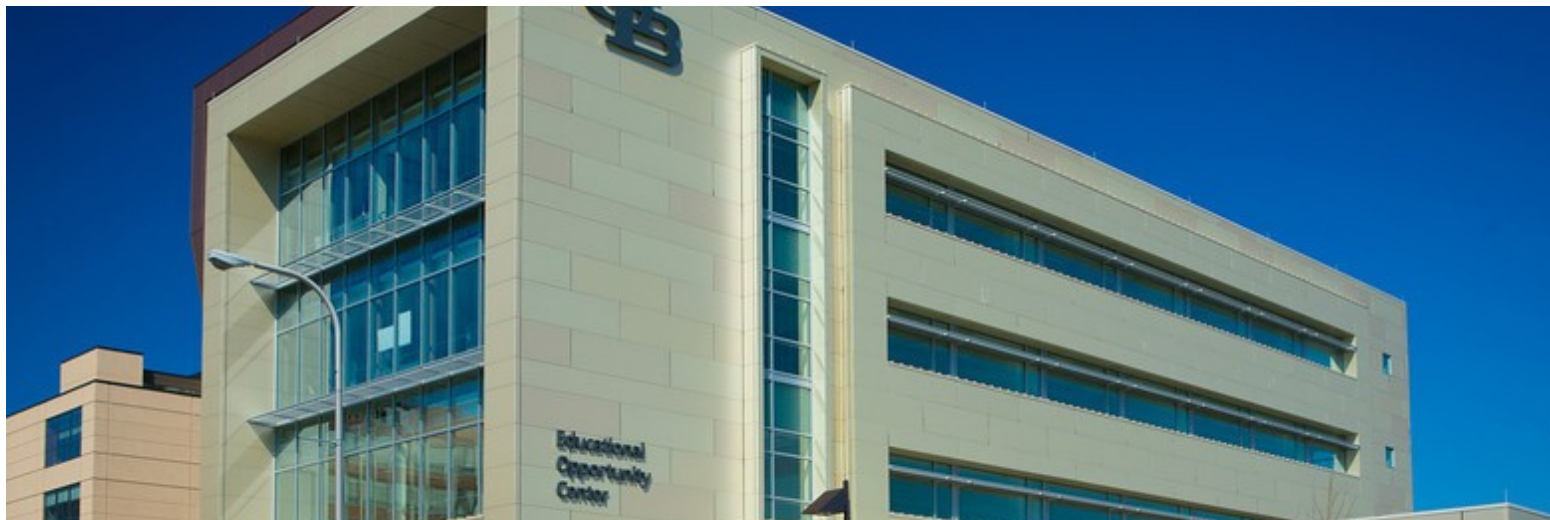


BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS



OPEN LETTER from EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Leading this organization is the honor of my life and career.”

Dear BEOC Alumni,

My name is Ben Hilligas and I became the BEOC Executive Director last June. Leading this organization is the honor of my life and career. I could not be prouder than to have the opportunity to ensure the EOC provides the best educational experience to every student who walks through our doors.

I would like to share a little bit about myself so you can understand where I am coming from. I did not receive a college degree until I was 32 years old. Like so many people, I encountered barriers to receiving my education, some of which I created for myself. For a long time, I was stuck.

When I was 26, I had the good fortune of being hired as a counselor by Compass House, the runaway and homeless youth shelter in Buffalo. I had no experience outside of my own personal experience, but days after I started, I knew that working with at-risk populations was my calling. After a while, I enrolled at ECC, then Buffalo State, where I took mostly evening classes and obtained my bachelor’s degree in social work. Since then, I received my Master in Social Work from UB and have had an amazing career helping people of all ages from many backgrounds. I am so thankful for the opportunities that my education afforded me and consider myself lucky that I was able to figure it out and create a better life for myself and my family.

I know for a fact that everyone has the ability to make positive life changes. As alumni, you are testament to this. Our honor at BEOC is to offer consistent support for you as you continue to achieve your own educational and career goals, like I have and continue to do. Thank you for allowing us to serve you.

UB NOW Announcement

<https://www.buffalo.edu/ubnow/stories/2023/06/hilligas-beoc.html>



Mr. Benjamin Hilligas

**Buffalo Educational
Opportunity Center
Executive Director**



2023

BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

**...To develop lifelong learners who are self directed,
empowered and committed to excellence.**

The Distinguished Alumni Award is bestowed to an alumna or alumnus who is self-directed, empowered and committed to excellence, mirroring the mission of the Center.

2023 Distinguished Alumni Award Honoree



Ms. Kareema Washington
Class of 2007
General Equivalency
Diploma

Ms. Kareema Washington's realization of success embodies the principles of the Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center (BEOC). Noting she "needed guidance" when enrolled as a young mother, Ms. Washington says BEOC instilled in her a sense of confidence that motivated her to achieve.

