

GRAHAM RECORD

Message from President & CEO

Kimberly Watson

Dear Graham Community,
As Graham Windham celebrated its 216th birthday in March, I reflected on how we started as an organization over two centuries ago and see that we have stayed true to the mission set forward by its pioneering women. The founders' spirit of giving "helpful help" and innovating is rooted in our organizational DNA and continues at Graham today. This has been our way of working from the very beginning when the founders saw and responded to children and families impacted by the yellow fever and tuberculosis scourges in 1806, and continues now, at the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Our Vision 2025 goals build on the legacy left for us so that we can continue providing “helpful help” to strengthen thousands of children and families facing challenges:

- Helping youth and families achieve their dreams;
- Helping families in crisis heal;
- Changing biased systems and fighting inequity; and
- Building a thriving One Graham culture.

I hope you enjoy this quarterly newsletter, the first of many to come, which will focus on the progress we make toward our Vision goals.

Upward,
Kym

Above & Beyond

Sharmeela Mediratta is honored by City & State New York



Graham’s own Sharmeela Mediratta was honored for her trailblazing work, particularly for her role in the creation of Graham S.L.A.M (Support, Lead, Achieve and Model) and the implementation of the O.U.R Place Family Enrichment Center in Hunts Point, Bronx. City & State New York recognized Sharmeela and other honorees as Above & Beyond Innovators in a special gathering at the Midtown Loft and Terrace on June 28, 2022.

Sharmeela has been a senior leader at Graham for over a decade. She is currently the Vice President for Health & Family Wellness and Chief Advocacy Officer responsible for overseeing our Health and Wellness Programs, Family Success Initiative and O.U.R Place.

Sharmeela also leads our advocacy and policy change efforts, advancing Graham’s Vision 2025 goal to “Change biased systems and fight inequity”. Consistent with the Graham way, Sharmeela is committed to listening to the people and communities we serve. When we listen, we can meet needs and make changes as a result of what we hear. Graham works to amplify the voices of our youth and families, then innovate and advocate as a result of what they share they need.

Helping Youth Achieve their Dreams: Academic Success at Graham College Spirit Week

We held our third annual College Spirit Week in May to encourage our youth and staff to participate in College Signing Day on May 7th. Each day we had a fun theme for youth and staff to participate: Staff shared their college memories, we showed our college pride by rocking college gear, we jammed out to throwback tunes, and we tested our college knowledge during trivia. We ended off our Spirit Week by finding out where our high school seniors were headed off to college. Thirteen (13) youth signed that they'll be attending college in the Fall (John Jay, City College, New York University, Medgar Evers College, Monroe College, SUNY Canton, Brooklyn College, SUNY Alfred, Kingsborough Community College, SUNY Buffalo, and Queens College).



Graham Graduation Celebration

For the first time in two years, on June 22nd we were able to hold our graduation celebration in person. It was a fun night filled with laughter and happiness honoring our youth. In total, we had 13 college graduates, 41 high school graduates, and 6 SLAM graduates (young adults who have met critical milestones, employment and academic, leading to continued success in life). We are so very proud of our youth and all of their hard work.



Among those being celebrated we had:

- 13 College graduates
- 41 High school graduates



DID YOU KNOW?

Former First Lady Michelle Obama created the first national College Signing Day in 2014 (the same year we rolled out Graham SLAM) to celebrate students who plan to pursue some form of education and training beyond high school and inspire them to take the steps necessary to achieve their dreams.