



2018 City of Ithaca's

My Brother's Keeper Ithaca Strategic Plan

OVERVIEW

In September 2014, President Obama issued the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge to municipalities across the country in order to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color. In 2015 Mayor Svante Myrick of Ithaca, NY accepted this challenge with great interest and desire to help foster long term change within the community and be a leader for the nation and communities like the City of Ithaca. Ithaca is one of 200 cities to accept the challenge so far. The MBK Community Challenge seeks to foster communities nationwide to implement a "coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential" without regard to race, gender, or socioeconomic status, etc.

The current Director of the MBK Ithaca movement (MBKI) is Travis Brooks. MBKI will be the umbrella organization to bring groups together help design the MBKI as well manage the initiative once the plan is created.

- In the Fall of 2016 My Brother's Keeper (MBK) was moved under the supervision of the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC). At this time MBK was rebranded My Brother's Keeper Ithaca (MBKI)
- The primary MBKI population will be:
 - The MBKI primary focus will middle school age young people of color through young adult (26) young people of color. MBKI will over time extend the umbrella to programs that work with the younger populations.
 - MBKI understands that the primary focus of My Brother's Keeper is young men of color, however in order to re-write the narrative for Ithaca's young people of color the work and support must be done for our young ladies as well.
- An advisory team was organized in the summer of 2016 that helped shape the direction in which the development process of the MBKI strategic planning process
- Approach to developing Ithaca's MBKI
 - Five Pillar Strategic Teams were established that will be focused on 5 key areas. Each team will have a chairperson that will bring together community members to form their

respective team. Teams are responsible for developing a strategic action plan that will examine the following:

- ❖ What programs currently exist and how those programs need to be tweaked or better supported in order to meet the MBKI population's needs
- ❖ What populations are not being served by these existing programs
- ❖ What needs to change or be created in order to engage the MBKI community
- ❖ What does not exist that needs to be created to increase success and desired outcomes for the MBKI population.
- ❖ Each team will look at data and assumptions.
- The Five pillars are:
 - ❖ Mentoring
 - ❖ Education
 - ❖ Employment
 - ❖ Recreation/Programming
 - ❖ Data/Policy
- In the Fall of 2016 MBKI formed a collaborative partnership with the City of Ithaca School District and joined the New York State My Brother's Keeper Initiative.
 - The Ithaca City School District (ICSD) Superintendent Dr. Luvelle Brown agreed to chair the Education Pillar
 - MBKI and ICSD applied and received the Family Engagement grant from New York State Department of Education.
 - ❖ Under this grant over 105 students have been engaged in new initiatives and more opportunities created by community-based programs.
 - ❖ Over 60 ICSD faculty and staff have received professional development in areas of equity, family engagement and bias and inclusion.
- Working groups and programs
 - 6 working groups have been either created and are working and/or finished bringing 6 strategic recommendations to life from the various strategic plans
 - ❖ One of the most critical developments has been working in collaboration with one of our local colleges that would allow 20 scholarships to 6th graders to receive free tuition upon graduation from high school. During the years of school they would receive college experiences as well as mentoring from students in the college
 - ❖ There are several programs that have been initiated through the strategic plan process including work programs, family engagement and data collection.

By the end of Fall 2018 we will have started and or finished the work of the working groups and begun the process of working with our many partners to bring to life the many recommendations from our strategic plans. Our social media and marketing team will be in full swing and will start to lay the foundation to building our bridge of permanent change for our MBKI families and young people.



My Brother's Keeper Ithaca

Mentorship Pillar - Strategic plan

The Mentorship Committee recommends:

The Mentorship Pillar uses the following as guidelines to craft activities for Mentoring:

“According to the website Mentor.gov, Mentoring creates meaningful connections that can positively impact the lives of both mentor and mentee. Those who receive mentorship are more likely to see improved academic, social, and economic prospects. Those who mentor are able to build important leadership and management skills, while giving back to their community.

