grants to eligible graduates of Buffalo public and charter schools to all State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) and nearly 100 private colleges and universities. Eligible students who enroll at a Say Yes participating college can receive a scholarship to cover up to 100% of the cost of tuition after Federal, State and institutional aid have been applied.

SAY YES BUFFALO SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS WHO:

1. Reside in the city of Buffalo.
2. At minimum, complete grades 9-12, in consecutive years, at a public or charter school in the City of Buffalo or enroll in and complete the Buffalo Public School Adult Education College Career Institute.
3. Graduate from a public or charter school in Buffalo in June 2013 or after.
4. Enroll full-time at a Say Yes college within one year of high school graduation; and,
5. Apply for all federal and state financial aid programs available (FAFSA and TAP), including Selective Service as required by law.



BUFFALO COLLEGE SUCCESS NETWORK

Takes Aim at College Persistence and Completion

In June 2019 it was announced that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded the Say Yes Buffalo Partnership a \$3.6 million investment. This generous funding supports the newly-established Buffalo College Success Network and other efforts to help students from communities of color and those who are from low-income households to successfully matriculate, persist and complete college.

The grant was awarded after an intensive yearlong grant proposal submission process which included Say Yes Buffalo, Buffalo Public Schools and five local higher education institutions including, Buffalo State College, Medaille College, SUNY Erie, the University at Buffalo, and Villa Maria College. Leaders from these institutions worked collectively to identify specific

opportunities for investment that could further remove barriers to postsecondary completion for Buffalo students.

The initiative has set in motion an outcome-driven movement that will fortify the work and vision of Say Yes Buffalo. The mission is not only to graduate more students with a postsecondary degree, but to revitalize the local economy by assuring that the next generation has all the tools and education to perform the work of the future. In the next 10 years, there will be 165,000 open jobs in Buffalo, and 64% of those will require a postsecondary credential. In order for the young people of Buffalo to be competitive and prepared for these jobs, they must earn a degree or certificate. Through the Buffalo College Success Network efforts, we intend to





The Buffalo College Success Network is comprised of representatives from Buffalo Public Schools, Buffalo State College, Medaille College, Say Yes Buffalo, SUNY Erie, Villa Maria College, and University at Buffalo to increase postsecondary persistence and graduation rates.

increase the amount of students going on to college as well as the number of students who successfully complete their degrees. Enrollment and persistence are the keys to this initiative.

The goals of the grant are threefold:

- 1. Increase postsecondary persistence for all Say Yes Buffalo scholars who access services with a focus on low-income students and students of color**
- 2. Increase postsecondary enrollment for graduates of Buffalo's Public Schools, with a focus on low-income students and students of color**
- 3. Creation of a comprehensive P-12 data system that has capacity to expand to P-16**

To achieve these goals, the Buffalo College Success Network will implement a suite of strategies including increased case management for Say Yes Buffalo scholars at each of the partner institutions in order to increase retention rates, realizing that getting students to college is not the end of the story. In addition to one-on-one case management, the Buffalo College Success Network will work to embed mental and behavioral health clinics on each of the partnering campuses and strengthen resources that are already working. Finally, this initiative will create a coordinated data system shared by high school and college partners, develop a seamless curriculum for transition from high school to

college, and pair current Say Yes Scholars with new students in a near-peer mentorship program.

We are thrilled to embark on these ambitious initiatives with the support of the Gates Foundation, and of our crucial partnerships with local institutions of higher education. It has always been Say Yes Buffalo's goal to light the way for the young people of Buffalo so that



STRATEGIES

to achieve priority outcomes

1

NEAR-PEER MENTORS



Embed recent high school graduates who have successfully transitioned to college in public high schools, to mentor their peers on their path to postsecondary success

2

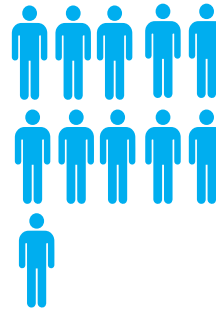


Implement a mandatory **COLLEGE TRANSITION CURRICULUM** in public high schools



3

11 NEW COLLEGE SUCCESS COUNSELORS



Hire 11 new counselors to work one-on-one with students to remove any barriers to their academic success on the campuses of Buffalo State College, Medaille College, SUNY Erie and Villa Maria College

4

ON-CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS



Establish on-campus mental health clinics to support students dealing with social, emotional or traumatic challenges that could negatively impact their ability to complete a postsecondary degree

they may lead lives enriched by a college education. To elevate the students of Buffalo and, by extension, Buffalo itself is an overarching aim of Say Yes Buffalo. We are so proud that others in this great city, and throughout the nation, see the bright young people of Buffalo as we do.

