




2024 IMPACT REPORT



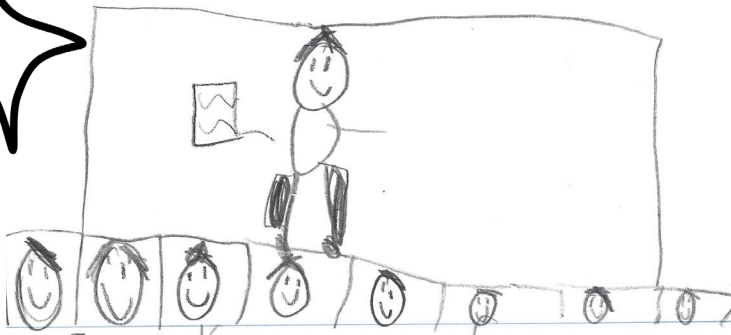
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phi•lan•thro•py
love of what it means to be human

KID NOTES



Thank you for
meeting my class
I liked when you
read your story to us.
From,
Ben

Dear Jahkil
thank you for
zooming with us
and giving people
blessing bags you are very
kind. love Ethan



Jahkil Naeem Jackson



MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER

Jahkil Jackson



Dear Friends,

As the 17-year-old founder of Project I AM, I am thrilled to share this year's Impact Report with you—a reflection of the incredible work we've accomplished together. What began as a simple act of kindness on a cold winter night with my aunt has transformed into a life-long mission. At just five years old, my innocent view of the world was shattered when I witnessed the harsh reality of homelessness. That night planted a seed in me—a deep desire to create change.

With the unwavering support of my family, I founded Project I AM to raise awareness about homelessness and provide temporary relief for those in need. Nearly nine years later, our impact has reached close to 200,000 men, women, and children globally. We've grown to include Project I Am: Next Up, a network of young ambassadors across Florida, Illinois, Georgia, Missouri, and France, with plans to expand to Dallas, Spain, and Canada in 2025.

This work would not be possible without the support of corporations, volunteers and school administrations that have generously contributed their time, resources, and expertise. Together, we've made tremendous strides and remain committed to creating lasting change through permanent solutions, such as tiny homes and wrap-around support services for those in need.

Looking back, I'm reminded of why this journey began—to make a difference and demonstrate the power of empathy and action. As you explore this report, I hope you see the profound impact of your support and the ripple effect of change we're creating together.

As I approach high school graduation, I am more committed than ever to the growth of Project I AM and its mission of service and impact. Thank you for believing in our vision and standing with us as we work to inspire, uplift, and create meaningful, lasting change.

Here's to another year of compassion, progress, and empowering youth to lead the way!

With Gratitude and Hope,

Jahkil Jackson

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR

Phyllis "GG" Smith



Dear Family and Friends,

I am filled with profound gratitude and optimism for the path ahead. Being part of a mission greater than myself motivates me every single day. Watching my grandson, Jahkil Jackson, develop into an inspiring youth activist and leader, supported by the incredible team at Project I Am, has been a truly transformative experience. Together, we are committed to making a tangible difference for unhoused individuals in Chicago and beyond.

The needs of the unhoused community remain urgent and often overlooked. At Project I Am, we are honored to provide critical resources like toiletries, coats, warm-weather gear, and food to those in need. Beyond addressing immediate necessities, our work focuses on fostering long-term solutions and raising awareness to inspire action.

This generation of young people is driven by a strong desire to create meaningful change. Project I Am empowers youth leaders with opportunities to expand their impact, hone their leadership skills, and develop empathy through service. These moments of connection and compassion are vital, reminding us all of the power of community care.

The milestones we've reached are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, along with the invaluable support of our community, partners, and sponsors. In this Impact Report, you'll see the results of our collective efforts and gain insight into the exciting initiatives we have planned. This includes new collaborations with schools in Dallas, France, Spain, and Canada, which will further amplify our reach and impact.

Our commitment to growth and impact remains stronger than ever. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey. Together, we are shaping a brighter future, one act of kindness at a time.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Phyllis Smith (GG)

WHO IS **PROJECT I AM?**

OUR *MISSION*

Project I Am creates awareness and provides temporary support and long-term solutions for the unhoused.

