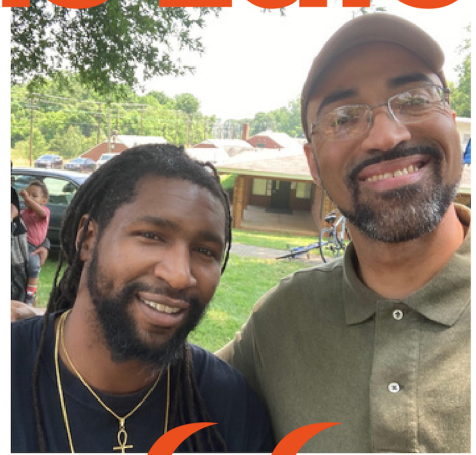


The Latest



Sincere is a mentor with Full Circle Mentoring in Piedmont Park neighborhood of East Winston-Salem.

I am a Native of Winston-Salem that has lived on the North, South, East, and West sides of the city. I have even lived in Pfafftown.

Yet when it comes to the East side of Winston-Salem, there seems to be a cloud of poverty that has grown. It's an issue I've discussed with my late Grandmother at a time when I had the privilege of being her employee.

She and my Grandfather owned a few Family Care Homes, one being a house at the intersection of 25th and Dunleith St. where we often had to live-in to serve the residents there. My Grandfather used to say if you sit on the porch long enough you will see every melanated person in Winston-Salem. The house was a center hub that sits directly in between three major Housing Developments, Fairchild (now La Dera Crest), Cleveland Homes, and Piedmont Circle Park. My Grandmother told me she remembers these types of housing being "advertised" as a "Housing Project", and she often said, "We now see the result of "The Project".

We the community understand there is a problem in living within communities we do not own, and sending our children to schools that do not understand our Melanated struggle.

Full Circle Mentoring



The projects of Winston-Salem began construction in 1951, giving context to a project in a time when segregation was still in place, and Civil Rights were still talked about in the atmosphere as an idea. The narrative of the first generation of melanated people who lived in these communities was, they came from “poorly-kept, rundown” homes and slum lords. Enticed by the beautiful landscapes and well built structures, meant to be a foundation for the basic needs of life, many of these first generations went on to do great things. Many went to college and received Masters Degrees, others gained solid employment from reputable companies. The community was known for families helping one another. Parents came together to look after the children in the neighborhood. Within five years of the so-called “Projects” being built, only four tenants were evicted.

So how then are these same communities now being treated as perpetual slums? Since 1951, America has ended segregation and enacted the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1964, 1965, and 1968, yet still our communities are steadily declining.

Since becoming a Mentor under A4E I witness the lack of self-confidence in many children, the same lack of confidence I felt within myself growing up in the WS/FCS system. Being able to look back now, as an adult I can adequately express the issues our children face today. I have always considered myself a “Bridge Kid”, and at times a “latch key kid”.

A “Bridge Kid” is a term I developed by noticing the railroads that run through Winston-Salem. I mostly lived in apartments and houses, in what most would consider lower-middle class. My parents were divorced, but my Mother always held a salaried position at Wake Forest School of Law. I know the amount of money in our family account. From Elementary years, my Mother allowed me to go into “Big Businesses” to pay a bill, or the front office to pay rent, as she would of course write the checks. She would trust and allow me to go to the atm for her, as I got older. I noticed we constantly moved, apartment to apartment, or sometimes a house, but everywhere we moved I noticed the “Bridge”, and the railway.

household and children, thus starting the environment of the single parent household within Melanted communities. Today's gangs arose from the ashes and anger of the Black Panther movement, due to the lack of jobs, and job security within our neighborhoods, and the constant racial harassment when our neighborhoods did have businesses. Gangs that once stood for liberating and protecting the neighborhoods, soon fell victim to the propaganda of Hollywood and the old Pimp movies like The Mack that portrays the Melanated community as Hustlers, an image that finally looked like us, sounded like us, and had money not like us.

