



**Ashanti Hamilton**  
*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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**August 6, 2018**

**Pres. Ashanti Hamilton**  
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## **President Hamilton will host completion ceremony for participants in the 9<sup>th</sup> annual “Be the Change” program**

**Common Council President Ashanti Hamilton** will be hosting a **City Hall ceremony TONIGHT -- Monday, August 6, 2018** celebrating 2018 participants who have completed “**Be the Change**,” a city-wide literacy, life skills and leadership program now in its ninth year.

“The positive transformation we see taking place in Be the Change participants is inspiring,” President Hamilton said. “By equipping these young men with skills they need to succeed academically and to contribute socially, Be the Change is nurturing their development and giving them an opportunity to take ownership of their personal growth, and this translates into positive growth in the community.”

“As we celebrate the closing of this summer’s activities and look forward to the year round program and the 10<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary of this initiative next year. We invite all of our partners to answer the call and be the change we would want to see in Milwaukee,” President Hamilton said.

The 2018 completion ceremony will take place **tonight at 5 p.m.** at City Hall in the first floor rotunda. **Media coverage is invited.**

**Reggie Moore**, Director of the Office of Violence Prevention, said the OVP is a key and proud partner of Be the Change: “It is vital for young people in our city to have access to positive, caring, and consistent adults especially during the summer months. The Office of Violence Prevention is proud to be a partner and sponsor of Be the Change as an approach for building life and leadership skills to young men in our community.”

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Milwaukee Public Schools has been a key Be the Change partner since its inception nine years ago. Interim MPS Superintendent **Dr. Keith P. Posley** said: “Be The Change provides young African-American men with the opportunity to succeed, thanks to the dedication of youth mentors, adult role models, and the determination of the young men themselves. ‘At-risk’ defines the status of a student at one point in time. It does not mean they cannot succeed, it’s just that they need additional support to reach their goals. I am proud of the young men completing this program and of all of those adults who make their success possible.”

The Running Rebels Community Organization is also a key Be the Change partner, and RRCO Executive Director **Victor Barnett** said: “It is always an honor to unite as a community to celebrate the gifts and accomplishments of our young men. We are grateful for this collaboration and the long-term impact it will have on our youth and families.”

Be the Change was developed in 2009 as a cross sector response led by then-Alderman Ashanti Hamilton who partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and community members to address the challenges that many of Milwaukee’s young males of color face. For nine consecutive years Be the Change has been a staple program helping young men.

This program platform utilizes an integrated service structure using culturally relevant literacy instruction (ID Literacy Curriculum, Dr. Alfred Tatum of Chicago, IL) combined with a rigorous cultural rites of passage component led by trained community facilitators. The Be the Change summer program serves to provide an outlet for young men of color, youth mentors and older adult role models to share concerns, exchange ideas, develop and offer solutions and act on priorities addressing conditions that lead to academic and social disparities.

BTC is a comprehensive program that supports the development, success and achievement of Milwaukee’s young males of color. BTC uses an integrated service structure and an intergenerational approach to connecting young men of color with young adult and older male role models of color. BTC will employ a cohort of seasoned mentors who have experience working with our scholars. In addition, all mentors will be given on-going instruction and support to ensure that they are equipped to be successful.

The goals of the program are:

- Increasing reading comprehension and literacy skills
- Improving student confidence and attitude toward learning
- Improving school attendance rates among participants
- Lowering disciplinary referral, detention, and suspension rates
- Establishing, promoting, and enforcing positive social norms and behavior habits
- Providing opportunities for community exposure, life-skills and character development
- Increasing community service and civic engagement