



PROJECT MALE HISTORY

During his term, President Barak Obama established and supported a national initiative for African-American males called "My Brother's Keeper". Many communities have connected their minority male programs to this initiative. Here, in southern Dallas County, Project MALE (**M**aking **A**spiring **L**eaders **E**xcel) is one of those initiatives. The majority of Project MALE's participants are involved through our partnership with the Lancaster ISD "***My Brother's Keeper***" program, and the Desoto ISD.

Both informal and empirical data suggests that the vast majority of African-American males continues to be in a crisis and is not reaching its full potential--educationally, socially, and emotionally.

Project MALE addresses the plight of the African-American male by providing educational opportunities related to character, culture, self-efficacy, leadership, healthy lifestyles, college readiness, financial literacy, and community service.

Project MALE started in 2014 with the target population being Kindergarten through 5th grade males, roughly ages 5 through 11. That Pilot was hosted at the Inspiring Body of Christ Church (IBOC) under the leadership of Pastor Rickie Rush. At the end of the pilot, parents of 5th graders requested that the program be expanded to include junior high students. So, members of the Dallas Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority elected to sponsor this age group, connecting it to their national male initiative—EMBODI (**E**mpowering **M**ales to **B**uild **O**pportunities for **D**eveloping **I**ndependence).

Since its inception in 2014, Project MALE has partnered with various faith-based and community organizations to provide the aforementioned opportunities to the young males. Project MALE's Program Year is October – May and during the 2015 through 2018 Program Years, Project MALE was hosted at the Antioch Church under the leadership of Pastor Karry Wesley. The sessions were held on the first Saturdays of the month. Project MALE will be held on the second Saturdays of the month at the University of Texas at Dallas (UNT Dallas) during Program Year 2018-2019.

In prior years, Project MALE has provided the young males with programming activities such as dining etiquette, collecting cards and socks for Veterans, financial literacy, healthy lifestyles, a field trip, a Kwanza Celebration, a career fair, a FUN Day, and group mentoring activities.

There is both a student and parent component to the program. The parent sessions are designed to provide helpful tips for parent/child communications, and educational enrichment in the other areas previously mentioned.

During prior years, the average attendance has been:

- 55 Students
- 23 Parents, and
- 26 Instructors, Mentors, and other Volunteers

The highest attendance in any particular month was in November 2016 when the attendance was:

- 100 Students
- 50 Parents, and
- 30 Mentors and Volunteers

Project MALE parents, instructors, mentors, and other volunteers work tirelessly to encourage the young males, and to provide opportunities for them to excel in their endeavors.

In prior years, Project MALE students earned points based on their behavior, attendance, and participation in class, or other program-related activities. At the end of the Program Year, those students were allowed to trade in those points for some items they wanted or needed.

In May each year, Project MALE's Leadership Team invites the community at large to join them in celebrating the Program's accomplishments, and to thank the community partners for engaging with them as they endeavored to make a positive difference in the lives of those young males.