After earning her General Equivalency Diploma from BEOC, Kareema earned an Associates of Science in Substance Abuse/Social Science from SUNY Erie College (formerly Erie Community College) and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University at Buffalo. Currently she is pursuing a Master's in Divinity at Liberty University.

Ms. Washington's career pursuits align with her community commitment and personal aspirations. Earning her CASAC credential (Credential in Alcohol Substance Abuse Counselor) from the NYS Office of Addiction Services and Support (OASAS), Ms. Washington taught courses at the Northland Workforce Training Center as a Success Coach.

Her present title is Head Substance Abuse Counselor at the Recovery

Center of Niagara in Newfane, NY. In this capacity, Kareema facilitates mental health and substance abuse support services to community members of all ages.

In addition to this role, Ms. Washington provides diversity and cultural training to over sixty-five medical and clinical staff at the Recovery Center of Niagara, addressing what she calls "biases to support the whole person."

Kareema's social service is also very impressive. As a Buffalo Urban League Vendor, she coaches area youth by responding to calls requesting support and guidance pertinent to parenting and life management issues. In the non-profit organization she established, Voices of Vision, she assists single parents by providing referrals to local resources including housing, workforce training and other family needs.

Ms. Kareema Washington's personal and professional persona, deserving of the 2023 Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center Distinguished Alumni Award, is summed up in her own words... "My whole life is giving back to my community. I know firsthand what it means to lack and be the underdog, but I also know firsthand what it means to accomplish the goals you have set for yourself."

CONGRATULATIONS KAREEMA!

**BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER
VALUE STATEMENT**

**...To foster personal growth, intellectual development,
and economic independence in our students.**



2023 Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award Honoree

The Arthur O. Eve Education and Community Service Award is bestowed to an alumna or alumnus who demonstrates leadership, advocacy, community service and/or commitment to education, in recognition of Mr. Arthur O. Eve, former New York State Deputy Speaker and legislative spearheader of the Educational Opportunity Centers.

Mr. Dale Martin is a community supporter. His sense of purpose is to be a leader, better father, and advocate to build a better Buffalo.

Dale's journey started by showcasing Western New York companies and organizations as a consultant in his company, Martin & Associates, and VP of Sales Acquisitions at WNY@Work (a media and business services organization) and moderator of the TV and radio shows on WBBZ-TV and ESPN 1520 AM, respectively.

In these roles, Dale has hosted area political, business, and non-profit organization leaders including Bryon Brown, City of Buffalo Mayor; Tim Kennedy, NYS Senator; Dottie Gallagher, President Buffalo Niagara Partnership, and professionals from 43 North, Go Bike Buffalo, Buffalo Niagara Human Resource Association, and Invest Buffalo Niagara to name a few.

Mr. Martin also moderated panel discussions with Rod Watson, (Buffalo News Columnist, known for his socioeconomic and political commentary on issues relevant to people of color), in partnership with Niagara University, regarding the

Socioeconomic Challenges and Opportunities in a Climate of Civil Discord. Dale also created his own leadership conference, Partners with a Shared Vision.

Mr. Martin is a graduate of Leadership Buffalo, D'Youville University earning a Bachelor of Science in Management, Daemen University awarded a Master of Science in Executive Leadership and Change and the Harvard School of Buffalo Management Program.

Dale's accomplishments also include being a member of Who's Who Registry of Business Executives, a recipient of the Uncrowned King Award from the Uncrowned King Community Builders Organization, Vice President of the WNY Society of Informational Professionals, Corporate Training Manager at Bryant & Stratton College Professional Skills Center and Mentor for the Real Experience and Leadership Mentoring Initiative at UB. As an active alumnus, Dale also served on the BEOC Advisory Board.

Mr. Dale Martin is currently Director of Sales with WUFO 1080 AM/ Power 96.5 in Buffalo, NY and WIGO 1570 in Atlanta, GA.



Mr. Dale Martin

**Class of 2003
Graphic Communications
Program**

CONGRATULATIONS DALE!



**ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT
SPEAKER SERIES**

**Alumni Inspire BEOC Students
by Sharing Their Personal and Professional Insights**



Ms. Hdar Basam '14
February 22, 2023

Chat with Alumni

"BEOC was a bright door I walked through that started my new life learning English, making new friends, earning college degrees and starting my career."

English as a Second Language students were inspired by Hdar, listening to how she met her challenges settling as an Iraqi refugee, working at Wegman's while speaking no English, earning a BS degree in Health Promotion Sciences, and starting her career as a Health Advisor at Primary Care of WNY.



BEOC Alumni have diverse backgrounds and experiences that make them exceptional presenters to enrolled students.

Please consider sharing your achievements and insights with others who follow in your BEOC footsteps. Share your perspectives regarding your life as a student, as an intern, college student or new employee.

