

2025

COHORT 12 GRADUATION

APRIL 26, 2025
MEMORIAL ART GALLERY



**LEADING TOGETHER,
GROWING TOGETHER**

PLTI MISSION

The mission of the Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute is to build bridges and advocacy skills to support parents becoming leading advocates for children. PLTI differentiates itself by embracing a cross-race, cross-class, and parent-informed, pro-social educational approach.

PLTI Program At-A-Glance

Parents complete 21 weeks of training built on interactive adult-learning practices:

- Retreat to develop group and define mission.
- 10 weeks of parent leadership coursework focused on voice, difference, values, and problem definition.
- 10 weeks of parent leadership coursework focused on how change occurs for children including best practice, data analysis, model policy.
- A community project that highlights skills honed from PLTI involvement.
- Over 200 PLTI alumni continue to do the important advocacy work they honed with their cohort.



VALUES AND BELIEFS

1

We trust parents.

Parent voice has impact. Parental expertise and insight add a powerful perspective to decision-making

2

Civil discourse promotes understanding.

We encourage and create environments for respectful discussions that support the common good.

3

There is a place for everyone at the PLTI table.

We are intentionally diverse by race, income, geography, gender, religion, and political ideology. Diversity adds value.

4

Continual learning drives change.

Learning is essential for making change for our children and for the health of our democracy. We are curious, we listen well, and we ask good questions.

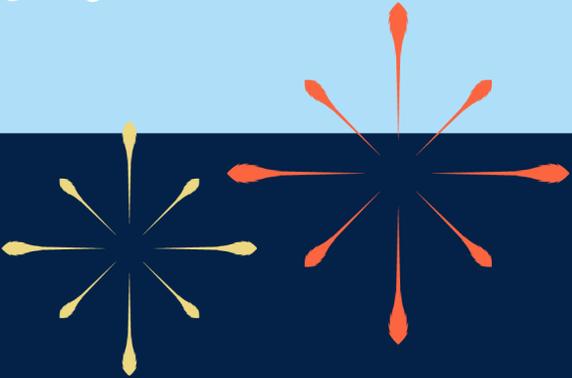
5

Public institutions should work for all people.

Informed, engaged civic leaders drive change for the good of everyone in the community.



Congratulations!
¡Felicidades!



FROM THE DIRECTOR

On behalf of Greater Rochester PLTI, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each of you on your graduation! This milestone is a testament to your hard work, dedication, and perseverance throughout your journey with us.

Thank you for embracing the vital role of ambassadors of change for the children in our community—your children. Your commitment to learning and growth has not only enriched your own lives but has also contributed to building a stronger, more engaged community. Know that this achievement is not an endpoint but the beginning of a new

chapter filled with boundless opportunities. Move forward with confidence, curiosity, and the unwavering belief that you have the power to create meaningful change.

As you embark on this next phase, remember that PLTI will always be here to support you. We are honored to remain a part of your journey and look forward to witnessing your continued growth and impact.

Once again, congratulations on this remarkable achievement! May your future be filled with success, joy, and fulfillment.



Luva

LUVA ALVAREZ
DIRECTOR



PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL - COHORT 12 CLASS OF 2025

WELCOME

James A Payne IV | Cheryl Wearen

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Josie McClary

SPOKEN WORD POEM

Jeremiah and Elijah Williams, CLTI Alumni, Cohort 11

NPLI GREETINGS

Janine McMahon

GREETINGS & CONGRATULATIONS

Representative from NYS Sen. Samra Brouk's Office
Assemblymember Demond Meeks
Monroe County Executive Adam Bello
Mayor Malik Evans, City of Rochester

GUEST SPEAKER

Thalia Wright, Commissioner of Monroe County's Department of Human Services
introduced by Tyler Brown

CLTI PRESENTATION

Mildrena Vega, CLTI Coordinator & CLTI Team

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES

Russell Nordquist | Kirstin Pryor

ALUMNI GREETINGS

Elizabeth Maxwell | Robert Rodgers

COHORT 12 CLASS SPEAKER

Savoy Myricks

STAFF RECOGNITION AND DIRECTOR'S ADDRESS

Luva Alvarez

SPOKEN WORD POEM

Makhi Whitley, Cohort 12

CLOSING & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

James A Payne IV

2025 GUEST SPEAKER



Thalia Wright, Commissioner of Monroe County's Department of Human Services (DHS), has served as a force for positive change in Rochester and Monroe County for nearly four years. She possesses more than 20 years of combined experience in child welfare and social services.