OUR *VISION*

To inspire a generation of servant leaders, community builders, and social entrepreneurs dedicated to creating meaningful change.

OUR *PURPOSE*

Project I Am is a leading service organization that celebrates and cultivates Youth Change Agents to create global impact.

OUR *WHY*

Everyone deserves a safe and reliable place to call home. It's a matter of security, stability, well-being and basic dignity. Yet many people live each day without safe or stable housing. Some are in emergency shelters while others live on the streets, exposed to the threats of violence, adverse weather, disease and so many other dangers exacerbated by homelessness.

*The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

On a single night in 2022, roughly 582,500 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States alone.

*United States Interagency Council on Homelessness



ALL TIME IMPACT



198,000
PEOPLE
IN NEED
SERVICED

300+
SCHOOLS
ENGAGED

7
COUNTRIES
SERVICED

\$675,000+
RAISED FOR
THOSE IN NEED



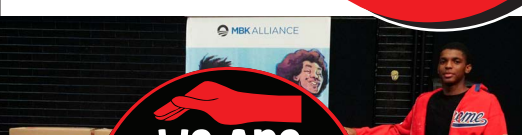
3,000+
YOUTH
VOLUNTEERS



75+
CITIES
SERVICED



13,000+
VOLUNTEER
HOURS

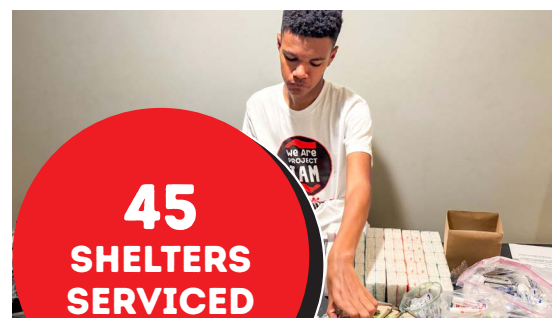


2024 IMPACT



1,500
YOUTH
VOLUNTEERS

1,000
VOLUNTEER
HOURS



45
SHELTERS
SERVICED



63,000
PEOPLE
IN NEED
SERVICED



50
SCHOOLS
ENGAGED



50
CITIES
SERVICED

TIMELINE



- Project I Am partnered with Chicago Bulls & Gatorade to make 5,000 blessing bags

- Jahkil Jackson named CNN Hero: Small Wonder

- Jahkil Jackson named Marvel Hero

- 15,000+ blessing bags created and distributed

2016

- Project I Am introduced at WE Day

- Jahkil Jackson named 1 of 3 most influential people by President Obama

- 5,000+ blessing bags created and distributed

2018

- Project I Am partners with Nike

- Project I Am featured by Forbes

- 12,500+ blessing bags created and distributed

2017

- Project I AM NFP 501c3 Designation

- First 1,000 blessing bags created and distributed

2019

- Project I Am introduced Virtual Packing Parties

- Recruited 50 youth volunteers nationally for Giving Tuesday to create 500 blessing bags

- Holiday Giveback serviced 575 youth

- 16,000+ blessing bags created and distributed



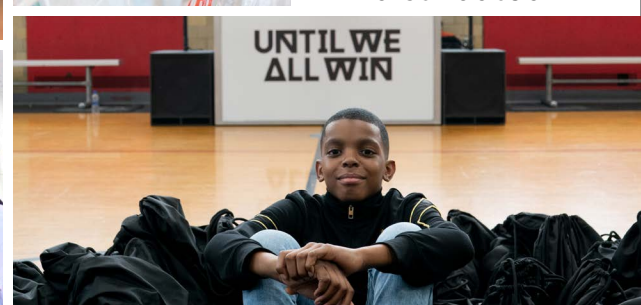
Forbes

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Meet The 10-Year-Old Social Entrepreneur Helping The Homeless Across The Nation



Robyn Shulman, CONTRIBUTOR
I cover the intersection of education and entrepreneurship. FULL BIO





- Recruited 100+ youth volunteers nationally for Giving Tuesday to create 5,000 blessing bags

- Holiday Giveback serviced 410 youth

- 17,000+ blessing bags created and distributed

- Joined YBK Day as the Chicago Ambassador for the national day of youth entrepreneurship.

