



ONE
COMMON
UNITY



ANNUAL REPORT

DEAR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS,

On behalf of the youth, staff, and board of One Common Unity, we thank you all for another amazing year! OCU is endlessly grateful for our network of donors, supporters, and community members who have stuck with us through the ups and downs of pandemic life.

This year, OCU staff have gracefully adapted to hybrid programming. We continued with virtual Fly By Light programming to finish the Spring semester. Over the Summer, we hosted the Summer Strong program in-person at Roosevelt HS. Then in the Fall, DC schools returned to in-person learning for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and so did OCU programming!

OCU announced this year that founding director, Hawah Kasat, stepped down from his role as Executive Director to pursue other personal endeavors. In his place, we have hired Jeffrey Franco to take over as Interim Director while we conduct the search for OCU's next Executive Director. All of us at OCU are incredibly grateful for Hawah's work throughout the years. We are excited to work with Jeffrey and to see what the future holds for the organization.

Looking to 2022, OCU plans to launch our newest program, Peace Together, to provide immediate crisis intervention to communities after an incident of gun violence. We are proud to be working in partnership with Building Blocks DC and other DC offices to bring this much-needed program to our communities.

Here's to another year of breaking the cycles of violence and building community!



Yours in service,

Brittany Nixon

Development Director





CONTENTS

Our Mission

4

Our Partner Schools

5

Fly By Light

6

Mental Health Services

12

Training

15

One Common Unity Staff

17

Board of Directors & Leadership Council

19

Finances & Funding

21

OUR MISSION



One Common Unity (OCU) breaks cycles of violence and builds compassionate, healthy communities through the transformative power of music, arts, and peace education.

OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS

Ward 3

- Oyster-Adams Bilingual Middle School (FBL)
- Alice DEAL Middle School (Mental Health Clinician)

Ward 1

- Cardozo Middle School (FBL)

Ward 2

- School Without Walls High School (FBL)
- Deal Middle School (FBL and Mental Health Clinician)

Ward 6

- Stuart- Hobson MS (FBL and Mental Health Clinician)
- Eastern Senior High School (FBL, Intention Room, Mental Health Clinician)
- Richard Wright PCS for Journalism and Media Arts (Mental Health Clinician)

Ward 4

- Roosevelt High School (FBL, Intention Room, and Mental Health Clinician)
- Paul Public Charter School (FBL and Mental Health Clinician)
- Whittier Education Campus (Mental Health Clinician)
- Takoma Education Campus (Mental Health Clinician)