Former U.S. President Barack Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper initiative in February 2014. He viewed mentorship in this way:

‘By sharing their own stories and offering guidance and advice, mentors can instill a sense of infinite possibility in the hearts and minds of their mentees, demonstrating that with hard work and passion, nothing is beyond their potential. Whether simply offering a compassionate ear or actively teaching and inspiring curiosity, mentors can play pivotal roles in young peoples' lives. When given a chance to use their talents and abilities to engage in their communities and contribute to our world, our Nation's youth rise to the challenge. They make significant impacts in their communities and shape a brighter future for coming generation.’

My Brother's Keeper-Ithaca (MBKI) recognizes that mentorship can be structural – such as an organization committed to mentoring – or informal – such as good community members helping youth independently. MBKI's Mentorship Pillar seeks to facilitate positive connections between the Black and Brown youth of the Greater Ithaca area through mentorship opportunities.”

The Mentorship Committee recommends:

Establishment of goals and related tasks with an eye on supporting – not recreating – what's currently available. However, a process should be incorporated to accommodate assisting or developing resources to meet a previously unmet need. This can include the creation of a list of potential mentors to connect with participants when none are available for a specific activity.

- **Identify the specific population(s) with whom MBKI will be working with and their needs.**

- Example: Students of color between middle school and age 24, young parents, or other subset of people who will benefit from having a mentor to help them make better decisions regarding ... (behavior, employment, personal relationships, education) ... in order to do better in their personal development)
- **Identify and establish relationships with key organizations in order to create networking linkages and sustainable momentum.**
 - Example: Age- and topic-appropriate groups within GIAC, Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Tompkins County, and their locally affiliated programs, student groups at the local colleges – particularly fraternities and sororities, and local civic organizations such as the United Way of Tompkins County’s Student Engagement Committee (i.e. potential resources for people and financial support)
- **Identify target areas or goals and parameters to establish focus and avoid repetition.**
 - Example: Lend support toward meeting goals for time-limited activities such as sports season or upcoming contests, exams, or beneficial opportunity; list ongoing areas for support; stress importance of not duplicating what currently exists without overarching reason
- **Create a mentoring database.**
 - The database should have a target number of 101 mentors for the following areas
 - Mentors who can serve at a minimum of 5 hours per week
 - Mentors who can serve at 5 to 10 hours per month
 - Mentors that can serve for short term or very specific needs
 - Folks that can contribute financially or have other skills sets
 - Speakers Bureau of people who want to help but are unable to serve as mentors. These should be people of note that program participants/mentees would benefit greatly by being exposed to the speaker’s occupation/expertise/experience.
- **Create a curriculum for annual mentorship training and refresher sessions that help mentor candidates understand certain impacts in the lives of their mentees.**
 - Topics for such training should include advocacy, cultural sensitivity, diversity and inclusion, mass incarceration, and poverty. The

Advocacy Program of Loaves & Fishes of Tompkins County trains its Volunteer Advocates with a curriculum that covers some of these topics. That program can coordinate and host the training to incorporate those elements into a comprehensive training curriculum.

- **Create a position and committee focused on outreach and marketing for MBKI's mentorship activities.**

- Duties for said role should include the creation of boilerplate information for consistent messaging and easy replication. The use of key social media platforms should be emphasized – but not exclusively – for reaching participants/mentees, volunteers, and mentors. The responsible committee should ensure these duties are met, provide input, and otherwise be a resource for the position.

- **Identify or create position(s) to support the administrative work of the Mentorship Pillar as current staff equals only one position.**

- Example: The Cornell Public Service Center and its student fellowship positions or the Traditions Scholars could provide support through student internship or work-study opportunities.

- **Create a funding committee devoted to identifying viable development opportunities.**

- This strategic committee would contain community members well connected with key entities inside and beyond Tompkins County
- Committee members would be tasked with identifying donors, sponsors/entities, and grant opportunities to support key mentorship efforts (i.e. Ithaca Public Education Initiative's grant program)

- **Compile a list of local key ventures and resources that will facilitate momentum for the related working group. A starter listing:**

Ithaca Schools

- Dr. Claudette James' lecture series with collegiate faculty of color
- Student Mentoring at Ithaca High School
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's program at New Roots

Community

These community organizations offer programs that are ready-made resources for the work of the Mentorship in the Ithaca area:

- **Loaves & Fishes of Tompkins County Advocacy Program**
loaves.org

The Advocacy Program links Loaves & Fishes' dining guests with support and local resources to help them meet basic human needs such as food, housing, healthcare, and transportation. The program also trains its new Volunteer Advocates and offers ongoing training and support for current Volunteer Advocates.