We extend a resounding thank you to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and to our partners for supporting this vital work.



"You can always find me at a Say Yes fundraiser, banquet, or community meeting. I'm just a huge supporter of the program, and always encourage students to take advantage of the many internships, jobs, and even community service opportunities that they provide."

—Aleya-Marie Sales, 2017 Say Yes Scholar Graduate of Canisius College and Admissions Counselor, D'Youville College

"The most rewarding part about being a Community School Navigator is being able to help with anything students, staff, or parents need help with."

—Joyce Stilson, Bennett Campus Community School Navigator



SCHOLARSHIP BOARD MEMBERS 2018-2019



The Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship Board focuses on fundraising and policy related to the program's scholarships. This board is comprised of private individuals who are volunteering their time to raise the funds needed to provide the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship in perpetuity. Scholarship Board members also determine eligibility and administrative guidelines and advocate on behalf of the program.

OPERATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2018-2019

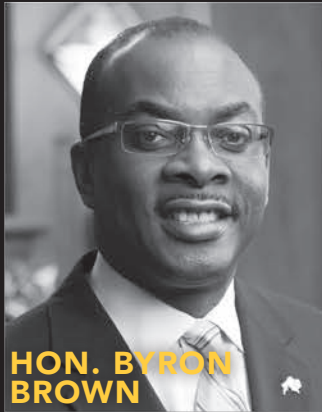
 <p>OTIS T. BARKER, SR. Deputy Commissioner, City of Buffalo</p>	 <p>HON. SHARON BELTON-COTTMAN* President, Buffalo Board of Education & Representative, Ferry District</p>	 <p>CRYSTAL BOLING-BARTON President, Buffalo Council of School Supervisors & Administrators</p>	 <p>MARIE CANNON Commissioner of Social Services, Erie County</p>	 <p>DR. KRINER CASH Superintendent, Buffalo Public Schools</p>	 <p>GENE CHASIN President, Say Yes to Education, Inc.</p>	 <p>DR. KATHERINE CONWAY-TURNER President, Buffalo State College</p>
 <p>CLOTILDE PEREZ-BODE DECKER President/CEO, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo</p>	 <p>DR. MATTHEW GIORDANO President, Villa Maria College</p>	 <p>DR. ELLEN GRANT* Deputy Mayor, City of Buffalo</p>	 <p>DR. THERESA HARRIS-TIGG** East District Representative, Buffalo Board of Education</p>	 <p>MOLLY HIRSCHBECK Communications Director, Office of Senator Tim Kennedy</p>	 <p>DR. DAN HOCoy President, SUNY Erie</p>	 <p>DR. WILL KERESZTES Chief of Intergovernmental Affairs, Planning & Community Engagement, Buffalo Public Schools</p>
 <p>DR. KENNETH M. MACUR President, Medaille College</p>	 <p>BLYTHE T. MERRILL Senior Vice President for Programs, The John R. Oishei Foundation</p>	 <p>DR. WENDY MISTRETTA* President, District Parent Coordinating Council</p>	 <p>SAM RADFORD** President, District Parent Coordinating Council</p>	 <p>PHIL RUMORE President, Buffalo Teachers Federation</p>	 <p>DR. BARBARA SEALS-NEVERGOLD** President and Member-at-large, Buffalo Board of Education</p>	 <p>JERRY TURCOTTE Co-chair, Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization</p>

The Say Yes Buffalo Operating Committee meets every three weeks to monitor progress and ensure stability of programs. This body is comprised of city officials, the County Commissioner of Social Services, parent leaders, the Board of Education, Superintendent, teachers' and administrators' union presidents, higher education officials and leaders from the region's two largest private foundations.

