

IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co.

Opportunity Center

MISSION:

To provide ‘Wrap-around Pre-entry’ services for at-risk youth and families.

To interrupt the “*school-to-prison pipeline*” that disproportionately affects underserved communities. To create a safe haven space for our clients where they can get access to opportunities not otherwise afforded to them. Our programs help prepare young people for the real world, by showing them how to generate wealth and effectively manage it, how to create jobs which make their communities more robust, and how to apply entrepreneurial thinking to the workplace. Students put these lessons into action and learn the value of contributing to their communities.

GOAL:

To provide alternatives and solutions to social issues and concerns that lead to wrong choices and poor decisions.

IAM The Voice of Legacy aims to present *the difference* to New Haven area youth and families facing daunting challenges, who have been facing adversity, navigating the pressures intensified by the fallout from COVID-19, substance misuse and addiction, persistent violence, enduring poverty, incarceration, mental illness, and the burden of generation trauma i.e. the War on Drugs. None of these conditions, alone, are easy to deal with, however, in most cases these conditions are combined double, triple or quadruple fold.

Too often, the people we serve have limited resources and options, but they are working hard to overcome their circumstances. Some may have faced obstacles like dropping out of school, misusing drugs and alcohol or joining gangs, but are eager to turn things around. We aim to let them see that they too, can dream bigger and strive for a more equitable future with the proper support and resources.

Drawing from our own life experiences, our community advocates, case workers, life coaches and coordinators work tirelessly with these youth and families to help them face their challenges proactively. When they encounter difficulties, our teams collaborate closely with families, schools, churches and similar faith-based organizations and the community to provide the necessary support, resources, and guidance, helping them find a positive and prevention-orientated path forward.

Through our programs we plan to have a lasting and meaningful impact on the lives of each person we serve, fostering much-needed generational stability and a healthier community for all.

VALUES:

- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. **Champions** originality and embraces the creative process unbound by conventional norms. This is exemplified by our thinking and actions, and the unique experience we provide our community.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. **Welcomes** our visitors and staff with an open mind. We believe in creating a safe space that embraces a diversity of culture, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity, religious affiliation, age, and physical or mental ability. Our policies and programming encourage connecting to others with respect and dignity.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. **Values community.** We unify individuals through shared experiences and build relationships with diverse populations within the community.

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. believes in inspiring others. The artwork and programs we promote provoke inspiration through curiosity, self-expression and awe. We approach our daily operations and programming with a light-hearted, celebratory attitude. We believe in working hard while still maintaining levity and humor.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. believes that art and art environments are often a form of therapy for both the viewer and the creators. We will focus on highlighting and educating about the importance of mental health and the role it plays in our organization and within the art community.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. believes that the pride of the individual can and should be exemplified by the collective. To that end, we will ensure that exhibitions, residencies and programs include a concerted focus on contributions of people of color and Black communities. Specifically, *at least 40%* of our programming will feature Black artists. Additionally, *at least 75%* of our overall programming will feature people of color, women and members of the LBGTQ community.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. believes in being transparent and above board, in everything we do. We also believe in *“planting trees that we know we won’t personally sit under the shade of”*. Therefore, we commit to sharing our blessings with select organizations whose goals, mission and values align with ours, by donating up to \$2,000 annually to said organization(s). As an organization, 100% of our operating budget is

out of pocket thus far. In the future we're hoping to add to our resources with funding that comes from grants, benefactors and fund-raising as well as the donations given for admissions to our exhibitions.

- We commit to using our operating budget exclusively to support the goals, mission and values of our organization to the utmost.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. believes that diversity and inclusion should be the cornerstone of the progress we experience. To that end, we will form an Equity and Inclusion committee that will include a diverse group of representatives from across the organization, including board members, senior staff, junior staff, and members of community. This committee will help facilitate the disassembling of any areas of systemic, implicit racism or discrimination in our language and policies, as well as investigate any additional opportunities for action by the organization toward equity and inclusion.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. will seek out and provide ongoing professional development opportunities for board and staff members and will prioritize staff training in accordance with established guidelines and best practices.
- IAM The Voice Of Legacy Co. wants to emphasize that the commitments and governance outlined above are not the end of this journey, and we are continuing to expand their scope as we grow.