J.R. Clairborne, Advocacy Coordinator

advocacy@loaves.org

607.272.5457

- Ithaca Youth Bureau

- Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Tompkins County

www.bbbsithaca.org

Nationally-known program pairing adults with children to establish and nurture friendships between caring, responsible adults and children in need for such friendship.

Joe Gibson, Program Coordinator

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607.273.8364

- Cornell Bigs (a program of the local Big Brother Big Sisters)

orgsync.rso.cornell.edu/org/bigsatcornell

- Ithaca Bigs (a program of the local Big Brother Big Sisters)

orgsync.com/87676/chapter

- College Discovery Program

www.ithacayouthbureau.org/college-discovery-program

A long-term mentoring and academic support program designed to reduce achievement gaps in the Ithaca City School District and increase access to a college education for program participants.

Higher Education

These offices and programs at local institutions of higher learning have resources that can be useful in the creation, sustainability, or enhancement of MBKI Mentorship opportunities:

- Cornell University

- Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives (OADI)

www.oadi.cornell.edu

OADI is focused on inclusion and achievement across the Cornell campus so students of all backgrounds excel at their academic goals. OADI programs especially support low-income students, those who are the first in their families to achieve a college degree, and under-represented students of color.

Trey Waller, Interim Director

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- Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP)

oadi.cornell.edu/programs/student-success-programs/pre-professional-programs/about-p3.html

CSTEP is a New York State funded program designed to increase the number of NYS residents from historically underrepresented or low-income backgrounds to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees, and careers leading to professional licensure or professions in science, technology, engineering, and health-related fields.

- Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP)

psc.cornell.edu/step

STEP serves economically-disadvantaged and underrepresented minority students in grades 7-12 in the Ithaca City School District, specifically DeWitt Middle School, Boynton Middle School, Lehman Alternative Community School, and Ithaca High School. Student participants aim to succeed in pre-college performance and ultimately in their STEM higher education pursuits.

Dr. Kristen Dade, Director

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- The Cornell Commitment

commitment.cornell.edu

Cornell Commitment programs recognize, reward, and encourage further development of a select group of students who exemplify Cornell's commitment to academic excellence, work and service, research and discovery, and leadership and learning, and in so doing, enrich their experience at Cornell and beyond.

Kristine M. DeLuca, Commitment Director

Meinig Family Cornell National Scholars (MFCNS)
Director

commitment.cornell.edu/meinig-scholars

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- Engaged Cornell

www.engaged.cornell.edu

Engaged Cornell advances Cornell's mission through community-engaged discovery and learning.

Inquiries: engagedcornell@cornell.edu

607.254.4240

- Cornell Public Service Center (PSC)

psc.cornell.edu

The PSC provides local, national, and international public service opportunities to Cornell students, faculty, and alumni.

Renee Farkas, Interim Director

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- Student Organizations
 - Cross Cultural Adoptee Mentorship Program (CCAMP)

orgsync.rso.cornell.edu/org/ccamp

C-CAMP is a non-profit student-run outreach program dedicated to fostering cultural understanding and appreciation in transculturally-adopted youth in the Ithaca community.

Inquiries: cornellccamp@gmail.com

- Cornell Multicultural Greek Letter Council

www.cornellmglc.org

Composed of 13 culturally-based – including the “Divine 9” historically Black – organizations at Cornell who serve to coordinate programs between its member organizations, members, and the rest of the community.

- Ithaca College

- Office of Student Engagement and Multicultural Affairs (OSEMA)

www.ithaca.edu/sacl/osema

OSEMA is dedicated to creating a supportive and inclusive environment on campus that complements the academic experience, connects and engages all students with the Ithaca College community, and provides opportunities for on-going personal and professional development. It also creates service and experiential learning opportunities through co-curricular community service.