YOU can motivate others to achieve, like you have!

Contact Alumni Affairs.



Ms. Ashia Martin '06
May 9, 2023

Coffee, College & Careers

"The Buffalo EOC Dental Assistant Program changed my life's trajectory. The curriculum was not easy, but the support I received prepared me for my pursuits in healthcare."

Ashia represented the Buffalo Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital VA Western New York Health Care, at this BEOC event, informing students of employment opportunities at the VA. Ashia is the Community Engagement Coordinator at the hospital.

BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS

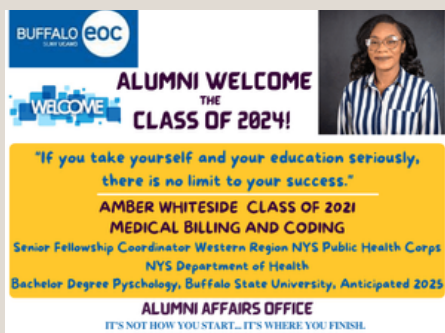
GOOD NEWS

"ALUMS JUST WANNA HAVE FU-UN!"



Family Movie Night at the BEOC 4.11.23

WELCOMING PROSPECTIVE ALUMNI!



Alumni Messages of Support Display on BEOC's Digital Screens and are Shared with Students at Orientation



Alumni Information at Student Support Services Open Houses

[Alumni Affairs Website](#)



Alumni Update

Marlyce Godoy-James '10
Rev. Tanya Spencer 1992
Kareema Washington '07

Represented BEOC at the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, Albany, NY February 2023

Yvette McCarter '01

Celebrated 30 years employed at Buffalo Veterans Hospital and is currently working as a Certified Pharmacy IV Technician

Lisa Monpere-Cruz 1984

Currently works as Assistant to Director English Language Institute UB Graduate School of Education; Primerica Financial Licenses/Certifications: Investments, Life Insurance, Home & Auto, Senior Health; UUP Board Member, UUP Delegate and UUP Department Representative; Entrepreneur and Owner of 3 companies: executive pens, gift baskets, advertising; BA Spanish Cum Laude from UB; CoOwner international award winning professional show car



Alumni Professional Development

Leadership 101 Zoom Session:
Audio Transcript link



Free Monthly Webinar Series

Webinars on a variety of topics including Career, Health, Business, and Finance, are sent directly to your email when signed up on the Alumni Affairs Listserv

BUFFALO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER ALUMNI AFFAIRS

JUST HOW BEOC ARE YOU?



1966: NYS Legislature appropriated SUNY funds to establish the Urban Centers. The Buffalo Urban Center (220 Delaware Avenue) was administered by Erie Community College.

1967: Arthur O. Eve, NYS Assemblyman, presented the bill that birthed the SEEK/ Educational Opportunity Program.

1969: Cooperative College Centers (CCC) were established in NY. The Buffalo CCC was administered by the University at Buffalo and was located at 465 Washington Street. College level and remedial courses in Reading, Math, English, Science and Social Science were taught.

1973: The Urban Centers and Cooperative College Centers merged and formed the Educational Opportunity Centers in NY.

Adapted from Gary Earl Ross, Retired BEOC Professor, *History of BEOC*



1980's: Programs at the Buffalo EOC expanded to include technology and the Center opened its first lab with Apple II computers. Vocational programs became part of the curriculum and included Business Office Skills (BOS) training.

1990's: Responding to the needs of the WNY community, the Buffalo EOC created partnerships with local employers and offered internship and job placement opportunities.

2000's: In addition to core programs (Basic Education, GED, College Preparation, English as a Second Language), the Center offered Certified Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant, Environmental Restoration, Building Trades and other programs. A Distance Learning/Teleconferencing Lab was established. SAT preparation courses were offered to area highschool students and BEOC offered programming at satellite centers.

2014 (June 10): BEOC moved into its newly built home at 555 Ellicott Street.



Personnel Update

Julius Gregg Adams PhD
Executive Director, Retired
In Memoriam

Caren Chilcott
ATTAIN Lab Coordinator

Tara Ganschow
Admissions Advisor-Bilingual

Alexis Godfrey
Admissions Advisor-Recruiter

Martin Hernik
Testing Examiner

Morgan Powers
Admissions Assistant

Michelle Riggio
Director Student Support Services

Eli Rosario
Testing Center Coordinator

Marvin Wilson PhD
Supervisor of Counseling

Adjunct Instructors

Jet'aime Feagin

Asantewa Holley

Shilpa Kapoor

Tuesday Mendez

Johnathan Nichols

Seraphine Sargent

Robert Short

Angela Smith

Carlos Spencer

Paula Williams

MARGOT BARRETT KEYSOR, ALUMNI AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATOR
KEYSOR@BUFFALO.EDU