



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

**BRONZEVILLE FENCING
ACADEMY**

FOCUS.FORTITUDE.FAMILY

A message from our President and Executive Director, Malcolm Muhammad



Our year in review brings to mind one word: resiliency. Our community continues to show up in extraordinary force.

Since 2016, the Academy's mission has been to provide and mobilize services to meet the existing needs of at-risk and underserved youth in the community; contributing to the personal growth of its participants through the development of character-building exercises and tools that promote self-respect, academic excellence and positive social skills and behaviors.

2023 was a year of lessons and extraordinary growth.

The Academy's holistically driven, youth-centric initiatives provide after-school and year-round programs for youth each year throughout the Chicago-land area. Participants find a safe haven and feel supported, develop close relationships with their peers, and are encouraged to explore their creativity, and learn new skills along the way.

Noteworthy in 2023

- 90% of youth returned for all four sessions, winter, spring, summer, and fall. 65% of youth maintained and/or achieved an improvement in their reading and math grades and, 70% of youth maintained and/or achieved enhancement in social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.
- Academy volunteers and interns provided 1,537 hours of service helping to carryout our [mission](#) in the communities we serve.
- We served 576 youth in our programs at the main campus, and partner sites.
- The Academy hosted its annual referee clinic with a record turnout of participants seeking certification.

We are honored and thankful to be a resource in youth development and will lead by example with the confidence of our principles, grounded in the understanding that we have critical roles to play in the lives of our youth.



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Asif Muhammad

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OUR MISSION

The Academy's mission has been to provide and mobilize services to meet the existing needs of at-risk and underserved youth in the community; contributing to the personal growth of its participants through the development of character-building exercises and tools that promote self-respect, academic excellence and positive social skills and behaviors.

OUR VALUES

We firmly believe that children living in under-resourced and marginalized communities will advance to and graduate from high school prepared for success in college and/or career.

For some children growing up with academic disparities or those living in exceptional environments, college is not the alternative for success however all children deserve an excellent foundation that meets their individual needs.



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

We are focused on providing expert instruction and mentorship, remaining non-restrictive and active in many different forums. We want these naturally occurring relationships to be authentic and responsive to the personal growth of our youth.



EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers find value in their work with the Academy because we recognize that the success of community programming is all in the stakeholder's willingness to invest resources and share their expertise in the development of the youth in the program.



EMBRACING OUR COMMUNITIES

We are focused on powering local movements by engaging in constructive dialogue with the leaders within our local community.



EXECUTING WITH INTEGRITY AND TEAMWORK

Our communications and actions are always done with honesty and transparency.



FOCUS

NOUN

a central point, as of attraction, attention, or activity

Many underserved and under-represented learners aren't exposed to opportunities that help broaden their prospects and choices in life. While our student-athletes hail from diverse cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, many also come from systemically marginalized racial and ethnic groups. The Academy aims to expand access to high-quality enrichment resources to lessen the achievement gap found within these groups.

Our wrap-around approach to youth-building focuses on several pillars of youth empowerment and development: education and athletic enrichment, social inclusion and equity, and good citizenship. Programming is designed to foster a desire in our youth to take charge of their lives; assess their current circumstances and actively take steps to transform future outcomes.

The Academy framework for youth development encourages our young people to see themselves in STEM, and so we partner with the Boy Scouts of America, Pathway to Adventure Council ([PTAC](#)) to present a series of educational and exploratory STEM, Workforce Webinars and Tutoring.

This partnership allows students to participate in activities within their community serving elementary and middle school youth of all backgrounds with resources that interest them. Engaging in this program will further supply our youth with character, leadership, and productive life skills.

These activities include but are not limited to, Coding, Art, Robotics, Creative Writing, Sports, Volunteering, Drama and of course, STEM.

Many of our students have committed to a fairly rigorous program here at the Academy and we believe that all children deserve a foundation that meets their individual needs so we continue to show up because our children should be comfortable taking up space, pushing the boundaries of their competence, confidence, and character.

Lastly, we are so very grateful for the support of our parent community. There is no greater reward than working with your students and watching them grow in so many ways. It is particularly gratifying when our Parents respect and appreciate the work we do.