Thalia and her team at Monroe County DHS provide vital assistance to residents of the area, with income support, medical assistance, and other comprehensive

services designed to promote a higher quality of life for children, families, and disadvantaged or elderly adults, and help move lives forward with care and dignity.

Believing in meeting people where they are, Thalia has been committed to a systemic redesign of where and how DHS recipients receive support, making processes less complex and more person-centered. Her extensive experience has provided her with a unique perspective and insight uncommon to singular disciplines or practitioners.

Thalia regularly incorporates her values of social justice and advocacy while facilitating discussions with local districts and congregate care agencies throughout New York State to improve services and outcomes for children and families of color involved with the juvenile justice and the child welfare system. She leads with compassion and exemplifies "servant leadership."

Before her current role with Monroe County, Thalia served as Regional Director for the Westchester and Long Island Regional Offices of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Early in her career, Thalia worked as a Long-Term Care Social Worker, Homeless Outreach Worker, Monroe County Child Protective Services Investigator and Child Abuse Prevention Specialist.

Thalia holds a BS degree in Human Services from SUNY Brockport and an MS degree in Organizational Management and Strategic Leadership from Roberts Wesleyan College.

Thalia is a proud member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated and the Chi Alpha Epsilon Honor Society.

"Parent leadership means guiding my kids by example—choosing peace, setting boundaries, and showing up with love and resilience. It's about making decisions that shape our future and teaching them to lead with strength and authenticity."

~Jhalysa Johnson,

Cohort 12

SCAN THE QR CODE TO
LEARN ABOUT
SAVOY MYRICK'S
PARENT LEADER JOURNEY



2025 PARENT LEADER GRADUATES COHORT 12



DAVID BARKER
RCSD



QUTISHA BRITT
RCSD



TWANDA BROWN
RCSD



ANIKA FLAGG
WEBSTER CSD



SENAIT GEBRE
WEST IRONDEQUOIT CSD



JHALYSA JOHNSON
RCSD



JARED JONES
RCSD



JESSICA MAY
GREECE CSD



JESSENIA MOREL-GOREE
RCSD



SAVOY MYRICKS
WEBSTER CSD



FELICIA NUCIOLA
WEST IRONDEQUOIT CSD



HEATHER PARKER
RCSD



JASMIN VEGA
RCSD



CLARA WASHINGTON
RCSD



MAKHI WHITLEY
RCSD



EVA MARIE WOOD
RCSD

**“NEVER DOUBT
THAT A SMALL
GROUP OF
THOUGHTFUL,
COMMITTED
CITIZENS CAN
CHANGE THE
WORLD;
INDEED, IT'S
THE ONLY
THING THAT
EVER HAS.”**

~Margaret Mead

2025 PARENT LEADER PROJECTS

David Barker	Heart-Mind-Body Initiative	The initiative will form peer-led, certified mental health support groups to improve health outcomes in the Rochester area.
Qutisha Britt	Community Healing Through Resources	A monthly brochure that highlights available parent resources in the community.
Twanda Brown	Healthcare and You	Understanding Child Health Plus Medical Coverage - Helping parents navigate and understand NYS Child Health Plus medical coverage.
Anika Flagg	FARM: Families Are Restored by Moments	Creating moments that can lead to healing the mind, body & soul.
Senait Gebre	Access > Granted	Achieving effective grant results for nonprofits.
Jhalysa Johnson	Meals that Matter	A community initiative designed to provide nutritious, personalized meals to families in need. Through soulful meals and personal connections, we aim to foster relationships and ensure that no family feels alone in their struggles.
Jared Jones	Connect Outdoors	A faith-rooted youth development program that empowers young black and brown men (ages 9-18) through outdoor experiences, mentorship, and leadership training.
Jessica May	Inclusive Impact Rochester	Inclusive sensory events for families.
Jessenia Morel-Goree	Share and Care Project	Fostering connection and support through a vibrant community space with a little library, a flourishing garden, and a pantry where people can donate non-perishable food.
Savoy Myricks	Vision, Purpose, Plan	Empowering individuals to unlock their fullest potential through Vision, Purpose, and Plan combined with the 7 Key Essentials of Life.
Felicia Nuciola	It Takes a Village - Single Parent Resources	Building a supportive network for single parents to help one another with everyday parenting needs to ease stress and enable parents and children to stay engaged and involved.
Heather Parker	Education Empowerment	Sharing the benefits of preschool and providing health education to teens through community workshops led by medical professionals.
Jasmin Vega	BeYoutiful Bond	Building bonding through brushing.
Clara Washington	Breaking Communication Barriers for Nonverbal Special Education Students	Pilot program at Edison Tech High School that enhances communication for nonverbal students through technology and hands-on learning.
Makhi Whitley	F.A.W.N. (Fathers Accountable Won't Neglect)	A collaborative effort of men supporting and holding each other accountable, connecting with each other using community resources like music events, children's activities and support groups.
Eva Marie Wood	Love Multiplies, Not Divides: A Journey through Co-Parenting	Creating a childhood with better cooperation and communication between all adults raising them, through a series of restorative seminars for parents in our community, led by mental health professionals.

