



THE GRAY MATTER EXPERIENCE PRESENTS:

UNTAPPED

POWERING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR A NEW GENERATION OF BLACK ENTREPRENEURS

AWARD CEREMONY & STUDENT SHOWCASE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2022
6:30PM - 9:30PM

BRINGING *Black Excellence*
TO THE FOREFRONT

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

NETWORKING

6:30 - 7:15 PM

GENERAL NETWORKING

MEET THE ARTIST

7:17 - 7:21 PM

INNOVATION: ERA OF ENLIGHTENMENT | MAX EMCAYS

STUDENT SHOWCASE

7:22 - 7:32 PM

STUDENT Q&A | JANNIYA HODGE & JORDAN QUINN

AWARD CEREMONY

7:55 - 8:05 PM

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AWARD | AFRICAN AMERICAN LEGACY

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP AWARD | FIFTH THIRD BANK

UNTAPPED AWARD | JANNIYA HODGE

CLOSING REMARKS | BRITNEY ROBBINS, CEO OF THE GRAY MATTER EXPERIENCE

NETWORKING

8:05 - 9:30 PM

CELEBRATION & NETWORKING

EVENT EMCEE

LISA BEASLEY



LISA BEASLEY

Shifting into many characters to meet the needs and the demands of the world we live in, Lisa Beasley's extensive plethora of experience has presented her multiple opportunities to occupy many rooms and influence change across multiple industries. Originally from Gary, IN, Lisa Beasley attended performing arts high school before being accepted into a Historically Black College in Memphis, TN. After graduating with a B.A. in Classical Jazz Studies, Lisa attended acting school in Los Angeles, CA. She pursued a ten-year theater career in Chicago, IL, which led her to work on stages such as Black Ensemble Theater, Court Theater, and Second City. She toured with the Second City National Touring Company and wrote and performed in two original revues on The Second City, e.t.c. Stage. Lisa is also a member of the improv group 3Peat. Known for her viral impersonations, namely, Mayor Lory Litefoot with a "y," Lisa utilizes her platform to discuss real issues within the depths of Chicago's inner-city South Side neighborhood Hyde Park. Lisa Beasley's collective approach to all things comedy leaves a lingering impression that you'll never forget.

As a leader in the community, Lisa's entrepreneurial skills provide a level of inclusion, autonomy, and creative freedom not found in most traditional workplace environments. Lisa believes in creating inclusive infrastructures where creativity can thrive. As an educator, Lisa is a professor at DePaul University, teaching students how to authentically show up as themselves and occupy spaces to make an insightful impact through their talents. She also serves as an advisor for the Comedy Arts Program and lends her expertise towards developing the new program.

As an entertainer, comedian and actor, Lisa is known for her performances on KevOnStage's Black People Do Improv, HBOMax's South Side, NBC's Chicago MED (Netflix), The Blackening (Comedy Central), and more. She has been featured in Black Enterprise, Essence, PopSugar, Pink News U.K., BuzzFeed, Syfy, Chicago Reader, The Red Eye, and more.

www.lisabexperience.com | For bookings: lboxp@lisabeasley.com | Follow Lisa on Instagram, TikTok, & Twitter: @lisabevolving

ART INSTALLATION

INNOVATION: ERA OF ENLIGHTENMENT

ABOUT THE ARTIST



MAXWELL EMCAYS

<https://maxwell.emcays.com/gallery/>

About a decade ago Maxwell Emcays was couch surfing and sleeping on the CTA trains. Today he is a philanthropist, an author of 4 children's books, runs mentoring in a juvenile detention center, holds 2 patents, does multiple charitable projects and is a full-time Artist focused on art activism.

Maxwell Emcays is a Chicago-based multidisciplinary creative who began his journey creating digitally born work, knowing a t-shirt as his only canvas. While attending The University of Illinois, he explored the relationship between meaning as it pertains to context. The t-shirt presented itself as an allegory that references this. His work seeks to navigate the bounds of meaning. His multi-layered work strives to create dialog around these institutionalized barriers while presenting a more overt conscious meaning.