Ward 5

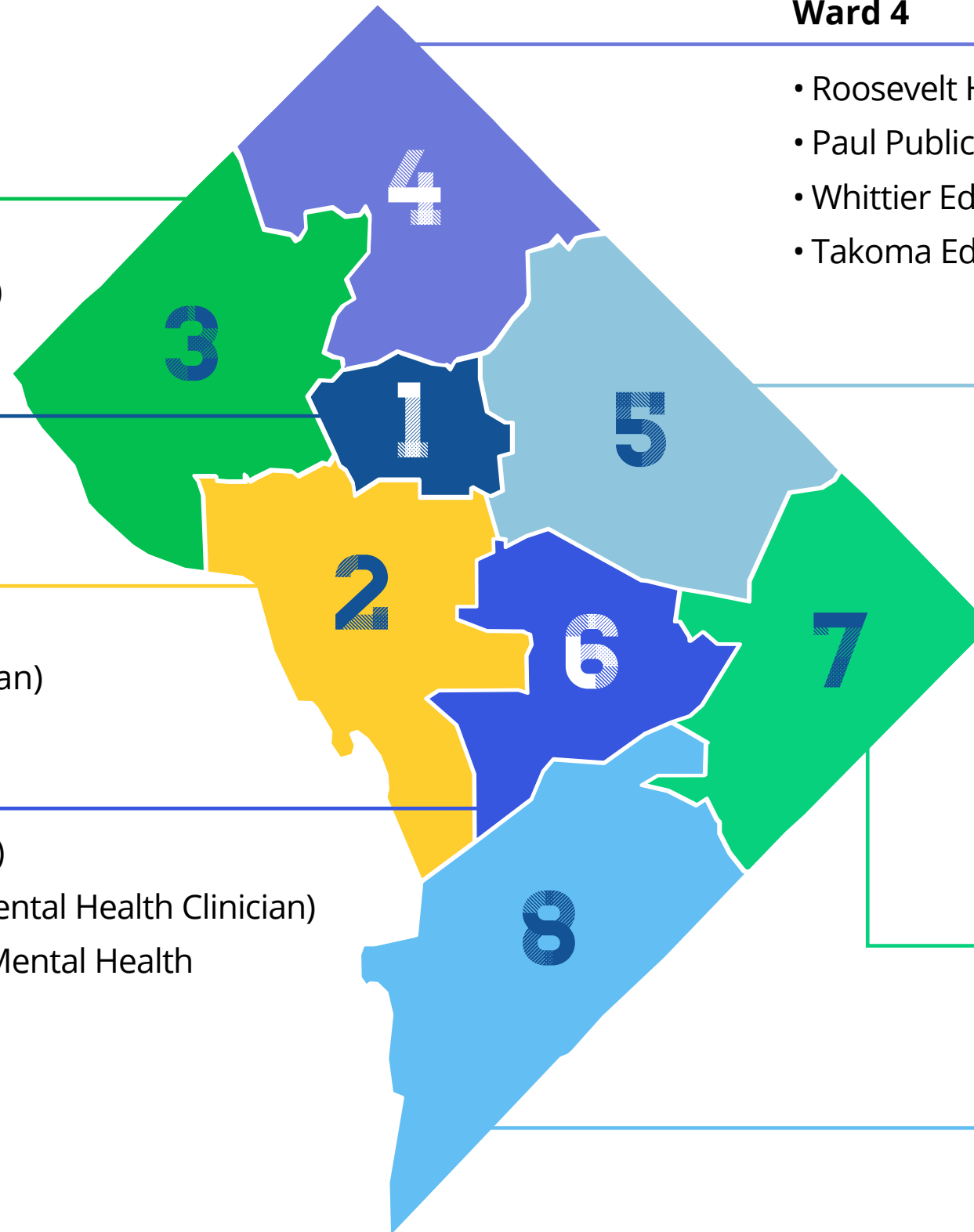
- Dunbar High School (FBL)
- Perry Street Preparatory Public Charter School (FBL and Mental Health Clinician)
- Browne Education Campus (FBL and Mental Health Clinician)
- Mary McLeod Bethune Day Academy PCS (Mental Health Clinician)
- Wheatley Education Campus (Mental Health Clinician)

Ward 7

- SEED Public Charter School (Mental Health Clinician)

Ward 8

- Thurgood Marshall Public Charter School (Mental Health Clinician)





FLY BY LIGHT

FLY BY LIGHT

Rounding out the 2020–21 school year amidst COVID-19 school closures, Fly By Light facilitators implemented weekly Fly By Light after-school programming with 116 youth in virtual spaces. The program sites include Organizing Troupe, Performance Troupe, Washington Institute of Dance, School Without Walls HS, Perry Street Prep MS, and Roosevelt HS.

They also implemented weekly in-school programming with 74 youth at Perry Street Prep Middle School, Browne Education Campus, and Roosevelt High School.

FBL facilitators lead cohorts of the evidence-based LifeSkills curriculum through the SAMHSA grant, delivering LifeSkills training to 86 youth at Browne Education Campus, Paul PCS High School, Roosevelt High School, Stuart-Hobson Middle School, and Perry Street Prep PCS.



VIRTUAL EVENTS

In 2021, OCU hosted several virtual events as a means to build community and provide healing spaces during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilitators hosted over 105 hours of virtual Fly By Light events during the first half of the year, reaching over 100 community members with programs including Mindful Art with Tyler, Dance By Light with Johneé, among others. Participants of all ages from across the country tuned in for these special events.

Annual Winter Showcase

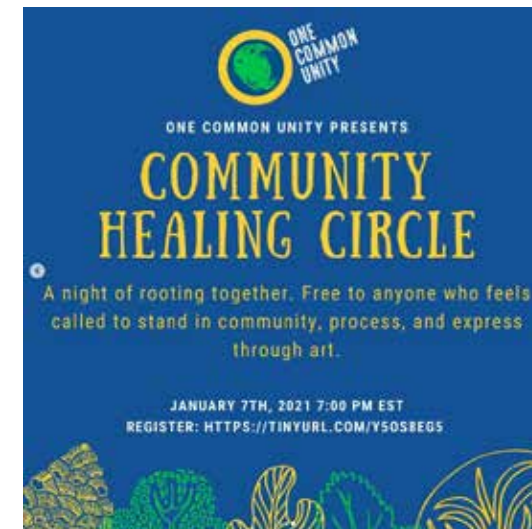
On January 27th, OCU held our annual Winter Showcase online due to the pandemic, featuring youth artists from Fly By Light chapters as well as many local artists. Over 100 people tuned into the live event (and hundreds more tuned in at a later time to watch the recording).