2025 CLTI YOUTH LEADER GRADUATES

KAIMER BOLLAR
JAXSON BROWN
LUKE CARNEY
MEREDITH CARNEY
ZACARI COLEMAN
AZAKYE D. CRANE
EMELIA DEAN
ZA'RYAH HERNANDEZ-RUFFIN

LYDIA HUNTLY
NAVIEA KEGLER
OLYVIA ROBINSON
JAHEEM SLOAN
ALIVIA TORRES
ZAKHI WHITLEY
MARY WOOD
MILO WOOD



Congratulations to this cohort of child leaders! Your journey as a child leader is just beginning. You now have the skills and knowledge needed to navigate and change the world.

BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN.
BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL.
BELIEVE THAT YOUR POWER IS UNSTOPPABLE.



NOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Congratulations, Cohort 12!



“Your dedication to leadership, advocacy, and community empowerment is truly inspiring. Here’s to the impact you’ll continue to make in shaping a brighter future for families and communities. Well done!”



Senator Samra
Brouk

Address: 274 N. Goodman St,
Rochester, NY 14607
Phone Number: 585-223-1800
Email: brouk@nysenate.gov



ASSEMBLYMEMBER DEMOND MEEKS DISTRICT 137



I am honored to extend my heartfelt congratulations to each of you on your successful completion of the Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute. Your dedication to this transformative journey reflects an unwavering commitment to strengthening our families and communities through advocacy, leadership, and civic engagement.

Congratulations

to our Greater Rochester PLTI
Cohort 12 Graduates.



Adam Bello
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Congratulations!

Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute Cohort Graduates

The City of Rochester is proud to support PLTI and the Rochester Parent Leaders!



CITY of ROCHESTER
Malik D. Evans, Mayor

CONGRATULATIONS!

Cohort 12

LEADERS AREN'T BORN, THEY ARE MADE.

And they are made just like anything else, through hard work.

- Vince Lombardi

CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE

from

TheChildren'sAgenda

Smart Choices. Bold Voices.

The Children's Agenda improves the health, education and success of children by advocating for effective, equitable policies, especially for families most impacted by poverty, racism, health inequities and trauma. **Together with parents like you**, we are making a difference at the state and local level on issues like reducing poverty, improving school climates, and ensuring families have more support.

Join us!

thechildrensagenda.org

STARBRIDGE
For the Hope and the How

Congratulations
Jessica May, Clara Washington
and the Greater Rochester PLTI Cohort 12

Together, we are building bridges to support parents becoming leaders of change!

Congratulations PLTI Cohort 12 Graduates!

is proud to support Rochester's Parent Leaders!

Congratulations
MILO & EVA WOOD
on this wonderful
accomplishment!
Parent advocates and
youth leaders are vital
to the success of
our schools.
We are proud of you!

ART IS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

ENROLL TODAY!
K-6 FREE Public Charter School
Where All Learners Find Success!
585-225-4200

299 Kirk Road, Rochester, NY 14612

renacad.org

SCAN ME!

From the Renaissance Academy Administration & Staff

Congratulations, Cohort 12!

from your
friends at



585-973-LONG

Congratulations,
Graduates!



Congratulations,
Cohort 12!

MANCINI
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Congratulations
Senait Gebre
Felicia Nuciola



Parents play a crucial role in equipping every child with the tools and resources they need to thrive. Your unwavering dedication to this vital mission is deeply appreciated.

Thank you for being such an essential partner in our journey towards success!



HATS OFF

TO THE
GRADUATES OF

COHORT 12!

PLTI and the Greece Central School District are united in a common mission to increase parent voice in education.

Together, we
Empower meaningful change



Parent Academy congratulates
the latest cohort of PLTI on an
amazing accomplishment!

