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Trailblazers program honoring mentoring groups Sunday

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Leisha Carr
Submitted

A decision to honor organizations rather than individuals in this year’s Black History Month Trailblazers Awards program led to a bit of a problem.

So many local organizations are providing the type of mentoring and leadership training that the Trailblazers committee was looking for that the number of awards had to be increased.

In an event with the theme “Trailblazers in the Making,” the five traditionally Black Bowling Green churches that oversee the Trailblazer Awards will honor seven organizations at 4 p.m. Sunday.

“This year we decided to do something a little different,” said Leisha Carr, this year’s Trailblazer Awards chairperson. “We’re focusing

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Four honored with Trailblazer awards

on organizations that are helping prepare our young people for leadership.

“We only planned to do five, but we’re recognizing seven because there are so many that are deserving.”

The 25th annual Trailblazer Awards will be at State Street Baptist Church but, because of coronavirus restrictions, will be open to a limited number of people while being streamed live on the State Street Baptist Church and Martin Luther King Jr. Planning Committee Facebook pages.

While putting the spotlight strictly on organizations is a first, Carr said future Trailblazer programs will include organizations along with individuals who are honored for their achievements.

“From this point on we’ll spotlight one organization each year,” Carr said.



The initial organizations being recognized share the common goal of preparing Black and minority youths through mentoring efforts that involve creative civic engagement activities and leadership training.

Organizations to be honored Sunday:

- Black Male Scholars program at Bowling Green Junior High School. This program stresses the importance of community,

collaboration and fellowship among students, their teachers and their mentors. Participants complete academic subjects as a cohort, with curriculum taught through the lens of African-American history and culture.

- Boys to Men and Leading Ladies, both offered to elementary school students. Boys to Men provides a positive loving leadership group for students regardless of race and empowers boys to be the best version of themselves. Leading Ladies, started as a complement to the Boys to Men program, teaches girls confidence and self-respect.
- For a Real Change Inc., a nonprofit started in 2020. It focuses on leadership, life skills, college and careers while giving participants the opportunity to participate in service projects.
- Girl in the Mirror. This program is designed to empower girls, through a one-day seminar, to see themselves clearly by equipping them with tools that will give them the ability to live a happy, healthy and prosperous lifestyle.
- Light of Chance, a nonprofit formed in 2005. Its mission is to serve youths and the community through innovative arts and wellness programs that help develop leadership and character.
- Police Officers With Educated, Responsible Girls, a mentoring program that pairs Bowling Green Police Department female officers with female youths. The program creates awareness of the role of

police officers while focusing on fitness, health, cooking, vehicle maintenance and other activities.

- WKU Young Male Leadership Academy, started in 2007 as a partnership between the state Department of Education and Western Kentucky University. A college preparation and recruitment initiative, it develops the leadership skills of young males of diverse backgrounds by exploring the teaching profession.

Sunday's Trailblazers recognition will include video presentations by all the organizations being honored, and Carr hopes it will raise awareness about those organizations.

“You might have a child who can get involved in one of these programs,” she said, “or you might learn how the community can support these organizations.”

The Trailblazers Awards is a program administered by a committee made up of members of these five churches: Mt. Zion Baptist, Taylor Chapel AME, Seventh Street Baptist, Eleventh Street Baptist and State Street Baptist.

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