IAlmost every weekend or every school break, if I wasn't at home to look after myself, I was with my Grandmother, or a relative's house. These are the days when we have to cross the railroad tracks to get to Liberty St. into East Winston-Salem. There's a different atmosphere as soon as you cross those tracks, the house structures, the landscape, schools, parks, the air is even different and you feel it. There are sirens that run all night when staying with my grandparents at their Family Care Home Business (then Hines Family Care Home #3) at 25th and Dunleith. As I grew older, became educated, I made many friends all over Winston-Salem, became a Barber and opened up an in-home Barber Shop at the same location 1425 E 25th St.

From that same porch sitting with my grandparents, I then sat with family, neighbors and friends. The stories I have from that porch and that house are endless. I've seen school buses ride past the children they were supposed to pick up, school buses not come at all. Now these same children are at times left in the street because no one was at home to open the door. They have parents that strive hard to succeed, but unfortunately due to systematic barriers, inadequate housing, poor education, and perpetual debt due to the cost of living, it's easy for life to become a traumatizing box.



The parents of today are the descendants of those of us who fought so hard for equality in the 60's and 70's that were never able to recover from plagues set against melanated people. These plagues put a subconscious divide between the Man from the



“When you're born with little, surrounded by a lot, and you don't know how to get there, but maybe if I can imitate what I see, because no one is there to teach you, how do you respond, when you're too nervous to ask because you've heard “no” so much.” - Sincere Hines-Bey



Mentoring from people who know your story because you've lived it is necessary in Melanated communities, because I understand what they feel because I also understand when you're in it, it's hard to recognize the windows to success because the walls are so close.

I remember being culture shocked when I first attended Jefferson Middle School because I wasn't used to being around European cultures. I also remember feeling so alone because I was often placed in advanced classes, which I was usually the only melanated child, or one of no more than 3, including myself.

I also remember understanding I was the poorest in most cases, not necessarily in looks or appearance, though I have been joked on about my shoes often as a child, but I remember hearing the so-called white children talking about their summer vacations in other countries or skiing, and always traveling to places I've never heard of before. I remember hearing them talk about politics as if they were politicians, and stocks as if they were brokers. I always felt dumb. School wasn't interesting because it never reflected the things I was dealing with.

At Mt Tabor High School, Freshman year, my locker was robbed of my necklace, bracelet, and shoes. As a bridge kid, sometimes people assumed we weren't

struggling. I never mentioned how much I saw in my family's account, but I knew an apartment wasn't a mansion. I knew I bought all that was stolen from me, knowing how to cut hair since I was 12 years old. My mother trained me well to understand business, and I knew I was being trained to know how to keep and value every possession we had gained.

I stopped wearing jewelry after that incident until my Junior Year. I became aware that people are watching me with the same feeling I felt when I first walked into Middle School with. The difference in their stare was the obvious action of theft. I have not been the same since. I was angry for about a week, until after I began watching my peers more closely, at first to find who stole my property, but eventually I started realizing the problem.

I see my friends come to school sleepy, hungry, bedroom shoes, bedroom clothes, don't come at all. I remember having a close friend die every year until graduation. I found myself having conversations with friends who needed help on rent, light bill, or water bill. I had a friend buy 22 \$1 menu cheeseburgers just so others could eat. My friends were working at times to help other friends pay bills for families. I knew many friends raising themselves with older siblings. There was a time my mom worked multiple jobs where we only spoke between her breaks. I became one of those

riends people could call on when they needed a ride to an appointment, or extra money on a bill, because I was always working to give back.

School is the least of many children's worries, yet we as adults know the necessity of education, knowledge, and drive. They are traumatized before they've had a chance to dream. It's perpetuated when they go to school to learn from teachers and administrators who can't culturally relate, or are of the same race, but so far removed from the neighborhoods that are Piedmont Park, or Cleveland Avenue Homes that they like the European Culture can't culturally relate because they have socially integrated with the same system that keeps areas as East Winston-Salem in poverty.

We are told that these "Project Neighborhoods" are not even ours to own and uplift, but federal property and all events or attempts to do good for ourselves must be approved. I say approve for us to own it, as they did in the "scattered" home building initiative, where people had the incentive to own a home.

Our next duty is to properly educate our children and parents on how government and society works, and make it readily available as public education. It should be questioned why check writing has been removed from third grade material, why cursive writing has been done away with, yet we expect our children to compete in an ever advancing world.