- Tompkins-Cortland Community College (TC3)

- Office of Diversity Education and Support Services (ODESS)

www.tc3.edu/student/odess_programs.asp

ODESS-sponsored enrichment activities not only enhance the

collegiate experience of students of color, but also cultivate cross-

cultural awareness and understanding for the entire college

community.



My Brother's Keeper Ithaca

Policy and Data Pillar – Strategic Plan

The Policy and Data Committee recommends:

MBK Policy and Review Board (MBK – PRB)

- MBK- PRB will be a regular standing committee of the Data and Policy Pillar that will meet monthly to examine government rules and policies at the local, state, and school district levels that impact the MBKI population. Where necessary, MBK-PRB will be tasked with making recommendations to governing authorities on changes to legislation or policy that that can engender the success of the MBKI population.

Social media and marketing

- Create and maintain social media platforms including website.
 - Develop 2 positions within MBKI for a young adult and high school student to manage these responsibilities
 - Work with local college students to develop best practices and platform use

Funding and financial development

- Establish a funding committee with the assistance of the Community Foundation
- Develop support from an Anchor Partner group

City/County Youth Court

- Youth Court is a program run by our youth for our youth. Juvenile offenders, between the ages of 10 and 17, who have committed a misdemeanor crime, have their cases heard by a jury of their peers. Youth Court volunteers perform the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys, bailiff, clerk and jury. A local volunteer attorney presides as Judge and is the only adult directly involved in the Court proceedings. Juvenile offenders who successfully complete the program avoid formal prosecution.
 - **The purpose of Youth Court**
 - Court is to interrupt the developing pattern of criminal behavior in juveniles by promoting self-esteem, motivation for self-improvement and forming a healthy attitude toward authority. The offenders assume

responsibility for their behavior and accept the consequences of their actions through community service work, serving on the Youth Court jury and any punishment sanctioned by a Youth Court jury of their peers. Youth Court provides an educational experience for the offender and juvenile volunteers. They are given "hands-on" experience with the legal process, become familiar with the Court system and learn about various career opportunities the Court system has to offer. The offenders also learn about various career opportunities through the community service they perform. Youth Court enables young people a unique challenge and opportunity to demonstrate to adults and themselves their capacity for self-government and responsible citizenship.

MBKI Data Bank Initiative

- Create a citywide MBKI data dashboard to serve as a tool to monitor and report on the community's progress towards the MBKI's goal of implementing a "coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential" without regard to race, gender, or socioeconomic status, etc. In an effort to paint a comprehensive picture of how young people are doing in our community, this data dashboard will incorporate a broad collection of metrics drawn from the data sets already maintained by the community organizations and government agencies that serve the young people in our community. This will be an interactive, web-based dashboard which will allow users to examine the data by subgroup (race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status). We will make the MBKI data dashboard publically available as an invitation for the entire community to join us in thinking about equity. We hope that as users explore the MBKI data dashboard that they will think of it as a tool for learning, rather than judging, and that they will use it to:
 - better understand how young people experience our community
 - ask questions
 - consider how they can contribute to the goal of equity in their own role(s) in our community

- A first step in creating this dashboard will be to bring together a working group to identify existing data sets and the metrics within these data that are aligned to the MBKI. This group will then work to ensure that there are sustainable systems in place to facilitate accurate, consistent, and continued data collection for all metrics and to document these systems so that data is collected, pulled, and reported consistently year to year regardless of who is leading the effort. Finally, this group will identify a data visualization tool to use to present the data and work through the dashboard design process with input from various stakeholder groups.



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Education Pillar – Strategic Plan

The Education Committee recommends

Trauma

- Working group creates a comprehensive approach to addressing Trauma (i.e. CARE Team Training, Trauma Response Team)

After School Programming

- Create After School Programs in support of families in various situations including: Incarceration, split families, grandparents raising young children, domestic abuse,
- Partner with TST BOCES to create an alternative learning program for Studio Engineering and Coding

Early Literacy and Pre-School Programming

- Create The Diane Sams Leadership Academy that will be a preschool program for 3-4 year olds. This will be a partnership with the Ithaca City School District. The instructional program will have an emphasis on culturally responsive practices.
- Continued support for Cradle to Careers who is working on achievement results for prenatal – elementary age.