**Term Began July 2019*

***Term Completed June 2019*

The 2018-2019 Community Leadership Council was Chaired by:



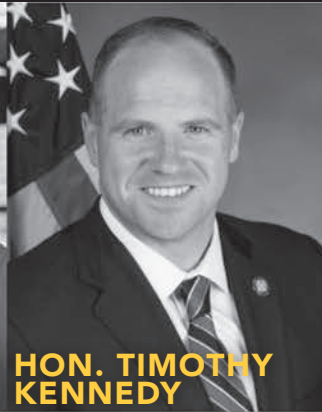
**HON. BYRON
BROWN**

City of Buffalo



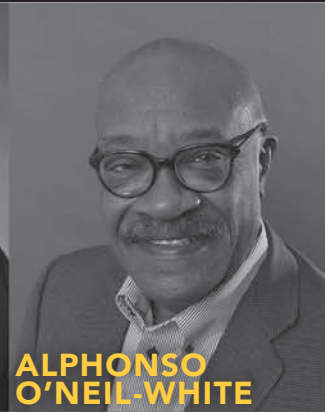
**DR. CATHERINE
COLLINS**

New York State
Board of Regents



**HON. TIMOTHY
KENNEDY**

New York State Senate



**ALPHONSO
O'NEIL-WHITE**

Say Yes Buffalo
Scholarship



**HON. CRYSTAL
PEOPLE-STOKES**

New York State
Assembly



**DR. BARBARA
SEALS-NEVERGOLD**

Buffalo Board of
Education



**MARIA
WHYTE**

Erie County

The Say Yes Buffalo Partnership gets much of its strength from the collaborative governance bodies that govern and guide its work. At the top of the structure is the Say Yes Buffalo Community Leadership Council, which is chaired by the Mayor, Deputy Erie County Executive, President of the Board of Education, the New York State Department of Education Regent, New York State Senator and New York State Assemblyperson for our region and the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship Board Chair. This body meets three times per year to tackle barriers to the work of Say Yes Buffalo, share updates on the partnership's overall progress and provide opportunities for public input and dialogue.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS 2018-2019

Say Yes Forever Scholarship ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE 2018-2019



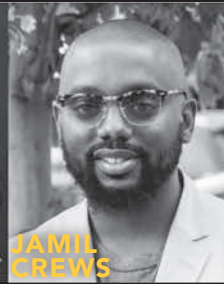
**LAUREN
BAYNES**

43 North



**TRINA
BURRUSS**

Northwest Bank



**JAMIL
CREWS**

Say Yes Buffalo



**LEAH
HALTON-POPE**

Office of Majority Leader
Crystal Peoples-Stokes



**ALICE
JACOBS**

Delaware North



**DR. JEANETTE
JURASEK**

Retired President,
Medaille College



**DR. WENDY
MISTRETTA**

Buffalo Public Schools
District Parent Coordinating
Council



**SHANNON
PATCH**

Delaware North



**LINDA
RAY**

LRay Consulting



**REV.
RACHELLE
ROBINSON**

Deep Wells Ministry



**NICK
SINATRA**

Sinatra and Co.
Real Estate



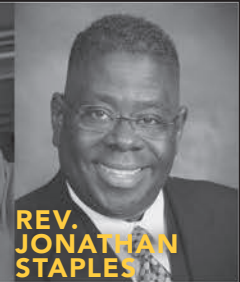
**COURTNEY
SINATRA**

Key Bank



**TANYA
STAPLES**

Say Yes Buffalo



**REV.
JONATHAN
STAPLES**

First Shiloh Baptist
Church



**STEVE
SWIFT**

BlueCross BlueShield of
WNY



**NICOLE
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BRYANT**

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**REV. VICKI
ZUST**

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Say Yes Forever Scholarship Endowment Campaign Committee, chaired by Nick and Courtney Sinatra, focuses on fundraising for the Say Yes Buffalo Endowment Fund. The Say Yes Forever Campaign is a 5-year, \$100 million campaign that is seeded by a \$25 million anonymous challenge grant and will ensure the Say Yes Buffalo scholarship is funded in perpetuity. The committee is comprised of business, community, religious and parent leaders.

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Nyles Moore

Villa Maria College, Class of 2020



Nyles Moore comes from a loving family, where his parents raised him and his two siblings to stay close to one another. “Because we’re all three years apart, we really learned a lot from one another, including what to expect in that next phase of our education or career.”

Moore’s educational journey began at Pinnacle Charter School and then Hutchinson Central Technical High School where he studied architectural engineering. “I really wanted to work with my hands, and I knew this school offered a curriculum that would further my knowledge and career goals.” After leaving Hutch Tech, Moore went to Villa Maria College to study animation. He’s currently a senior and enjoys the wholesome nature of the campus. Moore

describes his relationship with staff and his fellow students like a family. While at Villa, Moore has served as an Orientation Leader and attends recruitment events so he can get involved with incoming students. “I’ve been in their place before and know how it feels to worry about taking a new step in life. My goal is to become an official ambassador for Villa so that I can continue to serve as a resource and mentor to future students. I guess I can thank my family for instilling this desire in my heart.”

