



URBAN LEAGUE
OF UNION COUNTY

IN THE LEAGUE

IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

PRESIDENT & CEO
CRYSTAL ORR



Community work is more than a mission—it's a calling. As the leader of the Urban League of Union County, CEO Crystal Orr brings a people-first approach to outreach, ensuring that no voice goes unheard and no need goes unmet. Her dedication to equity, empowerment, and sustainable impact continues to shape programs that strengthen families, support economic mobility, and build a more inclusive future for Union County and the surrounding areas.

We want to welcome you "In The League". Throughout the year, The Urban League of Union County sponsors and supports a number of events. These events foster an environment of education, employment, giving, networking, empowerment, and economic advancement.

From the 2025 EOD Gala, The Expungement Clinic, The Angel Tree Toy Giveaway, The P.A.P.D. recruitment fair, to the various MLK Day events, the list goes on. We want to invite you Inside The League to a first hand look at how we work together, change lives, and shift dynamics.

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION



Our CEO recently attended the 41st Annual Interfaith Service and Wreath Laying ceremony in Elizabeth. During this time she was also give the opportunity connect with New Jersey's Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Dale Caldwell. The Lieutenant Governors' words echoed that of the great Dr.King and he reminded us to perservere in the face of adversity. It was a day of reflection and celebration of the strides that we continue to make everyday.

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"Dr.King fought for equality and equity; equity in resources and funding as well"
-CEO Crystal Orr



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The Inauguration



The recent inauguration of Governor Mikie Sherill and Lieutenant Governor Dr. Dale Caldwell.

Click the link below to hear from New Jersey's new governor, Mikie Sherill.

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In The Community

The 2026 Black Business Expo brought together entrepreneurs, community leaders, and supporters for a dynamic day of networking, innovation, and economic empowerment. This year's event was held at Shiloh Baptist Church in Plainfield, NJ. the event featured a business pitch competition, replacing the traditional panel format and providing entrepreneurs with a platform to showcase their ideas and compete for funding. In addition to this, it brought together over 40 black owned businesses.



The pitch competition was sponsored by the Urban League of Union County, with support from MGL Consulting Group and Murdochee Louis. Contestants submitted pitch videos that were reviewed and ranked by a panel of judges, including CEO Crystal Orr, Mayor Adrian Mapp, and Rev. Danielle Brown. The top two finalists were selected to present their pitches live at Shiloh Baptist Church on the day of the expo. Following the live presentations, the final winner was chosen on site. Danielle Cole was awarded first place and received \$1,500, while Akira Wood earned second place and received \$500.



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In The Community



The Black Business Expo highlighted what's possible when community, creativity, and commerce come together, reinforcing the importance of collective support in strengthening and sustaining Black-owned businesses in our communities. The Urban League of Union County extends its sincere gratitude to Shiloh Baptist Church and community partners Rev. Danielle Brown, Pat Fields, Ty Gaines, Michele Tucker, the City of Plainfield, and the Plainfield Cultural & Heritage Commission for their continued support and commitment to uplifting Black-owned businesses and fostering economic growth within the community.



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In The Community



The Urban League of Union County was a proud sponsor of the 5th Annual NJ Gathering.

Although NJ does not have an HBCU, we still have HBCU spirit. From the culture to the pride, and the EXCELLENCE, we claim it all.

The Gathering is a music-based celebration that brings HBCU voices, culture, and legacy to NJ during Black History Month.

Through choral, gospel, and the various forms of Black music, the Gathering offers workshops, educational sessions, and scholarships that invest in the next generation.

Showing up for our soon-to-be college students means alot, especially during application and scholarship season. You don't have to have a title nor a degree to change the trajectory of someone's life. Our young adults need us, they need us to be the wind beneath their wings.



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Our Team At Work



On March 11th, our Reentry Team was on the ground at the 2026 Law Enforcement Recruitment Fair at Kean University, connecting directly with agencies, partners, and opportunities that matter for our community.

This work is intentional. Every conversation, every connection, and every resource shared is part of a larger effort to ensure returning citizens have real pathways to stability, employment, and long-term success.

Our reentry services at the Urban League of Union County are designed to meet people where they are. From workforce development and job readiness to supportive services and guidance, we are committed to helping individuals navigate one of the most pivotal transitions in their lives with dignity and direction.

And we are not stopping here. We will be hosting another reentry-focused event later this year. Stay connected with us for details.

If you or someone you know is returning home and needs support, we encourage you to reach out. You do not have to navigate this alone. We are here for you.



The Science Competition

The Urban League of Union County proudly hosted another dynamic You Be The Solution Science Competition at the Rahway Recreation Center on Saturday, February 21st, bringing together talented students from across New Jersey for a day filled with innovation, hands-on learning, and excitement.

This year's event was truly impactful. Students demonstrated critical thinking, teamwork, and a passion for science that continues to inspire our work and mission. The energy in the room reflected a strong future pipeline of young leaders in STEM.

A special highlight of the day was having Manessa Lormejuste, Beauty Scientist & Product Developer of LORM-CO, join us. Students learned how to make lotions and beauty care products.



We extend our deepest appreciation to BASF, our lead partner, whose continued commitment helps make this initiative possible year after year. Their partnership remains instrumental in expanding access to STEM opportunities for our youth. Thank you Nadette Booker and Shantel Johnson for their leadership and collaboration in helping bring this initiative to life.

We are also grateful for the support of our sponsors, including KOBO, our head sponsor, who once again created an engaging, hands-on experience for students. Participants had the opportunity to create their own lip gloss and take it home, making science both interactive and memorable. KOBO also provided a judge for the competition. Thank you ReWorld for their support and presence at this year's event.



We are proud to recognize this year's outstanding teams:

- 1 1st Place: School 22 – Elizabeth, NJ
- 2 2nd Place: McManus Middle School – Linden, NJ
- 3 3rd Place: Benjamin Banneker – East Orange



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The atmosphere was elevated by DJ MPure, who kept the energy high and the environment engaging throughout the day.

We also want to thank our incredible volunteers who helped make the event run smoothly. We appreciate Kean University for providing volunteers, along with students from Rahway High School JAG program and the Linden Junior ROTC, whose dedication and support were invaluable.



You Be The Author

Our Black Children's Book Week event was held at the Hillside Recreation Center. Our host was Clarice Forbes of ULUC. There were about 20 children and their parents from the surrounding area that attended and were inspired to be the author of their own story. CEO Crystal Orr, Veronica Chapma, the founder of BCBW, Al Hardy the Director of the Hillside Recreation Center, and Union County Comissioner Stanley Neron, gave words of encouragement to the next generation. There was such positive energy in the room and the eagerness to create their own story was evident. At the end of the event, the children were able to take books home for free, courtesy of Karla Alvarez from the Rahway Library.



We invited a few local authors to read their stories to the children. JRead, Arayna Kemp, and Moses Eche read their books and afterwards, each child created their own story book with the help of the Hillside librarian, Christal Blue. We encouraged them to describe their illustrations and read their stories aloud. Some children wrote about dinosaurs, Rosa Parks, and their very own siblings. It was a great time of creativity and a reminder to open your mind and discover the freedom of writing.



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You Be The Author



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