2022

- Reached 100,000 people impacted for the Seven Year Anniversary

- Power Pillow partnership launched with Crate & Barrel

- Recruited 1,150+ youth volunteers nationally for Giving Tuesday to create 15,000 blessing bags

- Project I Am: Next Up Community Service Club introduced

- Holiday Giveback serviced 100 youth

- 35,000 people in need impacted

2024

2021

- Recruited 500+ youth volunteers globally for Giving Tuesday to create 10,000 blessing bags

- Holiday Giveback serviced 600 youth

- 28,000+ blessing bags created and distributed

2023

- 63,000 Blessing Bags created and distributed

- Recruited 1,042 youth volunteers for Giving Tuesday to create 20,000 blessing bags

- Partnered with Obama Foundation's My Brother's Keeper to introduce service to 50 young men of color

- Expanded Project I Am to France

- Partnered with Organic Oneness to create 1,000 blessing bags for MLK Day of Service



FRANCE

PROJECT I AM PROGRAMS & EVENTS



Project I Am: Next Up aims to assist hundreds of youths nationwide with becoming change-makers, starting with volunteerism. The goal is to help youth see their potential, expose them to new

opportunities and ultimately help shape productive society members as they enter adulthood. This project is designed as an expansion initiative for Project I Am to become a global organization, implementing Afterschool Community Service Clubs. In 2024, expansion was successful in Florida, Missouri, Illinois and France.

[HTTPS://OFFICIALPROJECTIAM.COM/PROJECT-I-AM-NEXT-UP-SERVICE-CLUB/](https://officialprojectiam.com/project-i-am-next-up-service-club/)

DON'T WAIT TO BE GREAT 2.0

Due to the overwhelming demand for guidance, Jahkil created Don't Wait to Be Great Social Entrepreneurship Workshop Series which brings community service and entrepreneurship together into one program designed to educate and enrich youth using classroom instruction and hands-on activities focused on the importance of philanthropy and entrepreneurship. In 2024, 60 students from Heritage Elementary School participated in the on-going workshop series, creating service-oriented businesses around poverty, animal protection and the environment.

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/PVH_YV2DEGW?SI=AJ_IK8ZC3HYAJZB3](https://youtu.be/pvh_yv2degw?si=aj_ik8zc3hyaJzB3)

EVENTS

8-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Project I Am celebrated 8 years of service at the annual anniversary community service event.



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HOLIDAY GIVE BACK

Project I Am partnered with Meals the Write Way and Nacelle for the annual holiday event to provide coats, toys, blessing bags and lunch to families at the Primo Center for Women & Children.

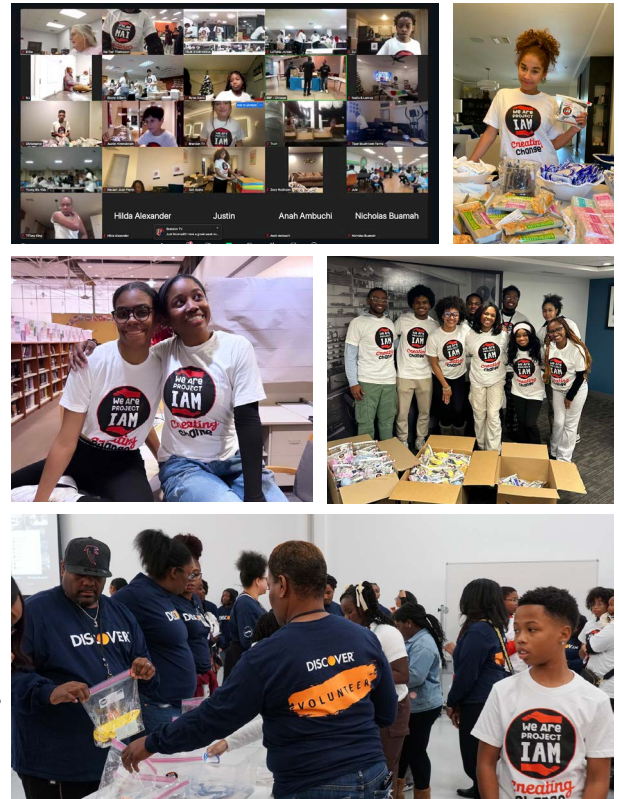
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GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday is as a global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world. Project I Am introduced Virtual Packing Parties in 2020 when the world was in COVID quarantine with 50 volunteers creating 500 blessing bags simultaneously via Zoom.