Stylistically, he references abstract expressionism, pop art and Afrocentrism. He channels his making process and rendering to echo the underlying theme.

His work has been seen in Miami Art Basel, Chicago galleries, the DuSable Museum, private collections and highlighted on NBC's "Making a Difference".



COLLECTION

SUPPORT LOCAL ART + TGME'S MISSION

Maxwell Emcays has created 6 pieces of artwork that feature TGME alumni, entitled Innovation: Era of Enlightenment. The pieces celebrate and promote innovation in the technology sector as it pertains to young Black talent. Maxwell seeks to bring attention to those African Americans in the tech space while inspiring future young talent.

Click the link next to each student's art piece to read their bio and purchase. Proceeds will be split between TGME and Maxwell Emcays, the artist.



KHADIJAH

45" x 45"
Mixed media

[PURCHASE](#)



JACE

45" x 45"
Mixed media

[PURCHASE](#)



JORDAN

45" x 45"
Mixed media

[PURCHASE](#)

COLLECTION

SUPPORT LOCAL ART + TGME'S MISSION



AARON

45" x 45"
Mixed media

PURCHASE



JANNIYA

45" x 45"
Mixed media

PURCHASE



EMMANUEL

45" x 45"
Mixed media

PURCHASE

STUDENT SHOWCASE

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

Many of our students couldn't be at tonight's celebration, but took time to share more about what TGME means to them and how it's helped to shape their trajectory. Click the video below to hear their stories.



[WATCH NOW](#)

We couldn't be more proud of our TGME alum, and are happy to put a spotlight on Janniya and Jordan.



STUDENT SHOWCASE

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



JANNIYA HODGE

Cohort 3 Alumni

Born and raised on Chicago's South side, Janniya Hodge is a graduate of Gwendolyn Brooks' High School as their C/O 19's Treasurer. Her passion for mathematics, "hustling" and sports led to her acquiring many academic and athletic scholarships - one of which was a full-ride academic scholarship to Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology for mechanical engineering.

Unfortunately, during her senior year of high school, she endured a sports-ending injury, requiring a full knee replacement surgery with a year of physical therapy. Devastated by this event and the results, Janniya turned her pain into fuel to drive her success through The Gray Matter Experience (TGME).

Today Janniya is a proud alumna of TGME (Cohort 3 & Hustle Hacks). Although she had experience being a self-taught hair stylist, selling customized phone cases, and snacks throughout high school, it wasn't until joining TGME that Janniya grasped what an "entrepreneur" was and used that knowledge to become full time self-employed.

With her hairstyling business; StylesByJanniya (@StylesByJanniya2.0) and beauty supply delivery service; Kargo Kangaroo, LLC (kargokangaroodelivery.com), Janniya has made life changing connections. She is also a musical artist and has plans to begin releasing her music in the upcoming year. Janniya has recently found herself on panels speaking about her journey (Fifth Third Bank x The Black Women's Expo), has won 1st place in a TechRise pitch competition and has worked with amazing mentors, allowing her to pursue her dreams of being a successful business owner.

"TGME has shown me my purpose again after I thought I lost it all." -Janniya Hodge

STUDENT SHOWCASE

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



JORDAN QUINN

Cohort 2 Alumni

My name is Jordan Quinn and I am an alumnus of Gray Matter's 2nd Cohort. I grew up on the South Side of Chicago and attended Lindblom Math and Science Academy, graduating Class of 2018. A life-long self-identified "Blerd," science, technology, and their intersections were all I could ever remember being interested in. The manifestations of this passion in my life are as listless as they are timeless; from receiving a GameBoy Advanced at the tender age of 5, building my first computer from scratch at age 12, or assisting in the building of a submersible autonomous robot to assist a marine biologist's team's research at age 16, my interest in STEM has had a profound effect on my life.

