



As we step into 2025, now more than ever, we stand united in the pursuit of new opportunities to strengthen our collective efforts and create meaningful change for Black women across Washington D.C.

This year, we continue to be inspired by the possibilities of building stronger community partnerships, supporting bold initiatives, and creating pathways that empower women to thrive. While the path ahead might meet us with challenges, JBRF is approaching it with profound optimism. The work we do today will define the stories we tell tomorrow.

JBRF Spotlight: Celebrating Kara Blankner



Kara Blankner, our Director of Health Equity and Opportunity, exemplifies the power of philanthropy in action. With over 20 years of experience, Kara's work drives health equity and economic opportunities for Black women in D.C., especially East of the Anacostia River. Her contributions recently captured a well-deserved recognition **The DC Health Care Workforce Partnership** newsletter.

[Join us](#) in celebrating Kara!



Facing Change With Purpose: Philanthropy's Role in Equity

The world is rapidly changing, and the disparities facing Black women in Washington D.C., especially east of the Anacostia River, demand urgent attention. At JBRF, we see philanthropy as a **powerful tool to drive meaningful change**.

[Our blog](#) highlights how strategic investments in workforce development, education, and community-centered initiatives can **dismantle barriers** and **create opportunities**. This is a moment to **focus on solutions**, and JBRF is leading the way toward equity and empowerment for Black women.



[Read the full blog here.](#)

Voices of Impact: Leicester Johnson, CEO Academy of Hope



For over 18 years, Leicester Johnson has led the **Academy of Hope (AoH)** in D.C., empowering adult learners to overcome barriers and build sustainable futures. Through AoH's partnership with JBRF, programs like the **Healthcare Academy** prepare learners for high-demand careers. "Adult education is the greatest lever for generational change," Leicester shares.

Discover more about her transformative work [here](#).

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