

# Mount Zion Community Development, Inc. (MZCD)



## PROJECT NAF

Nurturing Asheville & Area Families

### PROJECT NAF COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jacquelyn Clark, Representing Current Participants  
Denise Duckett, Buncombe County Health & Human Services  
Nancy Farmer, SPARC Foundation  
Parris Finley, Mountain Area Pregnancy Services  
Charlene Galloway, Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Asheville, Inc.  
Brandon Romstadt, Buncombe County Health & Human Services  
Royanna Williams, Business Owner, TBN Designs & Former NAF Participant

## Buncombe County COVID-19 Update

While it is uncertain the total number or type of vaccines Buncombe County Health and Human Services will receive from the state each week, our staff will make appointments as vaccines become available by contacting individuals on the wait list. Vaccines are free, and staff will never ask you for payment or personally identifiable information like social security numbers.

### Assistance by Phone

Adults 65 and older and all health care workers can get assistance for being placed on the wait list by calling (828) 250-5000 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To help residents stay safe at home and prevent the spread of COVID-19, there is no in-person wait list assistance.

Source: Buncombecounty.org

## PROJECT EMPOWER

Education Means Power

### Project EMPOWER Community Advisory Council

Seth Bellamy, Student and Representative for RHA Partnership for a Substance Free Youth  
Johnnie Grant, *The Urban News*  
Dr. Randall Johnson, Asheville City Schools District  
Mr. Devin Lipford & WNCAP  
Rasheeda McDaniel, Buncombe County Health & Human Services

### ECHO (Enhancing Collaborative Health Options & Opportunities)

## Black History All Year Long

February marks the start of Black History Month, a federally recognized celebration of the contributions African Americans have made to this country. It is a time to remember and reflect on the continued struggle for racial justice, social justice, and health equity among African Americans. I realize this is a time for us to reflect on our history and to remember those whose shoulders I have stood on; I dare not forget that. As an African American woman, my history, and the journey I have had and is still having, is important in January and through March-December, Every Year.

As a community, we remember the inequities, racial oppression, and systemic racism our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents battled and even in 2021, are still battling. I remember watching my parents "dress up in their Sunday Best" to go to the polls to vote.

I remember going to the doctor's office, and even as a teen, being bold enough to sit on the side not designated for "colored people," separated by a full-size room divider/magazine rack. I recall a staff person asking if I knew I needed to sit on the other side, I responded that I was fine where I was. No one asked me to leave. Maybe because the doctors in the practice, knew and respected my mother. Or maybe, just maybe, they

knew it should not be that way and did not want to push the issue.

Although not planned, the year 2020 met systemic racism face-to-face. I think that is interesting, as 2020 is often equated with having perfect vision. Far from perfect, as this past year was met with a public lynching, street protests to stand up for justice, being met with violence and brutality, even when peacefully protesting. Nevertheless, civil disobedience helped pave the way and pass new legislation in the fight for racial equality and justice.

Each month, MZCD features health observances that align with priorities to improve health and to impact health disparities. You may ask what does Black History Month have to do with prior feedback on voting, racial oppression, and health inequities? EVERYTHING! The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life risks and outcomes.

For many people in racial and ethnic minority groups, living conditions may contribute to underlying health conditions and make it difficult to follow steps to prevent getting sick with COVID-19 or to seek treatment if they do get sick.

## The Push for Equality

Black history and the push for equality is about acknowledging head-on the injustices in the workplace, systemic racism in schools, in medical settings, and injustices in the criminal justice system, seeing it as it is and doing something about it.

Amanda Gorman, the nation's first-ever youth poet laureate, read her poem, "The Hill We Climb," during the inauguration of President Joe Biden on January 20, 2021.

*Excerpt from the closing lines of Amanda Gorman's poem:*

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,  
we will rise from the sunbaked south  
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover  
and every known nook of our nation and every corner called our country,



Amanda Gorman

our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,  
battered and beautiful

When day comes we step out of the shade,

afire and unafraid

The new dawn blooms as we free it

For there is always light,  
if only we're brave enough to see it

If only we're brave enough to be it

Although Black History Month is about acknowledging past struggles and accomplishments of African Americans, Black History is every day, every month, and everywhere. It is a history and legacy filled with heartbreak, pain, anger, our struggles, our resiliency, and our triumphs to not be broken.

## Health Equity

Health equity means that everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.

To stop the spread of COVID-19 and move toward greater health equity, we must work together to ensure resources are available to maintain and manage physical

and mental health, including easy access to information, affordable testing, and medical and mental health care. To that end, Mount Zion Community Development, Inc. continues its collaboration with BCHHS, Buncombe County's CHIP committee, faith-based organizations, and collaborative partnerships to impact COVID-19 and other sicknesses and illnesses.

Source: CDC.



### MZCD: Amplifying Advocacy & Access

Mount Zion Community Development, Inc. is a 501(C)(3) Non-Profit Community-Based Corporation.



Dr. John H. Grant, Founding Chairman, President, CEO of Mount Zion Community Development, Inc.



Belinda K. Grant, Chief Executive Officer of Mount Zion Community Development, Inc.

### MOUNT ZION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.

For more information about MZCD programs and services, please contact Belinda K. Grant, CEO at (828) 776-1429.

### Staff

Belinda K. Grant, Chief Executive Officer  
Project NAF Outreach Worker (Vacant)  
Sapphire De'Bellott, Instructional Facilitator  
Seth Bellamy, Teen Outreach Worker

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WNC Bridge Foundation  
A PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH



Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Asheville, Inc.



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