TGME expanded my perspective way beyond the confines of what the already expansive field could entail as a career. For a significant part of my life, although I knew technology would likely be the field I would reside in, I struggled to make the decision on what avenue I would take. With passions for so many different areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Cybersecurity, and many others, choosing which pathway to pursue was extremely daunting. TGME was a fundamental experience in exposing me to the notion that entrepreneurship was the answer I was looking for. It emboldened me to create my first entrepreneurial venture, Manza, which was launched during the program and continued until graduation. After graduating from school, I was selected to participate in a local technology company, Relativity's Fellowship program. The program was designed to introduce underserved communities to the industry of E-Discovery, which is the electronic information management aspect of litigation. I currently work for the organization as a Technical Analyst, and serve on the subcommittee of Relativity's Community Resource Group "Black@Relativity", as well as on the review board for Relativity's Justice for Change program, which leverages our product in service of community law organizations and nonprofits in order to positively impact racial and social justice in our communities.

AWARD CEREMONY

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT AWARD



AFRICAN AMERICAN LEGACY
AN INITIATIVE of

AFRICAN AMERICAN LEGACY

www.aalchicago.org/african-american-legacy

African American Legacy (AAL), an initiative of The Chicago Community Trust, is a philanthropic and educational initiative led by African American civic and community leaders who share the common goal of improving the quality of life among African Americans throughout metropolitan Chicago. AAL engages African Americans in philanthropy, collectively and individually, and provides support to nonprofit organizations that work at the grassroots level to educate and engage communities, and to provide neighborhood-based services and solutions addressing community problems.

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP AWARD



FIFTH THIRD BANK

FIFTH THIRD BANK

www.53.com

Fifth Third Bank has been proud to be making banking a Fifth Third Better[®] since 1858. Fifth Third is among the largest money managers in the Midwest. In total, Fifth Third provides its customers with access to approximately 56,000 fee-free ATMs across the United States. Fifth Third operates four main businesses: Commercial Banking, Branch Banking, Consumer Lending, and Wealth & Asset Management.

Fifth Third has a rich legacy of community support. In 1948, it became the first financial institution in the United States to establish a charitable foundation. Today, it continues to invest the time, resources, and people to help build a better tomorrow in the communities it serves. Everything they do is rooted in Fifth Third's purpose: to improve the lives of their customers and the well-being of their communities, to fulfill their vision to be the one bank people most value and trust. To learn more visit, www.53.com.

AWARD CEREMONY

UNTAPPED AWARD



JANNIYA HODGE

Linkedin

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THE

AFTER

PARTY

LOCATION

Soho House
113-125 N Green St
Chicago, IL 60607

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Celebrate from 10pm till Midnight
- Networking
- DJ & Light Bites



Thank you to our sponsor!

**SPOT
HERO**

UNTAPPED

POWERING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR A NEW GENERATION OF BLACK ENTREPRENEURS

Thank you to our sponsors!

ACCELERATOR



INNOVATORS



CATALYSTS



OUR STAFF

BRITNEY ROBBINS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Britney Robbins is the founder and CEO of The Gray Matter Experience, a non-profit she founded in 2016, dedicated to unlocking the self-determining power of Black youth and strengthening their ties to community through real world experience in entrepreneurship. They have since served over 700 Chicago youth in this mission, awarded over \$95,000 in seed funding and helped to launch 9 teen-run businesses.

Britney has worked within Chicago's entrepreneurship and tech community for the past ten years working within some of Chicago's top venture capital firms and incubators including Sandbox Industries, Cleveland Avenue, Lightbank and 1871. She has been recognized as one of Ariel Investment, BMO Harris and WVON's 40 Under 40 Gamechangers, Essence Magazine's Woke 100, a finalist for Ebony Magazine's Power 100 People's Choice Award, featured on Fox32, Chicago Inno, BlackEntrepreneur.com, DNAInfo Chicago, Chicago Tribune, and Essence Magazine for her work through Gray Matter. Most recently, she's been named as one of the 26 Most Influential, 20 Most Inspiring Chicagoans, The Chicago Defender's Women of the Year in 2021 and Crain's 2022 Notable Black Leaders & Executives.

