



## ROCHESTER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH

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December 6, 2024

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **READY Raises \$25,000 Through Annual Bowling 4 STARS Fundraiser to Support Future Educators**

ROCHESTER, NY – READY is proud to announce the success of its annual Bowling 4 STARS fundraiser, held on December 5, which raised **\$25,000** to benefit the READY STARS Scholarship Fund. This year's event was **proudly sponsored by Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology and University Preparatory Charter School for Young Men**, with strong support from other community partners.

READY's mission is to **increase access to quality K-12 schools in Rochester**, recognizing that a diversified talent pool is a critical element of quality education. Research consistently shows that teacher quality is the most important school-based factor influencing student learning, and teachers of color have a profound impact on improving academic outcomes for students of color. These impacts include higher test scores, graduation rates, and college-going aspirations.

In Rochester, however, the disparity is striking: **80% of teachers are white, while over 90% of students are students of color**. Many of these students will complete their education without ever having a teacher who reflects their racial identity or cultural experiences. The READY STARS Scholarship Fund aims to address this inequity by investing in the next generation of educators who reflect the identities and experiences of the students they serve.

Administered by the **Urban League Black Scholars Program**, the fund provides scholarships to African American high school graduates from the Rochester City School District and area charter schools to pursue careers in education. Supported by the annual Bowling 4 STARS event, this initiative is a cornerstone of READY's efforts to create a more equitable and effective education system.



40 Franklin Street, Rochester, NY 14604



[www.READY4Schools.org](http://www.READY4Schools.org)

This year's event brought together a powerful coalition of partners, including:

- **Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology**
- **University Preparatory Charter School for Young Men**
- **City of Rochester**
- **National Parents Union**
- **Uncommon Schools – Rochester Preparatory Charter Schools**
- **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**
- **Jack and Jill of America, Rochester Chapter**
- **Black Physicians Network**
- **Roc Royal Entertainment**

“We are deeply grateful to our Title Sponsors, community partners, and supporters for their shared commitment to equity in education,” said Dr. Shanai Lee, Executive Director of READY. “A quality education system starts with great teachers, and ensuring that our students see themselves reflected in the classroom is essential to their success.”

Maya Crane, Executive Director of Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology, expressed her enthusiasm for sponsoring the event, stating, “Supporting the READY STARS Scholarship Fund aligns perfectly with our commitment to fostering a diverse and an inclusive educational environment. By investing in future educators who mirror the identities of our students, we are taking a crucial step toward bridging the representation gap in our schools.”

Walter Larkin Jr., CEO of University Preparatory Charter School for Young Men, highlighted the benefits of a diverse teaching staff, stating, “Having more teachers of color impacts the success outcomes of our students by providing them with role models who understand their lived experiences and can connect with them on a cultural level. This connection fosters a positive school culture and climate, leading to improved academic achievement and personal growth.”

In alignment with these goals, READY's **Liberation Teaching Academy** is piloting at University Preparatory Charter School for Young Men to engage high school students early in the teaching profession. This yearlong afterschool and summer program is designed to strengthen students' cultural identities, explore their career interests, and build community with peers, providing a structured opportunity to explore their interest in teaching.

READY is working to reimagine and rewrite education in Rochester by empowering students, families, educators, and communities. The READY STARS Scholarship Fund exemplifies this mission by ensuring future educators have the support they need to thrive and lead in classrooms across the city.

For more information about READY and the READY STARS Scholarship Fund, visit [www.READY4Schools.org](http://www.READY4Schools.org) or contact Shanai Lee at [Shanai@READY4Schools.org](mailto:Shanai@READY4Schools.org)