During his senior year of high school, Moore attended the first-ever Say Yes College Kickoff. The annual event gives graduated high school seniors the tools needed to make a smooth transition to college. The following year, Moore

attended the event again but this time as a representative of Villa. While there, he spoke to prospective students and families about the college experience.

After the Kickoff, Moore realized there were more opportunities to get involved with Say Yes and continue his quest to serve as a mentor. In 2018, he officially became a Say Yes Ambassador. Through the program he has served as a keynote speaker at donor events, where he was able to represent his peers and speak to their experience and need for the tuition scholarship and wraparound programs. As an ambassador, Moore also attended workshops that helped to develop his “soft” skills, which have already come in handy. “I’m definitely more articulate and professional when presenting.



I can now bring my 'A' game when speaking one-on-one or in front of a crowd, and I think those workshops definitely help with that." According to Moore, serving as an ambassador for both Villa and Say Yes has helped him to offer key insights into the mindset of students.

Over the summer, Moore served as an intern in the Education Department of the Albright Knox Art Gallery. He connected to the opportunity through the Say Yes Internship and Career Pathways Program. "Working at the gallery gave me the chance to explore my artistic side and develop new perspectives. I truly enjoyed the work and never saw myself in that world when I was

studying at Hutch Tech."

Looking ahead, he's considering getting his master's degree and pursuing a career in teaching. He and his friends recently finished the paperwork to establish a studio that will serve as a platform for artists to receive feedback on their work. They are looking to launch in early 2021. Moore was also offered a teacher's assistant position at the Albright Knox. "I'm so ecstatic about the future and this opportunity to teach. It doesn't happen everyday that you get to teach what you love with people who also have a passion for that subject," added Moore. Moore is also interning in the production department at Squeaky Wheel in

the fall of 2019.

When asked about Say Yes, Moore said "There's so much to say. Say Yes gives you the door. You just have to be willing to open it."

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Deja Thompson

University at Buffalo, BA '17, MSW '20, JD '21



In the courtroom, Deja Thompson helps to give youth a voice.

Through the “Raise the Age” initiative, Thompson is working with Legal Aid of Buffalo to represent juvenile offenders and advocate for their best interests. “In the legal system, one of your strongest assets is your voice and having a representative who will make sure you’re heard,” said Thompson. “I think I was destined to work on behalf of Buffalo’s youth and I’m excited for all the opportunities ahead in my quest for justice for all.”

Thompson has been involved with civic engagement all her life. At an early age, she was volunteering at community centers, philanthropic events and working to empower others. It was during these

moments that she began to consider all the ways to give back. “I realized that we all have the power to strengthen communities. I thought long and hard about the road I’d take, and decided that I can influence policy and add real value by pursuing law and social work.”

With that goal in mind, Thompson moved full steam ahead, which she knew would include an education. While at McKinley High School, she met with her school counselor and learned about a new organization with a promise to give Buffalo’s students access to a college education. “I’m a proud member of the first class of students to graduate from high school in 2013 with a Say Yes Tuition scholarship. When I learned about the program, I knew I had to take

advantage. What I wasn’t prepared for was the other resources that would come along with the financial support.” While pursuing a bachelor’s degree in social sciences with a concentration in legal studies at University at Buffalo, Thompson was also meeting with a Say Yes coordinator on campus for help navigating the college experience.

When she wasn’t in the classroom, Thompson was serving as an intern in the Say Yes school-based preventive program. She also provided support to the Boys & Men of Color, Parent Center and Development teams. “Through all of these experiences I was able to get a true sense of the community. I helped facilitate youth groups, went on home visits and participated in school-based trainings.

These are experiences I might not have had if it weren't for Say Yes giving me the opportunity."

Today, Thompson is working on a dual degree at the University at Buffalo, which will conclude in 2020 with a master's degree in social work and a Juris Doctor of Law in 2021. "Thanks to Say Yes and its many partners I was able to leave my undergraduate program debt-free. Realistically, I don't know that I would have been able to pursue this next phase of my education without that help. I just can't see how I could have afforded it."