Thanks to our partner PTAC, for helping to make it a great school year. It's amazing to watch our student's bond over stimulating enrichment activities. We look forward to many more engaging sessions in the new year.



“We aim to **expand** access to high-quality enrichment resources to lessen the **achievement gaps** in the community.”

FINANCIALS

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Donations (Unrestricted)	\$10,753
Foundation & Corporate Grants	\$5,000
Membership Dues Individuals	\$46,518
Program Service Fees	\$21,277
Total public support and revenue	\$83,548

EXPENSES

Advertising & Marketing	\$4,745
Office & Administrative	\$25,197
Payroll	--
Program Expenses	\$52,172
% Management, General, and Fundraising	30.68%
Total Expenses	\$82,114

NET ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$1,433
Fixed Assets - Equipment	\$11,501
Total Net Assets	\$12,935

Foundation, Organization, and
Corporate Donors
\$5,000 and below
Guy A. and N. Kay Arboit Charitable Trust

Individual Donors
\$999 and below
Guy Sean Armstead and Family
Michael Sklovsky and Family
Christopher Jones, CMJ Tech
Zaid-Abdul Aleem and Family
April Roberson and Family
Nicole Hallett-Manes and Family
Mary Chapman-Deas
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Cash
Laura Patterson
Preston Brown
Michael Vitoux
Anonymous

Gifts in Kind
Fernando Delgado
Bakhyt Abdikulov
Henry Cash
Jason Burns
Kenneth Rogers
Myla Patterson Smith, Ph.D.
Carlette Piggott
Shenita Johnson Garrard, Esq.
Siegliende Lim Siewert
Eva Chow, PharmD.
Michael Vitoux
Dick Dunlop
Tim Glass, OLY
Jason Pryor, OLY

Financials represented are year-end summaries. The audited statements for 2023 will be finalized and available August 30, 2024.

PROGRAMS

Out of School Time

We elevate our youth with literacy activities that engage at both primary and secondary education levels. The Academy's collaborations with public and private schools, and the local park district, are specifically designed to motivate and support academic achievement and success in alternative sports disciplines, promoting a viable pathway to secondary and post-secondary education.

The Academy targets its efforts towards sites located in largely under-resourced, and marginalized communities in the Chicagoland area. The Academy also engages in community outreach with stakeholders within the targeted community - local Alderman and other youth organizations to gather data and information. The OST model provides the Academy with the opportunity to bring our unique program into spaces and help broaden life skills education for youth in under-resourced communities.



Bronzeville Fencing Academy

S.T.E.A.M

We elevate our youth with science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics that engage creativity and critical thinking skills. STEM Education combines the curriculum of Woz ED with Academy ideals, such as discipline, leadership, and good citizenship. The program aims to produce youth who become assets and not liabilities to their communities. The Academy expects students to acquire the understanding as part of their experience in the program, logical and natural consequences, facilitating growth in the areas of discipline, commitment, structure, accountability and modeling appropriate behavior and actions in all phases of their lives.



Bronzeville Fencing Academy has been an engine of change since 2016. We invest our entire budget in the communities we serve.



PROGRAMS

MENTORSHIP

We elevate our youth with mentoring activities that promote character, leadership, and productive life skills. Mentors enhance the student's ability to use principled disciplines to understand and develop solutions to a diverse range of problems, and the ability to process and manage multiple sources of information. These interactions improve attentiveness and fosters an ability to successfully work independently.

Our programs incentivize the youth to stay beyond regular school hours for guidance and activities that reinforce character-building exercises and tools that promote self-respect, academic excellence and positive social skills and behaviors. Program evaluations show retention rates remain level and a steady influx of new participants to Academy programming is strong despite competition from a field of other competitive enrichment programs.

We recognize that mentoring relationships are highly personalized and have a powerful impact in the lives of our youth. It builds their confidence, supports mental health, and promotes a sense of resilience in youth.



INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS

We elevate our youth with athletic activities that promote health and wellness as a simple yet powerful form of self-care. This helps to provide our youth with social and emotional learning fostering individual development through various activities. This focus promotes athletic prowess and good citizenship in a fun and safe environment.

In addition to the extracurricular fun, intramural competitive sports encourage health and wellness habits that nurture the mind, body, and soul. The adoption of these habits in early adolescence helps the student become more aware of their bodies.

Our programming intentionally includes a focus on college, career, and post-secondary options. 40+ colleges and universities have National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sanctioned Division I – II – III fencing programs. These programs offer financial assistance, up to and including full scholarships to student athletes; participation in this program promotes a life-long interest in the sport of fencing through which participants can literally explore the world and helps nurture social, emotional and leadership intelligence.

33 COMMUNITIES

576 YOUTH SERVED

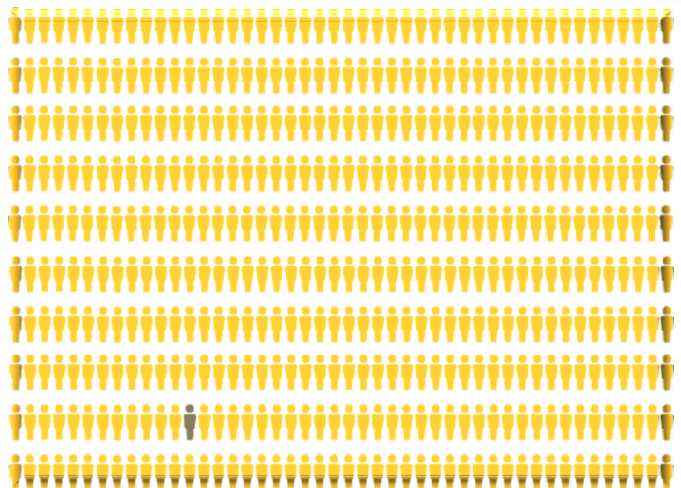
REACH

The Academy has stayed the course with its values and unique brand and grown from a small afterschool program in the local park, to a well-respected partner in the Chicago-land area.



ILLINOIS
[CITY OF CHICAGO]
Armour Square
Ashburn-Gresham
Avalon Park
Beverly
Bridgeport
Brighton Park
Chatham
Chicago Lawn
Douglas
Englewood
Grand Boulevard
Greater Grand Crossing
Hegewisch
Hyde Park
Kenwood
Loop
Morgan Park
Mt. Greenwood
New City
Pilsen
Roseland
South Shore
South Loop
South Chicago
Streeterville
Washington Park
West Loop
[CENTRAL REGION]
Chicago Park District
[SUBURBS]
Blue Island
Hazel Crest
Homewood-Flossmoor
Kankakee
Bourbonnais

INDIANA
Merriville



VOLUNTEERS

The backbone of the Bronzeville Fencing Academy is its volunteers. They are the lifeblood of the work we do. From leading parent advisory council groups, mentoring seminars and chaperoning the youth, these stakeholders kindly give their time and talents to further the Academy's mission. In 2023 volunteer service hours equaled 192 days of unpaid labor.

Many of our volunteers are very engaged parents and that's why we devote substantial resources to welcome, engage, and listen to them. We spend a significant amount of time with their students, and we work to strengthen the bond with our families who join us each year. We require a lot from our volunteers because we recognize that the success of community programming is all in the stakeholder's willingness to invest resources and share their expertise in the development of the youth in the program. We empower our volunteers to listen well, ask questions about Academy programming, and we stress the importance of participation in the community. We heavily invest our focus on communication and relationship building.

1537 HOURS OF SERVICE WERE
VOLUNTEERED BY
INDIVIDUALS IN 2023.

Volunteering stimulates community engagement and fosters a sense of belonging. It also allows the Academy to solicit input and feedback on programming. It displays a greater presence of collaboration in our program model to ensure that the curricula we engage in are culturally relevant and responsive to community needs.