Throughout the year, facilitators worked closely with the administration at Roosevelt High School to plan and provide SEL-focused Professional Development (PD) opportunities, reaching close to 100 staff members at each session. Most notably, OCU hosted a healing circle event on January 29th that was attended by 120 Roosevelt staff members.

Through funding from the SAMHSA grant, facilitators continued hosting monthly Parenting By Light workshops, focused on healthy communication, conflict resolution, stress reduction, and self-care during COVID. These workshops were delivered in both English and Spanish by FBL facilitators Princess, Jair, and Tyler.

Response To US Capitol Insurrection

On January 7th, in response to the US Capitol insurrection on January 6th, OCU hosted a Community Healing Circle for community members to process the incident using the arts. Nineteen participants attended the event. Prior to the circle, the Performance Troupe hosted an Instagram Live event titled “Mic Drop: Youth Voices on White Supremacist Violence”.



Annual Summer Showcase

On June 9th, we held our annual Summer Showcase online. Over 150 people tuned into the live event or viewed the video recording on Facebook.



SPECIAL FLY BY LIGHT COHORTS

Performance Troupe

On January 27th, OCU Performance Troupe, Elements of Light – an ensemble of aspiring professional artists – performed at Roosevelt High School’s 9th/10th grade lower school assembly, reaching 64 students with original music, poetry, and dance reflecting a message of resilience, self-love and positivity.

On February 25th, Performance Troupe held an Instagram Live event called “Mic Drop: Youth Voices on Teen Domestic Violence.” Elements of Light performed targeted pieces around the topic, discussed the theme, and had discussions throughout the set.

On April 27, 2021, the Performance Troupe youth hosted an Instagram “Mic Drop” open mic focused on poetry for National Poetry Month. On May 7, 2021, they hosted an Instagram “Mic Drop” open mic and discussion on mental health during Mental Health Awareness Month.

Organizing Troupe

On February 3rd, the Fly By Light Organizing Troupe hosted a live Black Lives Matter in School Week of Action youth-led assembly. The Performance Troupe was featured at Dunbar High School’s “Love Fest,” a school assembly and panel discussion with the ladies of Dunbar that was attended by 55 youth.

On May 11, 2021, the Organizing Troupe hosted a “Beyond the Body & Mind” special event for everyBODY, focused on mental health and body image.



