

**12 FACTS ABOUT  
PROJECT LEGACY**  
*Connecting the past to inspire the future*

1. *Project Legacy* is a program operating under the umbrella of the Booker T. Washington Empowerment Network, Inc. (BTWEN), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
2. BTWEN was founded by the great-granddaughter of Booker T. Washington to carry on his legacy of lifting those who struggle to lift themselves.
3. *Project Legacy* is a youth development character education/leadership program for “at-risk” inner-city youth, ages 16 through 19-years old.
4. *Project Legacy* is designed for disadvantaged, motivated youth, who want to do better but lack the skills, resources, and support to do so.
5. *Project Legacy* has five components: 1.) Weekly character education and leadership classes, 2.) One-on-one mentoring, 3.) Case management for youth and others significant to their success, i.e. parents, guardians, siblings, and 4.) An 8-day historical rites of passage journey across the country following in the footsteps of Booker T. Washington from slavery to freedom, 5.) Follow-up mentoring and case management services for four years after graduating from high school.
6. Each component is designed to provide youth participants with life-changing lessons gained through concrete experience followed by reflective observation.
7. Weekly character education and leadership classes are guided by a workbook, *16-Success Principles*, based on Booker T. Washington’s teachings on character building, education, excellence, leadership, and personal responsibility.
8. Weekly character education and leadership classes help youth develop critical life skills, including confidence, self-worth, social skills, budgeting, delayed gratification, effective communication, critical thinking, conflict resolution, and anger management.
9. Weekly character education and leadership classes prepare the youth for the *rites of passage journey* by developing their interest, knowledge, and skills in history, mapping, budgeting, fundraising, and trip planning.
10. The *journey* will go from the plantation where Booker T. Washington was born a slave in Franklin County, VA, to his freedom in Malden, WV, to his formal education at Hampton University in VA, to Washington, DC, where he was the first African-American invited to dine at the White House (A request will be made to meet with members of congress, and President Obama). The trip will end at Tuskegee University in AL, the school he founded in 1881.
11. By the conclusion of the *journey* the youth will be able to draw a connection between the past and the present, and gain an understanding and appreciation for their history by learning how their ancestors, who experienced extreme circumstances, were able to rise above to achieve success with far fewer resources than they have today.
12. Mentor/coaches will monitor youth, and be accessible to them for up to four years following graduation from high school, or upon receiving their G.E.D.

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PROGRAM MANAGER**

Sarah O'Neal Rush, the great-granddaughter of Booker T. Washington, is the founder and executive director of BTWEN. She has a master's degree in clinical psychology, and has worked professionally with "at-risk" youth and their families for many years. Her positions have included psychotherapist, clinical case manager, group home social worker, and youth crises shelter administrator. She has also participated on several multidisciplinary committees, including San Lorenzo, and Castro Valley Unified School District Student Attendance Review Boards. She is a professional speaker on rising above difficult circumstances. She also conducts trainings on working effectively with "at-risk" youth.

In keeping with the theme of legacy, among BTWEN's talented board of directors is Ron Abernathy, Esq., the nephew of the great civil rights leader, and advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy.