



## High Hopes Kids™

High Hopes Kids™ is a project of the Youth Hope Builder's Academy of the Interdenominational Theological Center. This project exists as a prevention, education and restorative project for African American children, youth, families and communities who have experienced childhood adverse experiences and traumatic events. The program works through oral and written communications with the family to ensure that adversely affected parents, caregivers, children or youth can be part of a transformative change. Our approach is collaborative to instill a sense of connectedness with oneself, family and the community for holistic healing. We seek to engage children, youth, families, churches and communities in experiences of holistic healing through narrative discourse, collaborative learning, coaching and mentoring for change. Assessments of patterns of family life and issues creating stress are highlighted while introducing educational tools and strategies to build new patterns of resilience.

It is now known that adverse childhood experiences including developmental trauma, disrupted attachment, abuse and neglect are reaching epidemic proportions in communities. It is a major health issue according to the Centers for Disease and Control. Our mission is one of health and restoration utilizing the five pillars of trauma-informed care: safety trust, collaboration, choice and empowerment.

The primary purpose for this project is to restore and strengthen the parent/caregiver-child relationship within the bounds of childhood trauma. These restored relationships become a vehicle for creating resilience through building and strengthening parental core skills while educating on much needed protective factors. The second purpose is to create a trauma-informed learning environment within the community. Educating church leaders and communities about the prevalence and impact of trauma is an essential element of the program. A collaboration of

children, youth, parents/caregivers, faith communities and other service providing groups will facilitate the community response. The project consists of three facets which are noted below:

- Family - The goal is to provide parents and caregivers with concrete strategies and interventions that they can use to support their families while addressing the behavioral challenges their children may exhibit. We seek to improve living environments for families who are faced with trauma and other childhood adverse experiences through an atmosphere where children and youth feel safe, encouraged, empowered and a sense of agency.
- Faith Communities - This part of the project collaborates with local churches established within the community. As such, churches become a catalyst of transformation and bring healing from the “Good News” proclaimed through Word and deed. The goal is to work alongside of church leaders and parents, many of whom are millennials often not on the front lines of care and guidance, in the formation of a trauma-informed care support. Part of this aspect is the education and equipping of pastors to become a resource for their congregations while part is creating support and service care centers for families.
- Community –This element of the project entails all parts of the wider based community. One such element is within the school systems to educate, inform and train administrator and teachers about the impact of children’s behavior from adverse and traumatic events experienced. Creating of culture of health within communities of socioeconomic-inequities and the prevalence of trauma in those communities exist as primary concerns. This reality requires an emphasis on raising awareness and understanding about the various ways in which systems can unintentionally re-traumatize children and their families.