Britney serves as the Secretary of the Chicago Urban League's IMPACT Alumni Association, is a member of Business Leadership Council, the Executive's Club of Chicago and the Baumhart Leadership Council and is also a Graduate Adjunct Professor at Loyola University's Baumhart Center for Social Enterprise and Responsibility.

OUR STAFF

JESSICA ROBINSON

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



As a Detroit native and a resident of Chicago's South side, Jessica is committed to bringing opportunity back to her communities, and using her knowledge to equip the next generation of changemakers. She has a passion for people and seeing them be their very best selves.

Prior to joining Gray Matter's team, Jessica spent several years working directly with some of Chicago's best entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship programs as an events and operations professional at 1871. While there, she coordinated and re-designed the Campus 1871 program, an immersive weekend of startup simulations and workshops for Illinois college students.

Jessica's natural gift of organization, attention to detail, and creative imagination have earned her a reputation for unparalleled excellence as an event & program manager. A person who prides herself on being an executor, Jessica takes pride in cultivating events, programs, and operational structure that have a larger impact on the public and clients, alike.

An artist at heart, Jessica studied Contemporary, Urban and Popular Music at Columbia College Chicago, where she also completed coursework in Entrepreneurship, Vocal Performance, and Creative Writing.

She is a proud bookworm and live music junkie.

OUR STAFF

JANAI HARRIS

PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR



Janai Harris is a vibrant and multi-faceted individual, born in Chicago and raised in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Her career journey began as an administrator for residential and commercial real estate management companies in Chicago.

After spending years as an office & property manager, Janai decided to switch course to pursue one of her passions, esthetics. In 2021, she launched a brow and body waxing company, where she would experience the world of entrepreneurship firsthand.

Janai joins The Gray Matter Experience team as a Project Administrator, assisting the leadership team with scheduling, special projects, and all-around support. Always striving to improve, Janai uses her unique life experiences to fuel her to success in all areas of life, and looks to bring her driven & committed spirit to TGME.

Her interests include being an avid music lover, art museum enthusiast, architecture photographer and enjoying movie nights with her two children and husband.

OUR STAFF

JOVONEY MORTON DESIGN & PROJECT MANAGEMENT INTERN



Jovoney recently graduated from Howard University with a B.B.A in Marketing. She is a creative and passionate young professional seeking to make an impact in the same communities she was raised.

Being a former student in the Gray Matter program (Cohort 2), Jovoney has since taken on creative freelancing, traveling, and her new role at HubSpot. Her ultimate aspiration is to help minority entrepreneurs understand and utilize their data to make impactful marketing decisions.

With her creative eye and analytical mindset, Jovoney is able to bring a unique perspective to the table and has showcased this through her professional experience at companies and organizations including -- Estée Lauder Companies, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, HubSpot, and now Gray Matter Experience.

Being a true hustler, Jovoney has always been able to occupy her time with projects that expand to something bigger than herself, and plans to keep it that way.

OUR STAFF

MILES ASARE

PROGRAM INTERN



Miles attends Middlebury College and expects to graduate with his degree in Economics by 2024. He is a young entrepreneur himself with the intention of inciting change for other young people of color looking to get their foot into the business world.

Having been a member of programs such as UChicago Collegiate Scholars, Jack and Jill of America, and the Posse Foundation, Miles understands the importance of having mentors who look like you and have your best interest in mind. His burning passion for creating wealth within minority communities, learning, and entrepreneurship have led him to The Gray Matter Experience. His drive is motivated by wanting to help students believe that the sky truly is the limit and they are capable of anything.

Miles believes that there are two types of people in this world -- sayers and doers. He demonstrates what being a doer looks like by putting his all into the work in front of him. He values the big picture impacts rather than the small picture benefits and will continue to live by that ideology.

OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD

Our Executive Board is pivotal to the oversight and growth of the organization. Through their leadership and guidance, they help to shepherd donors, new relationships and share expertise to help strengthen the overall mission and ensure TGME has all the support it needs to grow and thrive.