We recognize that volunteers are motivated by many different factors. Empathy for those with less-than-ideal circumstances, a desire to make a difference, or simply expanding a skill set. Our volunteers demonstrate their commitment and dedication to the mission and the wisdom, to whom much is given, much will be required, rings true and true. They employed their personal gifts and efforts in return for others. This service allowed the Academy to effectively marshal our youth to greater achievements. On behalf of our board, community stakeholders, and the youth we serve, thank you for being part of our extended family.

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To whom **much** is given, much will be required.

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PARTNERSHIPS



Bronzeville Fencing Academy partners are organizations focused exclusively on closing the achievement gap; providing programming and mentorship, to support the youth in and out of the classroom. Types of agencies include:

- Workforce Development
- Health & Welfare
- Educational Enrichment
- Athletic Enrichment

We understand that you have many choices when it comes to choosing a partner and so here are a couple of reasons why you'll be completely satisfied when partnering with the Academy.

We provide the highest quality of service and have quickly become a valued and reliable source of youth programming within the community. Cross marketing between brands exposes the Academy's community of diverse learners to our partners products and services. Our partners saw a 20% increase in their services.

The Academy is working to lead efforts to combat the lack of quality enrichment resources in marginalized and under-resourced communities. Lack of programming is a significant barrier to achieving positive life outcomes. We are interested in partners looking to power the drive for a more inclusive and collaborative space for diverse learners. Become a partner today.

“

The Academy's **alternative** and **innovative** programming has been a wonderful addition to our community of students, The students are **eager** participants.”

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CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

Park Supervisor



BOARD MEMBERS

MALCOLM MUHAMMAD, PRESIDENT
Executive Director and Board President

KASEY MUHAMMAD, VICE-PRESIDENT
Assistant Director and Vice President

MICHELLE CASH, SECRETARY
Chicago Transit Authority, ret'd.

JAY JOHNSON, TREASURER
AT & T Mobility

DAVON MCCORD
McCord Insurance Agency

JUDGE ARTHUR P. WHEATLEY
Circuit Court of Cook County, ret'd.

ADVISORY BOARD

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IL Division, Region 2

MEREDITH DELGADO
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IL Division, Region 2

THELONIUS MUHAMMAD
Johns Hopkins University Peabody Institute

ORLANDO LEWIS
100 Black Men of Chicago, Inc.

AUSET MUHAMMAD
Temple University, Lady Owls Fencing

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

MYLA PATTERSON-SMITH, Ph.D.
Chair

SIEGLIEND LIM-SEIWERT
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SHENITA JOHNSON GARRARD, Esq.
Partnership-Education Liaison

EVA CHOW, PharmD
Local-Regional-National Rules Liaison

CARLETTE PIGGOTT
Volunteer Engagement Liaison

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES

MONIQUE SCOTT
Alderwomen, 24th Ward
City of Chicago

JEFF ISSAC
Scout Executive & CEO
Pathway to Adventures Council
Boy Scouts of America, Inc.

DAVID GAGE
Park Supervisor
Chicago Park District

JASON BURNS
Owner, Head Coach
Mettle Fitness, LLC

KENNETH ROGERS
Owner, Head Coach
Fresh Start Sports & Mentoring

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- 1 SUPPORT** the work of the Bronzeville Fencing Academy
It is our hope to continue providing services to the community.
- 2 VOLUNTEER**
Bring your gifts and talents to further BFA's mission.
Consider becoming a lead volunteer, facilitating groups.
- 3 FOLLOW** us on social media.
Tag us in your Facebook and Instagram posts.
Check our website and social media posts for updates.
- 4 CONNECT** your friends and family to BFA.
Your circle would enjoy volunteering with us.
- 5 GIVE**
We strive to be good stewards. Consider a monthly gift as a RECURRING DONOR.



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The logo features a stylized white silhouette of a fencer in a dynamic pose, set against a dark blue background. This central element is framed by a large, dark blue 'X' shape. The background is composed of several geometric shapes: a large dark blue triangle at the top, a smaller dark blue triangle at the bottom, and a light beige trapezoidal shape on the left side. The signature 'Asif Muhammad' is written in a cursive script across the lower part of the fencer's silhouette.

Asif Muhammad

Bronzeville Fencing Academy

BRONZEVILLE
FENCING ACADEMY

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