Congratulations, Cohort 12!

from The Burns Family
Proud CLTI alumni, PLTI alumni, and
CDT alumni

PLTI'S NATIONAL HISTORY

The Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) is a local initiative of the National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI), an evidence-based program designed to increase parent involvement in community issues. Since PLTI began in Connecticut in 1992, the program has grown nationally. The Monroe County-based Early Childhood Development Initiative worked to bring PLTI to the Rochester community, which began as Greater Rochester PLTI in 2012.

Many thanks to NPLI for their collaboration with towns and regions across the country to implement quality parent leadership for good child outcomes.

2024-2025 PLTI CLASS FACILITATORS

Kirstin Pryor
Russell Nordquist

Lydia Riveria
Matt Wagstaff

THE CHILDREN'S LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI) is an organic bridge for parents and children that focuses on family, empowerment, and improving the community. It runs as a parallel course to PLTI for the children of cohort participants. Anchored in literacy, the Children's Leadership Cohort creates a full spectrum of activities to encompass multiple intelligences.

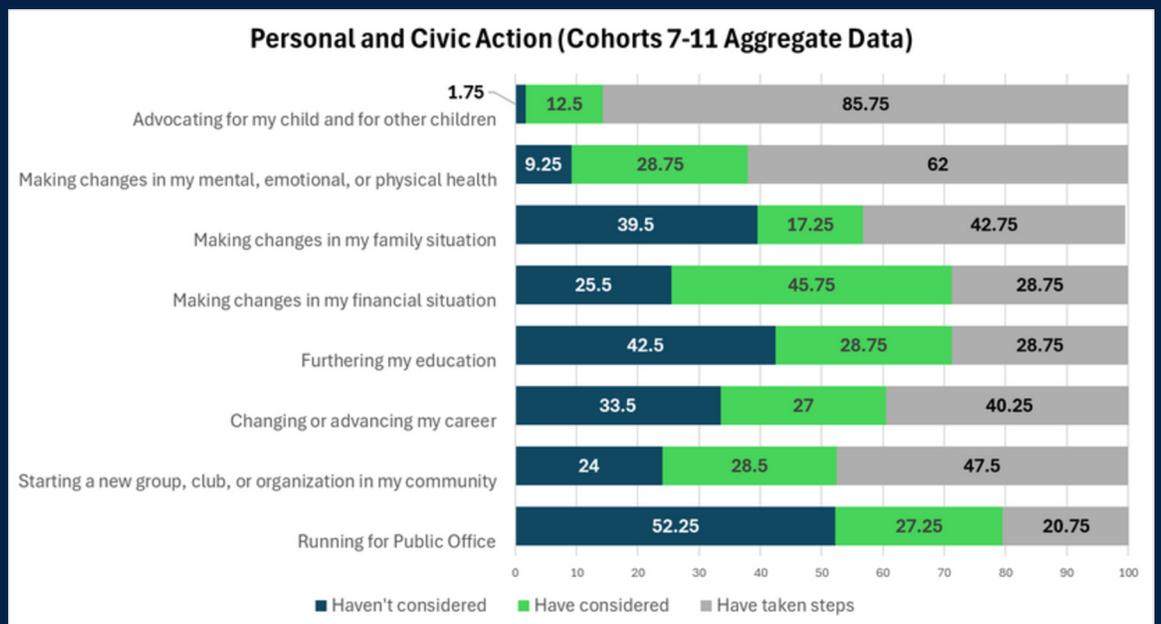
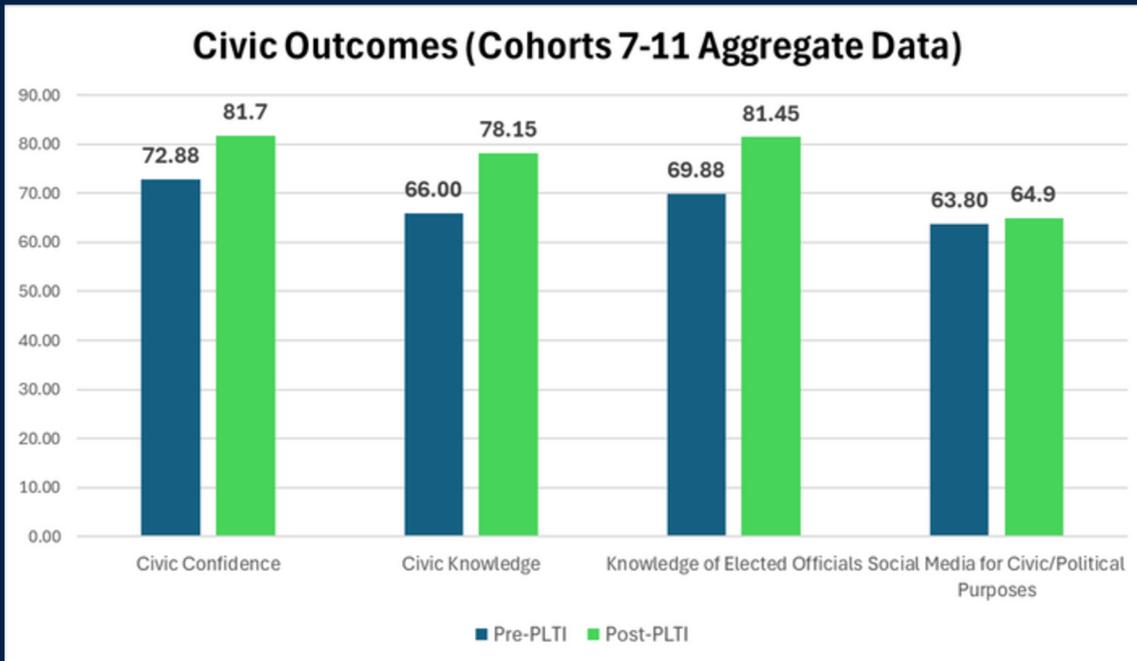
2024 - 2025 CLTI TEAM

