



# GROWING KINGS

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## **Growing Kings Kicks-off Its Program Year for 500 Male Youth in Birmingham City Schools!**

Male Youth Development Non-profit Has Begun its 14<sup>th</sup> Year of Delivering School-based Enrichment and Mentoring Programs for 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students in the Birmingham City School system.

Birmingham, AL – October 24, 2022 – Growing Kings, an organization that provides mentoring programs to underserved male youth in Jefferson County, AL, has started its 14<sup>th</sup> year of implementing its school-based mentoring and enrichment program series, Journey of a King. For the 2022-2023 academic year, Growing Kings will engage 500, 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade male students in 9 Birmingham City Schools every week in comprehensive programming designed to improve academic, behavioral, and school-attendance outcomes.

Growing Kings partners with principals and parents to ensure that each participant is provided critical supports needed to succeed. “The mission of the Birmingham City Schools system is to guide all students to achieve excellence in a safe, secure and nurturing environment,” said Jennifer Love-Lott, principal of Wilkerson Middle School. “Growing Kings goes above and beyond to uphold our mission and make sure our youth see that the doors of opportunity are endless, as to what they can achieve.”

Journey of a King is a series of three group-based, structured mentoring programs offered to at-risk male, elementary, middle, and high school students. As a result of the program model’s design, students are provided with the opportunity to participate in nine years of comprehensive programming. The program model is implemented in low-income, Title I schools based upon the percentage of students who receive free and/or reduced lunch. Each school’s faculty selects students to participate in the programs based on the student’s in-school behavioral data, course grades, and observation of students in need of a non-teacher, caring adult advocate. One-hour program sessions are conducted weekly for each grade level. This type of consistent engagement, along with the long-term nature of the program, are proven to create better results within the defined population.

“Each student deserves to feel comfort, empathy, and love within their community. Whenever students come into our school building, we do our best to make it known that this is a safe space,” said Fred H. Stewart III, principal of Hudson K-8 School. “We enjoy having Growing Kings as partners in our school and community. Not only are they showing our scholars positive male figures, but they also are consistent with their presence for the students beyond their time here.”

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### **About Growing Kings:**

*Growing Kings is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that operates with a mission to encourage and facilitate the critical thinking and positive attitudes of underserved male youth through systemic and targeted enrichment, research, and advocacy.*