Thompson is currently assisting Say

Yes to strengthen the scholar alumni network, which will kick-off with an event in 2020. The purpose of the event and larger initiative is to keep the students connected to the community. "I'm exciting about the alumni network because it gives the scholars an opportunity to give back to future scholars," said Thompson.

When asked what advice she would offer to current Buffalo Public School students, Thompson said... "Don't be afraid to try something new just because you haven't seen it done before. Organizations like Say Yes are here to give you exposure to all that's possible

and serve as a guiding light toward your goals. It's up to you to take the first step and have the courage to share your story."



PARENT SPOTLIGHT

Aaronda Vick



Aaronda Vick and her daughter, Tierra Purdue, are a dynamic duo.

Vick has been a single mother most of her life, having raised Tierra while working a full-time job at Ingram Micro and pursuing an associate degree. Since graduating from SUNY Erie, Vick has gone on to receive her bachelor's and master's degrees. "When people ask which of my academic programs was the most difficult, I always say the first," said Vick. "In between classes and work, I was a full-time mom. It was a real challenge."

Vick was certainly busy, but her parents instilled a strong work ethic and encouraged their children to pursue their education. "Education was a big component of my upbringing, but I wasn't always sure where I was going in life." While Vick, a self-proclaimed student, was finding her way,

her daughter Tierra Purdue was fearlessly going after her dreams.

A product of the Buffalo Public Schools, Purdue has always been ambitious. She was an excellent student at Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts and spent countless hours in the school counselor's office to prepare for college. During her many visits, Purdue learned about Say Yes Buffalo. Since that first introduction to Say Yes, Purdue has taken advantage of every opportunity that has come her way, from sharing her story and captivating audiences at donor events to successfully turning an internship at Northwest Bank into a full-time job. Purdue was connected to the Northwest opportunity through the Say Yes Internship and Career Pathways Program.

"Because I never wanted my daughter to

repeat my mistakes, I always spoke to her about the right and wrong way," said Vick. She took my advice, her own ambition and all the opportunities provided by Say Yes and excelled."

Both women have come a long way since it was just the two of them dreaming about setting the world on fire. Today, they're doing just that. Vick recently started a new job, got married, and joined a faith-based group that encourages healthy lifestyles and time with God. Purdue just returned from a service trip to Africa and will earn her degree from Buffalo State College in May 2020.



DONOR PROFILE

Dan Boland

Dan Boland of Boland + Partners Real Estate runs a company that invests in rental properties and renovations. While his business might be in residential and commercial properties, his interest is in the sustainability and future of our community, which includes a strong education system for Buffalo's students.

Born and raised in Western New York, Boland attended private schools before going to the University at Buffalo. He was passionate about math and computers and received a bachelor's degree in Business.

Upon graduating, Boland moved to California but began purchasing real estate in Buffalo when the market was still moving slowly. "I always saw potential in Buffalo. Knowing this, I decided to leave my job at a Fortune 500 company for an opportunity to pursue my real estate dreams back home in Buffalo." Real estate isn't the only thing that brought him home - Boland also met his wife before moving to California, so they made the decision to return home to Buffalo to start a family of their own. The couple now has

a daughter who turns two next year.

Boland was introduced to Say Yes by local business leaders and through seeing media coverage about the growth of the initiative. Boland always thought that Buffalo had such great potential, but that the public school system was one of its biggest challenges. Seeing how Say Yes was helping to improve attendance, test scores and graduation rates, Boland knew he needed to get involved. Boland's contribution to Say Yes is monthly and goes far in ensuring that our entire city is a place where people can learn, live and play.

When asked about all that he's learned since partnering with Say Yes, Boland said, "I've learned Say Yes is good for our economy. I love that every kid in our city, regardless of your zip code, is guaranteed the option to go to college. And, you can go and come away debt-free. That alone just puts you down the right path."

DONOR PROFILE

BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York



At Say Yes Buffalo, we often boast that partnership is our secret sauce. One of our key ingredients has been the support we receive from BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York. An early investor and believer in the promise of the Say Yes Buffalo Scholarship, BlueCross BlueShield was at the planning table nearly a decade ago because they recognized the importance of strengthening the Buffalo Public Schools.

"It didn't take much convincing for us to get involved in bringing Say Yes to our community," said Julie Snyder, Senior Vice President, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York. "We have been in this community for more than 80 years, and our headquarters are right here

in downtown Buffalo. Understanding the employment challenges we often face when trying to find and retain talent, we know that the health of the public school system is good for the overall health of our community." Both Say Yes and BlueCross BlueShield understood that our city's economic renaissance could only continue if everyone is included and our homegrown talent pool is prepared for the jobs that are available.