2024 saw the largest Giving Tuesday impact so far with 1,000+ volunteers from 42 cities creating a record breaking 20,000 blessing bags for those in need. To date, Project I Am's Giving Tuesday initiative has worked with over 3,000 youth volunteers from over 75 cities, creating a total of 57,500 blessing bags for the unhoused in their cities.



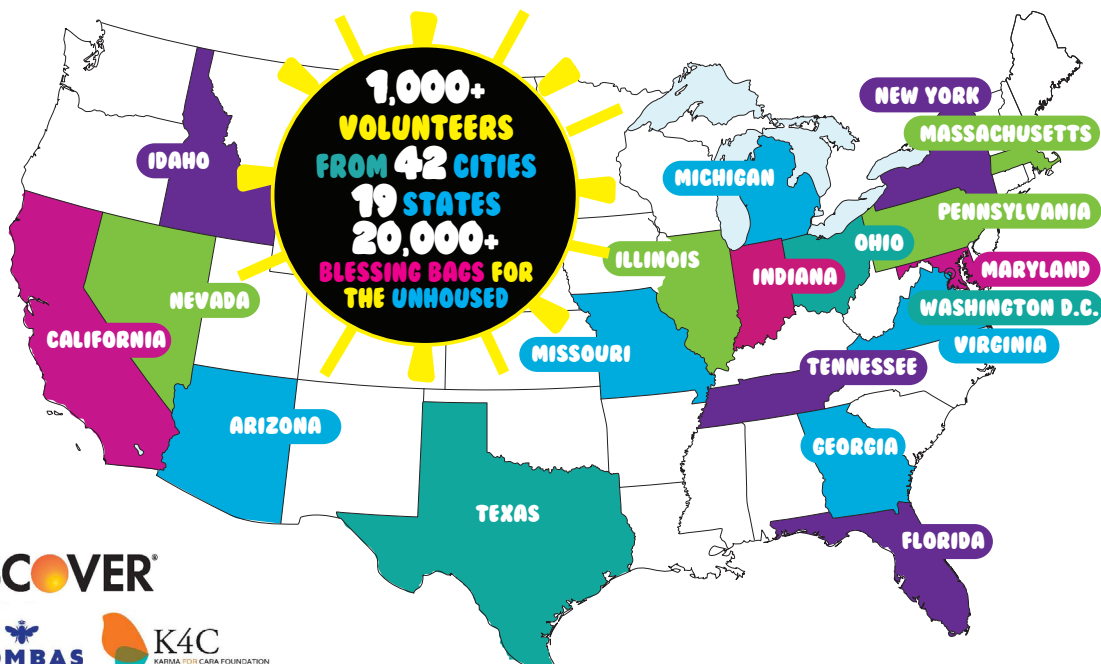
2024 RECAP

2024 FULL RECAP



GIVING TUESDAY

VIRTUAL PACKING PARTY 2024



Powered by **DISCOVER**



FRIENDS OF PROJECT I AM



My Brother's Keeper Alliance works to unleash the power of communities working together to solve problems for boys and young men of color, at a level to improve real life outcomes. Project I Am has partnered with MBK Alliance for the past 2 years to help youth embrace the importance of community service.

Christopher Crater
Manager, MBK Alliance



PRIMO CENTER

For more than 45 years, **Primo Center** has empowered families experiencing homelessness to become productive, responsible, and independent members of their community. Primo Center also provides an array of wrap-around services and support programs. Serving those most vulnerable, the Center's record of helping families gain independence far exceeds the national average. We are able to yield positive outcomes because of strong relationships with dedicated partner organizations like Project I AM.