Family Engagement

- Continue to monitor and support the implementation of the Ithaca City School District Family Engagement grant from New York State Education Department.

Post-Secondary Education and/or Training

- Partner with TST BOCES to create a twilight/night school program
- Explore partnership with TC3 to implement an Early College High School program in the Ithaca City School District.
- Explore the possible implementation of a cohort-based tuition free program that will identify, support, and mentor students who will attend Cornell or Ithaca College.



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Recreation and Programming Pillar – Strategic Plan

The Recreation and Programming Committee recommends:

Late night programming:

- Develop programming that includes several different outlets that would occur on Friday and Saturday nights
- Late night open gym, movie nights, social events, drama and arts

Empowerment, leadership and social justice

- Creation and continued support for empowerment groups for all ages of the MBKI population to be served
- Leadership training opportunities for the three segments: Middle/high school and young adult
- Develop programs based on the Rights of Passage teachings
- Develop and maintain a social justice arm of MBKI that place an emphasis on engaging, teaching and creating opportunities for the development of the MBKI population

Out of town trips:

- Monthly trips that occur a minimum of an hour away from Ithaca
- Quarterly big trips – Overnights or bus trips to games, amusement parks, other community center events
- Leadership/Empowerment Conferences – Twice a year

The development of a sports/community complex for teens:

- A complex that will include several basketball courts, turf fields, dance studio, meeting space, arcade and teen ran café.
- There are several models that have been developed that could be duplicated and upgraded for Ithaca
- This would become the Community Teen hub

Official AAU programs designed to get young people into collage:

- There are several sports that could be developed from Basketball to jump rope
- Needs to be affordable for low income
- Present a what next element – COLLEGE
- Need a college connector – We know our kids of color are not being recruited through our high school coaches

A robust Summer program that includes:

- Financial support for RRBL and the creation of a league for teen girls
- Summer outing events –
- Opportunities for larger evening activities outside of basketball

College life experience:

- Getting our young people onto college campus for weekend/school/summer break visits – Experience college life



My Brother's Keeper Ithaca

Employment Pillar - Strategic Plan

The Employment Committee recommends:

Middle School-Aged Youth

- Youth will have regularly scheduled career exposure opportunities to in demand, living wage industries and occupations. (ex: Water Treatment, Manufacturing)
 - These will include hands-on practice and school credit for participation
- Schools, afterschool programs, and other youth-focused organizations will convey to youth that while college is important, the ultimate goal is employment
- School Guidance Counselors will identify career paths that may not need college and guide students through paths toward various careers
- School staff will coach youth on what to do with results from career interest assessments
- In class, teachers will explain how skills are relevant to job market, career, and job-related tasks
 - Teachers will be paid for their time learning from employers how to contextualize lessons
- Schools will offer lesson related to entrepreneurship including basic business and exposure to industries so youth can find their niche market

High School-Aged Young Adults

- Teens are matched with mentors with experience in the industry they are interested in
- Employment programs (i.e. summer employment) will match young adults to job opportunities related to their career interest with meaningful tasks/projects
 - Supervisors will mentor and teach youth staff how to be effective employees
 - After a few seasonal trials, employers will transition young adults to position with growth opportunities
 - Employers will pay college/training expenses for young adult to grow with organization
 - Youth employment programs will provide support for employment including transportation
- Create opportunities for young adults to work beyond the summer and receive payment and school credit
 - Work and school/training complement each other to reach specific career goal
- School Guidance Counselors will identify career paths that may not need college and guide students through paths toward various careers
- School will offer electives relevant to work including business, cosmetology, and personal finance

- School lessons will include hands-on learning and problem solving
- School will offer/expand nonjudgmental academic support with clear relevance to employment

Young Adults 18 to 26 Years Old

- Employers are prepared to receive young people, adapting to cultural shifts, and new employment norms and expectations of young adults
- Employers will invest in young adults by providing training and holistic support
- Develop list of worksites where young people have had positive experiences