SUMMER PROGRAMMING

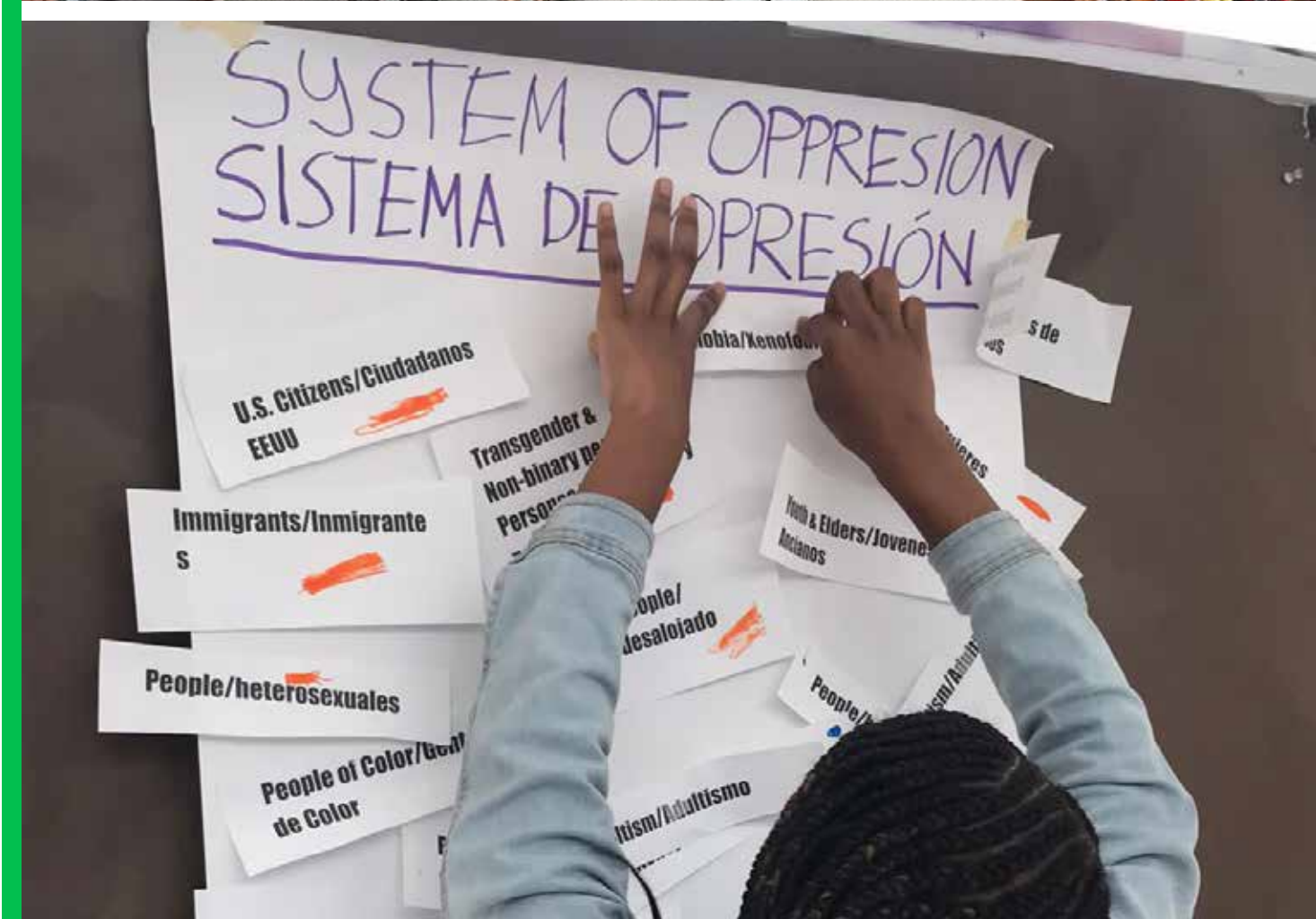
Over the summer, OCU hosted our first Art and Social Justice Institute at Roosevelt Senior High School for 32 youth through our partnership with Learn24. Students were fully immersed in the Fly By Light curriculum, in which they practiced artistic expression with various media and created their own social justice campaigns centered around police brutality, climate change, and mental health.

The program was offered in both English and Spanish, bringing together students from different backgrounds. OCU facilitators lead students on various field trips, including a canoe trip with the Anacostia Watershed Society, an interactive art viewing at the Artechouse, a special Kennedy Center performance, and a trip to Kings Dominion! On the final day, students presented their social justice campaign to a very special guest...Senator Bernie Sanders!

Through a partnership with the Mayor Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program, OCU was a designated DC Summer Youth Employment site. Four Fly By Light youth from different school chapters had the unique opportunity to transition from program participants into program leaders.

Throughout the course of the program, the youth participants developed, promoted, and facilitated a virtual event for the community, focusing on how to manage stress in COVID times. They also facilitated a full day of the Fly By Light National Training, sharing their unique insights on youth activism with educators and youth workers from across the country.

Later in the summer, the youth hosted a group of Nigerian activists visiting the U.S. through the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program and facilitated a workshop about DC youth organizing for them. The program culminated in a collaborative zine, called "A Look Through The City," about interventions to gun violence, such as community organizing, mutual aid, conflict resolution, and more.