Shelley Cooper
Chief Community Relations Officer, Primo Center

The Jule Foundation

The Jule Foundation aims to empower minority students. We believe in creating opportunities for our youth to excel. Community is at the heart of the Jule Foundation. We engage with local organizations, schools, and families to create a supportive network for our youth. Through community events, volunteer programs, and partnerships with organizations like Project I Am, we aim to build a strong, interconnected community that uplifts and supports its members. Together, we have taken meaningful steps toward addressing the homeless crisis and creating safe, reliable spaces for those in need. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and amplifying the profound difference Project I Am is making in the world.

Andre Hursey, Founder
Cameron L. Gordon, Board Member, The Jule Foundation

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT



ANAH AMBUCHI

17 years old (Maryland)

Anah is an award-winning director who loves giving back to the community and supporting her friend Jahkil. Anah has been partaking in the blessing bag events with Project I Am for 9 years now, because she believes in the message that Project I Am advocates for.



BELLA NOELLE

7 years old (Tennessee)

Bella Noelle is a vibrant young entrepreneur, best-selling author, and literacy advocate from Nashville, TN. As the CEO of The Adventures of Bella Noelle, she inspires young readers with her engaging children's book series, including Bella's Big Wish and Bella Goes to College. Bella is also a certified speaker and a youth ambassador, passionately encouraging early literacy and empowering other young entrepreneurs through her work.



GWENDOLYN BROOKS COLLEGE PREP COMMUNITY SERVICE CLUB

(Illinois)

Established in 2019, this club has regularly participated in community service, including campus cleanups and making Valentine's cards for the elderly. In 2023-2024, they donated hundreds of clothing items to displaced migrants and partnered with Project I Am on Giving Tuesday to pack 750 Blessing Bags for the homeless. The club is committed to giving back and making the world a better place.



HARPER ANTHONY

12 years old (Illinois)

Harper is an entrepreneur, actor model and youth advocate from Chicago, IL. Harper is the founder of The Built Different Initiative focused on anti-violence and academic excellence for all youth.



JUSTIN & TYLER SATHER

14 & 12 years old (California)

Justin & Tyler have always enjoyed working on creative solutions to build a better future for the next generations. They have packed hundreds of Blessing Bags over the years with Project I Am in San Diego, CA. Justin is an outdoor advocate for the environment. Justin is the founder of www.Recreate.World, working with businesses and engineers to create new innovative products. Tyler loves playing sports, baking, and giving back to others.



KENZEL WINSTON JR

9 years old (Illinois)

Kenzel loves soccer, video games, and reading. Since age 5, he's been helping others through his annual Gift of Giving around his birthday, bringing smiles to those in need. He's created over 300 blessing bags with Project I Am. Kenzel is committed to using his voice and skills to make a difference, showing how small acts of kindness can create a big impact.



KING FAMILY

(Arizona)

Childhood friend Kelby has volunteered with Jahkil and Project I Am for the past 9 years. With the support of his family, the Kings have helped create impact for hundreds of families in need in Chicago and Phoenix. The King family are true community leaders.



LONDON

11 years old (Florida)

London has been a dedicated volunteer with Project I Am for four years, assembling over 2,000 blessing bags to support her community in Jacksonville, FL. Inspired to make a difference as a philanthropist, she launched her own initiative, For the Love of Literacy, partnering with organizations to distribute 1,000 books and reading buddies to local children.



NADIA & LENNOX SIMMS

18 & 10 years old (Arizona)

Nadia & Lennox are siblings that love pairing up with Project I Am and helping those in need. Lennox is an NAACP Image award nominated actor who loves art and animation and Nadia is a high school graduate, actress, and business owner.



SAMMIE VANCE

16 years old (Indiana)

Sammie has been spreading kindness through buddy benches for over 7 years. She loves being a fellow Giving Tuesday Spark with Jahkil and helping pack blessing bags every year. She is the founder of Sammie's Buddy Bench Project and encourages others that you don't have to be an adult to make a difference, you can be a kid too.

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS



Northwest Memorial



POINTS OF LIGHT



CLICK ON IMAGE TO VIEW VIDEO

MEDIA



OBAMA FOUNDATION



YOUNG KING



NBC



COCOA BUTTER



ABC



WGN



DAILY HERALD



PR NEWSWIRE



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