As We Mentor at Full Circle we introduce these subjects to our children, we step in to educate our parents on the resources available to them, because the message always seems to get lost in transition by so-called official agencies that expect us to just know.

I do know there is also an unspoken element of the mentally ill that are allowed to roam the streets and increase the crime rate within the neighborhoods.

As a Med-Tech and Lead SIC (Staff in Charge) within NaRu Family Care I learned at that time we were one of a very few homes that ran to serve the people. Patients have rights, and we have a duty to protect those rights for them to the best of our abilities. Family Care is in the name of our Family business. My Grandmother Ruby J. Hines made sure she instilled love in every meal she made for our residents, in turn when she trained me, she reminded me of why she stayed in the business. Her mom and aunt needed care, and we couldn't trust other facilities to care for them with the respect and dignity we would have desired. My grandmother wanted to provide a true home for our elderly family, and for me I remember loving spending time with my Great Grandmother and Great Aunt.

My story is one that maintains value in family, community, and the duty to help others in need.



There are teenagers in our program today who were my neighbors then, and were my clients in my barber shop. Meeting here in the space of Piedmont Park for Full Circle Mentoring is continuing a family duty to our neighborhood that began with my Great Grandparents of Elbon St., my Grandparents of Manchester St. and 25th St., now myself to the youth who may not know our rich history as a community, and a people of America.



Essentially I have been a Mentor in this neighborhood for a while. When I say my rings a lot, it is because I can relate to the children of this area because I have dealt with the same issues, they have, I have borne the burden with many of them. I know their parents, I know the history of our area, I know how to inspire their imagination through helping them see themselves in the now, and the future that awaits them if they can do me the favor of showing up. I make them a promise to show up to best of my ability, and to understand they times I can't answer the phone, I have family as well, but I make the effort to always be there for them, and to be an ear of understanding, because I understand we as Melanated children are mentally capable of processing deep information at early ages, the same, way if we are not educating our children at earlier ages, we begin to accept the norms of life given to us, which is the trauma that creates the student to prison pipeline of no hopes or dreams.

I don't judge them for being in the streets, I remind them of the duty they have as young professionals in the streets. I remind them to be inspired to achieve better than the things they have endured. I allow them to express how they feel, the very things my family gave me to achieve. I push them to think as all our Mentors do, so they do not grow up believing asking for help means the honest truth is always given. I remind them that life is real and that people can take advantage of their ignorance if they choose to be ignorant.

Do our children listen to me, yes, do they always comprehend me, no. I tell myself neither did I when I was going through it, but it was the consistency that kept my drive to want to learn what my elders were teaching me.

This young man just passed away in 2024. Our program was taken from him, his brothers, and family that supported us in the program. I often think if we had the funds to serve all the families we've connected to, he would still be with us today. Our afterschool program followed a routine that kept children away from street activity by providing them with activities to fill their time, and also providing transportation to local events that empower their cultural self confidence.

I started Friday Night Basketball, an initiative to give youth the opportunity to go to a local recreation center or outside court and play basketball after school. This was a way of pulling youth from the streets, and providing a way to build friendships amongst youth from different neighborhoods.

Our trips to Other Suns Cafe provide the same support we as children are subjected to provide support for the Old Salem and the Moravian Settlement of Bethabara. Public school has never provided the melanated children opportunities to experience their local history to inspire them.

We take that initiative at Full Circle.

**written by:
Sincere Hines-Bey
March 2024**



Our communities need more community driven opportunities to help heal our communities. Trust is hard to come by, in the beginning these children are likely to curse you, and talk all kinds of ill to you. Being able to see through that mask of hurt allows us as community based Mentors to bridge relationships with our people of the community and not turn a nose up. In our Phase I met a young man who first told me he didn't believe I cared about him. He told me this was my job, and if I wasn't getting paid I wouldn't be in his life. I gave him my life story of what led me to him in the form of a job. I let him know I have this job because I have been dedicated to uplifting our community and the youth. I let him know regardless of this job, he and his mother have my personal contact information. I am about community first, and soon he and his brothers became an important part of my life and the other Mentors I work with.