RETURN TO IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING

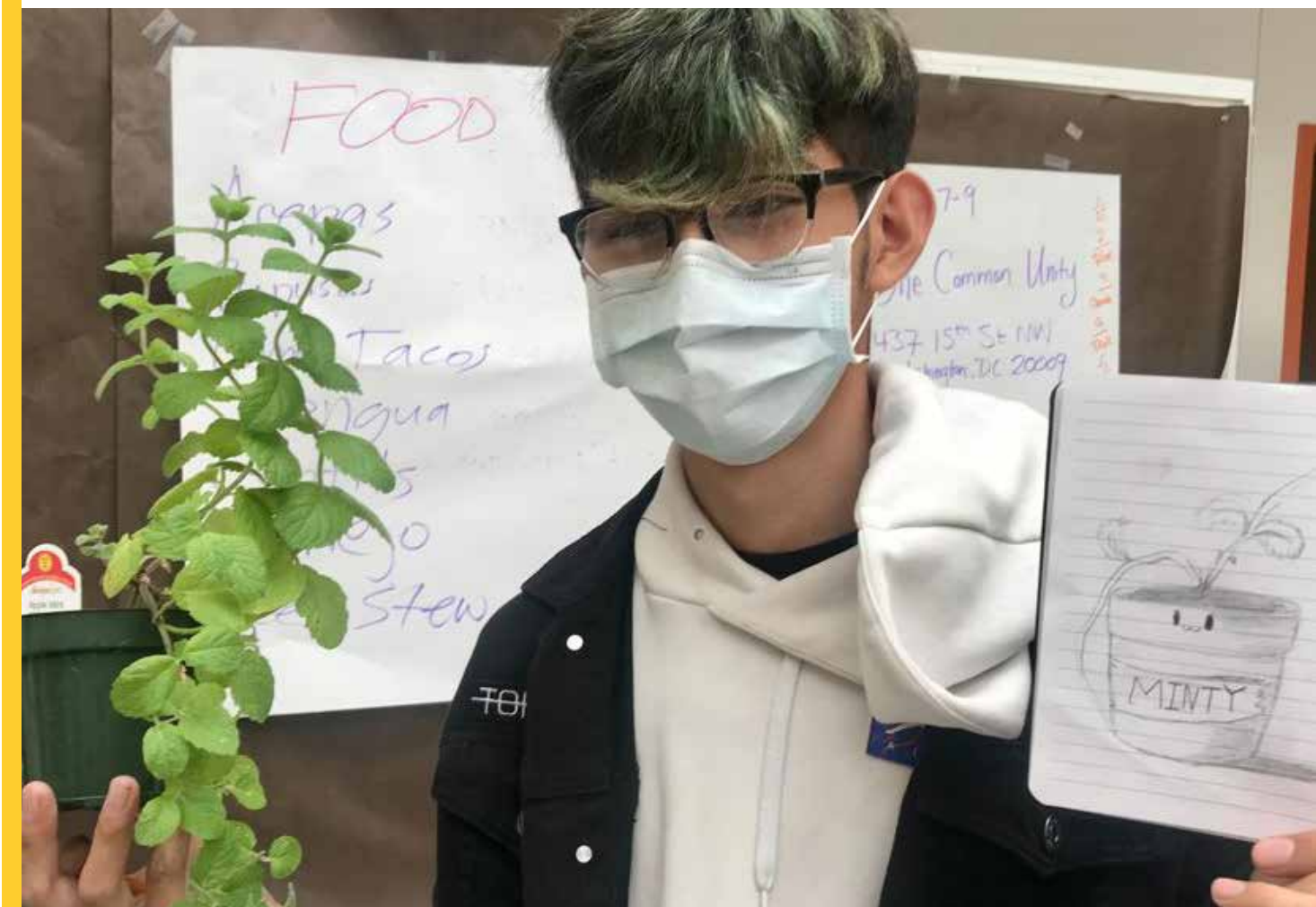
Schools returned to in-person learning in Fall 2021 for the first time since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, and OCU immediately re-launched in-person programming after more than a year of hosting our programs online.

We placed full-time facilitators at several schools throughout the District, including Eliot-Hine Middle School (daily peace room, FBL facilitation, mediation); Perry Street Prep Middle School (daily Intention Room, Life Skills programming and Fly By Light classroom plug-ins); and Roosevelt Senior High School with a full offering of Fly By Light programming.

In the first semester, 302 students were involved with Fly By Light in-school programs, 67 students completed the Life Skills 10 session program, and 355 students visited an OCU Intention room.

Through a Learn24 Out-of-School-Time grant, Fly By Light after-school programming started up again all across the city! Programs have been offered at Perry Street Prep Middle School, LaSalle Elementary School, Stuart-Hobson Middle School, Browne Education Campus, and School Without Walls High School as well as the OCU Organizing Troupe.

When it came time for the holiday season, OCU held a Thanksgiving food distribution event, where 50 students showed up to help distribute food and essentials to families in their community. Later on, in December, 33 students from Eliot-Hine Middle School, Roosevelt Senior High School, and LaSalle Elementary School attended an ice skating field trip at the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden.





MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

In the first quarter, OCU clinicians enrolled 27 new clients in therapy services, providing 311 therapeutic sessions for a total of 259.25 hours of direct therapy, as well as 31 family sessions, and 479 consultation sessions for Tier 1 and Tier 2 services. We received 48 new client referrals throughout the year.