Beyond its initial million-dollar commitment to the Scholarship Fund, BlueCross BlueShield also extended its partnership with Say Yes Buffalo to include internship opportunities for Say Yes Buffalo scholars enrolled in postsecondary degree programs. "The internship program has

really been a tremendous mentoring opportunity for both our employees and the students who spend their semesters with our team," added Snyder. To ensure the internship program is accessible to everyone, the team revised its job description to remove barriers, including a former requirement for interns to have a vehicle. "We realized that rules like that are inherently restrictive and really unnecessary. If a student can get to our building, we can get you to all of our community relations events."

One of the first students to intern at BlueCross BlueShield was Keiara Wilson, who went on a mission trip to Africa following her time with the company. When she returned one of her first stops was to

BlueCross BlueShield's offices to share the experience. "Our interns are an integral part of our team, and we want to continue to be part of their story well beyond their days in our offices. We're so proud of Keiara for the work she's doing, but we encourage all students to stay in contact with their internship supervisors. We want to keep serving as a partner in the student's career," said Cait Zulewski, Director, Corporate Relations, BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York.

BlueCross BlueShield also funded the Say Yes Health Homes program. "Through the Blue Fund, our health-focused grant program, we have been able to leverage existing health home networks to address the vast health needs of children in the Buffalo Schools," said Snyder. The Health Home Care Management Program provides

school-based comprehensive health coordination in school, health promotion, patient and family support and service referrals to support students with chronic health conditions. By the end of 2019, more than 450 students received support.

We are grateful for the generosity and commitment from BlueCross BlueShield, whose support will benefit our region for years to come.



"Breaking Barriers is a brotherhood. It changes you and exposes you to new things."

—Shawn Collins, South Park High School senior and member of Breaking Barriers



"Internships lead to improvement of resumes, exposure to different fields, and well-rounded students. Internships allow you to get your foot in the door."

—Tajae Williams, Medaille College student (biology and African American studies) and internship program participant



"It's one thing to have a mentor but it's another thing to have one that desires your success as much as you do. She's the best thing that's happened to me, she helped me find myself."

—Nia Morse, SUNY Fredonia student (theater and creative writing) and participant in Mentoring Program

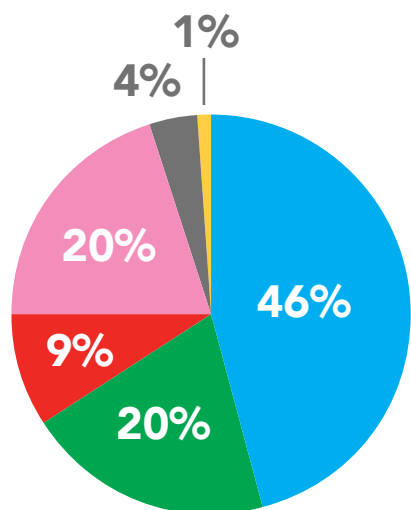


SAY YES BUFFALO **IMPACT DASHBOARD**

The Say Yes Buffalo Impact Dashboard is a collection of data points that the Say Yes Buffalo Partnership identified collaboratively to measure the impact of their work. Individual data points are updated annually as data becomes available at SayYesBuffalo.org.