CHIKA UMEADI

*Product Manager
Google*



JONATHAN MCGEE

*Deputy Director of Regional Economic Development
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic
Opportunity*



SETH GREEN

*Dean
Graham School at University of Chicago*



LAYLA LUMPKIN

*Partner
Thompson Hine LLP*



PAMELA RANDLE

*Senior Business Consultant
Minority Entrepreneur Initiative
JP Morgan Chase & Co.*

OUR ASSOCIATE BOARD

ADMINISTRATION

The Associate Board Administrative Team consists of the the Board President, Vice President and Secretary. Their job is to oversee the operations, including presiding over meetings, keeping records, and liaising with the TGME executive board & staff to develop overall Associate Board strategy.



JONATHAN MCGEE

*Deputy Director of Regional Economic Development
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic
Opportunity*



KIRSTIN L. JONES

*Chief of Staff
The First Women's Bank*



ERICA LOPER

*Senior Finance Manager
Target*

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee is the communications hub through the Associate Board newsletter, social media promotion and to assist in elevating the Aboard externally.



BRITTANY APPLGATE

*Director of Cultural Strategy
TEN35*



NICOLE MCCARTHY

*Director of Innovation & Venture Strategy
World Business Chicago*



ANYEA TAYLOR

*Director of Development
SitStayReady*



KIRK HENDERSON

*Investment Banking Analysts
William Blair*



TIFFANI MITCHELL

*Client Partner
Meta/Facebook*

ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The objectives of the Associate Board Engagement Committee are to manage the Associate Board recruitment process, onboard new members (ensuring they are up to speed and integrated into the board), and monitor the board's give/get goals.



JESSICA COLE

*Strategic Partner Manager
Snowflake*



ARIKA LINTON

*Senior Recruitment Manager
City Year*



GRANT RICHARDSON

*Program Manager
Promise Venture Studio*

EVENTS & OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Events Committee supports the Gray Matter Experience staff in planning events and workshops for TGME and other events throughout the year that amplify the organization's mission.



JESSICA GAHUNGU

*Customer Success Manager
SWORD Health*



ADRIENNE BRADFORD

*Director, DEI & Talent Engagement
Integral Ad Science*



CAMERON MERRITT

*Global Electric Vehicle Strategy Manager
Ford Motor Company*



CHLOE JOHNSTON

*Inclusive & Diversity Business Partner
Twitter*



MATTHEW HARRIS

*Business Management Associate
Cleveland Avenue*



TOSH CHANDY

*Founder
Law Offices of Tosh Chandy*



JEREMIAH EVANS

*Factory Manager
Ferrara*



QUINN BRYANT

*Marketing & Outreach Specialist
Acreage Holdings*



SAM THOUSAND

*CEO & Artist
Superlative Muzak Inc.*

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The objectives of the Development Committee are to secure financial and in-kind resources, raise awareness for TGME by planning and executing our annual fundraising events and lead sponsorship outreach.



KARRIE MINER

*Development Director
Civic Consulting Alliance*



HANA VISWANATHAN

*Private Wealth Advisor
Goldman Sachs*



JONATHAN GOODELL

*Manager of Growth Stage Memberships
1871*



JONATHAN GLOVER

*Senior Client Advisor
Northern Trust Wealth Management*



OLUSEUN AROWOLAJU

*Trading Associate
PEAK6*



RILEY JONES

*Director, Ventures
CityBridge Education*



ALEXANDRIA FOREMAN

*Community Manager
Goodie Nation*



ANTWOINE FLOWERS

*Senior Data Scientist
Coinbase*



JON CAINES

*Executive VP of Business Development
Lexicon Networks Inc.*



GRAY MATTER

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**SUPPORT OUR MISSION OF BRINGING BLACK
EXCELLENCE TO THE FOREFRONT TODAY...**

[DONATE](#)



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The Gray Matter Experience



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