

# A Coalition for Boys and Young Men of Color

By: Kevin Washington

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**Dear Colleagues:**

**Just 52 percent of African-American males and 58 percent of Hispanic/Latino males graduate from high school in four years.**

**One in three African-American males and one in six Hispanic/Latino males will go to prison at least once in their lifetime.**

**Boys and young men of color are twice as likely to grow up in poverty as white males.**

**The statistics are just as disturbing for workforce participation, health and well-being, and life expectancy.**

**These disparities are unique to boys and young men of color, and they are unacceptable. I believe the Y can and should play a role in closing these gaps and, at the same time, address our own challenges with boys and young men of color, who are vastly under-represented among Y members, program participants and staff.**

**Today I am pleased to announce that YMCA of the USA is partnering with the YMCA of Greater Charlotte to build a coalition with other organizations committed to improving outcomes for boys and young men of color. I believe a coalition is needed. The Y has an important role to play, but we can't do this alone. The task is too daunting, and we will benefit from the experience and resources of other organizations. One such organization is the Campaign for Black Male Achievement.**

**"The Campaign for Black Male Achievement is thrilled to support the efforts of the YMCA as we collectively work to improve the life outcomes of Black boys and young men of color," says Shawn Dove, CEO of the Campaign for Black Male Achievement.**

**"The Y's reach and focus on measurement adds tremendous value to the field and is aligned with CBMA's collaborative efforts to ensure that our young men love, learn and lead."**

**This work will be led by Michael DeVaul, the Charlotte YMCA's Chief Social Responsibility Officer. In Charlotte, Michael has played a lead role on behalf of the YMCA in a communitywide effort to close opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure they can reach their full potential. I have asked Michael to build on what he's learned in Charlotte for the benefit of all YMCAs, the boys and young men of color we engage today and the many more we will engage going forward.**

**I want to thank Todd Tibbits, President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte, for partnering with Y-USA and making it possible for Michael to devote some of his time to this important effort.**

**I know colleagues across the Movement will be interested in supporting the Y's participation in this coalition of external partners, and opportunities will be available through our new service-delivery network. Expect to hear more as this work moves forward.**

**Inherent in the Y's Commitment to America is the need for us to engage young people and communities we don't today and empower them to reach their full potential. This new coalition dedicated to supporting boys and young men of color will help us do just that.**

**Sincerely,**

**Kevin**