SAY YES BUFFALO IMPACT DASHBOARD

2017-2018 Buffalo Public School Student Demographics



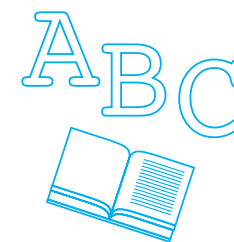
82%

Of students receive free or reduced lunch

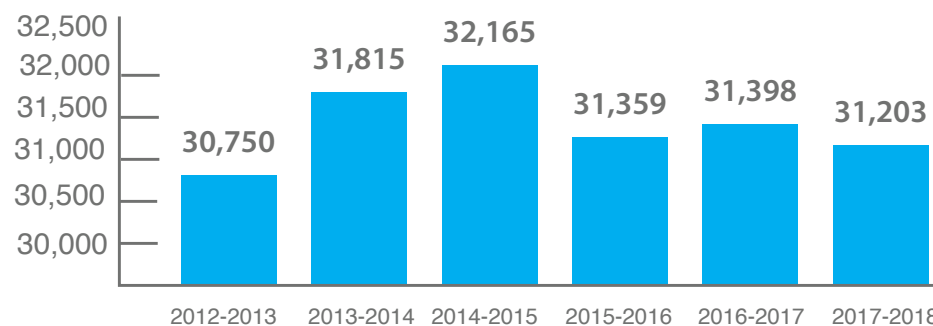


18%

Of students are English language learner or limited English proficient



Buffalo Public District Enrollment

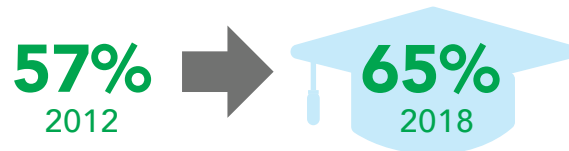


Public School Graduation & College Matriculation Rates

Nationally, since 2012, postsecondary enrollments have decreased overall by 2% and in New York State they have dropped by 10%. But in Buffalo, the overall number of students who enrolled in postsecondary education has increased 8%.

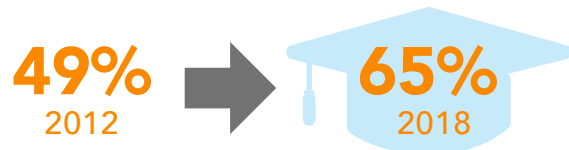


Postsecondary Enrollment Rate



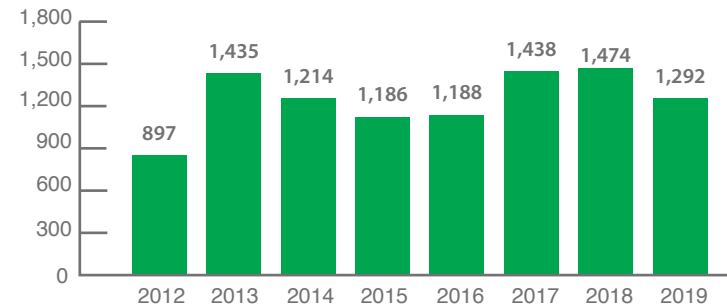
Overall average increase of 8 points since the launch of Say Yes Buffalo in 2012

High School Graduation Rate



16 percentage point increase since the launch of Say Yes Buffalo in 2012

FAFSA Completions



*FAFSA completions differ due to class size.

Operational Budget 2019-2020



Say Yes programs and operations are funded through a grant from Say Yes to Education, Inc. and funding from public and private partners including the City of Buffalo, Erie County, Buffalo Public School District, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, Citi Foundation, Cullen Foundation, Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, Celia Lipton Farris & Victor W. Farris Foundation, The Blue Fund, and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Program Outcomes 2018-2019

In addition to monitoring the outcomes stated in the Impact Dashboard, Say Yes is also committed to regular evaluation of the programs it supports. Below are outcomes of the 2018-2019 school year.

Community Schools



53,251 VISITS

to Saturday Academies
by Buffalo Public School
students and parents

Summer Camp Program



**PRE-K THROUGH 6TH
GRADE STUDENTS**

participated in free
6 week summer camps

Preventive Services Program



**5.25% INCREASE IN
ATTENDANCE**
for students who
received services

Legal Clinics



378 FAMILY MEMBERS
received help

73 LOCAL ATTORNEYS
volunteered services

Internships & Career Pathways Program



86 STUDENT INTERNS
placed

90+ STUDENTS RECEIVED
ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT
through internship application
process

Mentoring Program



141 SCHOLAR
PARTICIPANTS

95% MATRICULATED
to college

91% PERSISTED
from year 1 to year 2 of college

(Compared to 62% and 69%, respectively, for all
Say Yes Buffalo Scholars)

Mental Health Clinics



837 INDIVIDUALS
served 2018-2019

Donors to the Scholarship

Thank you to the individuals, families, foundations, businesses and organizations that have made gifts to fund annual Say Yes college scholarships for public and charter school students in Buffalo.

SAY YES BUFFALO ENDOWMENT FUND

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 Sinatra & Company Real Estate in honor of Rachid Cheaib
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 Gary M. Crosby Endowed Scholarship Fund

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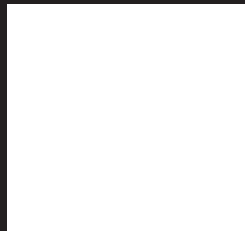
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