We currently have 55 active clients enrolled for Tier 3 (Treatment) services, and we received 13 new client referrals this quarter.

Entering into the 2021–22 school year, OCU placed school-based mental health clinicians at 10 partner schools to provide consistent, accessible mental health support for students. It was a rough adjustment back to in-person learning, and our clinicians saw a drastic surge in demand for their services.

In the last half of the year, our clinicians treated between 47 to 129 clients each month, closing the year with 85 clients enrolled in Tier 3 (Treatment/Therapy) services. We also received 35 new client referrals during this time.

93 | Total Number of New Patients Enrolled

1,889 | Total Number of Therapeutic Sessions provided

Group Therapy | **205**

Individual Therapy Session | **1,591**

259.25 | Total Hours of Therapeutic Sessions

\$0* | Total amount paid by students and their families

***all of our services are provided to students completely free of charge**

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

We started the 2021–22 school year strong as our clinicians assisted with Tier 1 and 2 resources and programming with the students. In the last part of the year, surging demand for mental health services and rising COVID-19 case counts in schools and among our clinicians highlighted the multiple challenges our team faces as well the deep need for our services.

Community-Based Behavioral Health (CBBH)

At the start of the year, OCU's Behavioral Health Supervisor, Jake Frelick, developed a business model and laid out the groundwork for OCU's outpatient Community-Based Mental Health program. Since launching the program, our clinicians have been able to provide individual and group therapy to youth and adults across DC, not only in our current partner schools.

Peace Together

In December, we were awarded a substantial grant to administer the program, which we have since titled Peace Together, set to launch in January 2022! We are proud to work in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Victims Services and Justice Grants, Building Blocks DC, and the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement to bring this intervention program to youth who have been affected by gun violence.





TRADITION

TRAINING

FBL National Training: The 2021 National Fly By Light Training was a major highlight of the year. Part one of the training was held on June 21–24, 2021 and continued on Fridays from July 9–30, 2021. Eighteen educators and other youth workers completed the annual National Fly By Light Training and are now licensed to implement Fly By Light in their own schools and communities throughout the country.

Harambee Summit: In August of 2021, OCU hosted a special professional development day at Roosevelt High School, titled the Harambee Summit. The summit was attended by the entire school staff and consisted of invigorating music and dance performances, inspiring speakers, breakout discussion rooms, and special presentations by our youth participants.

Throughout the fall, OCU facilitators also held multiple professional development trainings for educators and school staff:

- **Race & Equity** for all staff on October 20th (58 staff members attended)
- **Self-Care & Stress Relief for 11th-grade ALC** on October 22nd (23 staff members attended)
- **Self-Care & Stress Relief for 11th-grade ALC** on October 27nd (11 staff members attended)
- **Race & Equity Recap/Affinity Group All-Staff Meeting** on November 1st (58 staff members attended)



Close The Gap: To celebrate One Common Unity's 21 Years of service, we hosted a two-part anniversary event, starting with the premiere of our documentary *The Melody Lingers On*. This powerful film about former OCU youth, Marcus Morgan, was an Official Selection of the International Social Change Film Festival and premiered virtually on October 21, 2021.

We ended 2021 with the 'Close The Gap' Virtual Benefit Concert, emceed by renowned radio personality Little Bacon Bear! The event was headlined by Rising Appalachia along with local DC artists, Dior Ashley Brown, Rochelle Rice, Baba Ras D, Aztec Sun, and Fly Zyah (recently named one of the Kennedy Center's Next 50). There were also statements from local and national politicians and artists, including Monica Dogra, Gallant, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, Sen. Bernie Sanders, and DC Councilmember Robert White Jr. It was an incredible celebration to mark an incredible 21 years of OCU!



ONE COMMON UNITY STAFF

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Team Building

The OCU staff reunited for the first time in over a year at an in-person staff team-building day in May! Staff also participated in an online team-building day over the summer. We were lucky enough to do a day-long, in-person staff retreat later in the Fall as well, which brought together veteran staff and new staff for some quality bonding time. Those in attendance reported feeling energized and connected after spending time with colleagues.

Leadership Transition

After announcing the leadership transition of our founder, Hawah Kasat, in October, a team of Board and staff members formed a task force to hire the Interim ED. After reviewing 45 applicants, they selected Jeffrey Franco.

Jeffrey brings 25 years of experience leading and managing large-scale nonprofits and providing strategic consulting, business development, and change management for both corporations and nonprofit organizations.





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