Alexandra Addis - CLTI Teacher
Silas Alvarez - Youth Leader
Nhazia Bedell-Scott - Youth Leader
Tyler Benson - CLTI Teacher

Julia Gonzalez - CLTI Teacher
Destiny Dalmau Gonzalez - Youth Leader
Mildrena Vega - CLTI Coordinator

HOW PLTI IMPACTS PARENT LEADERS

NYU Metro Center was hired by NPLI as an independent, outside evaluator to assess outcomes of the PLTI program, including conducting a parent survey. The survey measures the impact of the initiative on parents' civic skills, engagement, and knowledge, as well as their experiences with the initiative. Surveys were completed at the beginning and the end of the program. While Cohort 12's final data will not be available until this summer, below is the composite data for some of the measured outcomes for Cohorts 7-11. For more information, visit greaterrochesterplti.org



Change Starts With You

**Cohort 13 Applications
will be available on May 1.**

**Classes begin October 2025.
www.greaterrochesterplti.org**

Free to Parents & Caregivers in Monroe County

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024-25 PLTI FUNDERS

- Sen. Samra Brouk & NYS OCFS
- City of Rochester
- ESL Foundation
- Greater Rochester Health Foundation
- Konar Foundation
- Rochester Area Community Foundation
- Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield
- FULL MEASURE
- Starbridge
- True Insights Consulting

**WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR FUNDERS AND THE
MANY INDIVIDUAL DONORS WHO HAVE GIVEN TO PLTI THIS YEAR.**



SPECIAL THANKS TO

- Asbury First United Methodist Church
- 2025 Class Speakers: Judge Fatimat Reid; RCSD Board Commissioner Camille Simmons, WHAM 13's Stephanie Townsend; CCSI's Nancy Raca; and PLTI Alumna Kearstin Brown
- Coordinated Care Services, Inc. (CCSI)
- Kimberly Jones (Alumna, Cohort 1) & the MAG Events Team
- Local caterers who provided weekly meals
- Mancini Public Relations for assistance with the program
- 2025 PLTI Parent Leader Mentors
- National Parent Leadership Institute
- Photographers Maria Flecha (Cohort 4) and CLTI alumna Samantha Cruz
- Printing Plus
- Starbridge and The Children's Agenda for their donations to our graduates' gift bags

THANK YOU TO OUR CIVIC DESIGN TEAM

Silas Alvarez, CLTI Alumnus, Cohort 6; Youth Leader

Toyin Anderson-Willis, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 1; Action for a Better Community

Gail Berkes, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 10

Dawn M Breitung, The Children's Institute

Tyler Brown, Monroe County

Kathryn Copeland, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 10

Monica Graham, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 9

Clayton H Osborne, True Insights Consulting LLC

James Payne, PLTI Alumnus, Cohort 9; BOCES 2

Erika Rosenberg, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 2; Center for Governmental Research

Lisa Singletary, PLTI Alumna, Cohort 8; Student Success Project

PLTI's Civic Design Team (CDT) is an advisory board composed of PLTI alumni and community leaders that helps to sustain the PLTI mission and programs.