

THE graham RECORD

NOVEMBER 2025 | ISSUE NO. 11



Dear Graham Community,

As we transition to the fall and winter months, I have found myself in deep reflection about the state of the world around us. Knowing Graham supports communities facing difficult obstacles caused by poverty and injustice, and children, youth, and families who are being most impacted by these turbulent times, we are more determined than ever to continue our work.

For nearly 220 years, Graham has persevered through some of the most trying times in American history. I find hope in continuing to forge ahead, expanding Graham's offerings for children, youth, families, and communities, in partnership to help them achieve their dreams.

In our last newsletter, we announced the expansion of our [innovative Graham SLAM education and career coaching initiative](#). We are excited to provide an update in this newsletter on significant progress toward our goal of reaching 900 youth by 2029.

In alignment with our **bold [Vision 2029 strategy](#), Graham continues to be a leader in a movement we are calling "the Reckoning." Over the past few months, we have hosted convenings to address** harms caused by the child welfare system and to brainstorm positive community supports that will ultimately replace traditional foster care. Our strong partnership with members of the Graham community

and peer organizations joining us in this work propel us forward.

I recently had the opportunity to share my Reckoning reflections in an [interview with Urban Matters](#). I invite you to read the article and join us in this important conversation.

I am immensely grateful for your continued belief in Graham's mission. Together, with your valued support and participation, we will help children, families, and communities lead healthy, joyful, and successful lives.

Onward,
Kym

Students Get Ready to Learn at Back-to-School Events



Throughout August and September, we hosted 10 Back-To-School events across NYC. Thanks to the generous support of Graham's donors, **we reached our goal of raising \$50,000** to help students get Ready to Learn! Graham staff distributed 3,800 backpacks filled with school supplies and other essential items. Our volunteer partners donated books, clothing, fresh produce, and more to support the children, families, and community members we reach. Attendees at our Back-to-School events enjoyed family games, face painting, arts and crafts, and more—what a fun start to the school year!

NY Officials Visit Our Community Centers

We were delighted to welcome State Senator Cordell Cleare, who represents Upper Manhattan, to the Manhattanville Cornerstone Community Center! During Senator Cleare's visit, Graham staff showcased the center's vibrant offerings for both youth and seniors in the Manhattanville community.



The Tremont Youth & Family Center welcomed State Senator Luis R. Sepúlveda, DCWP Commissioner Vilda Vera Mayuga, and staff from Council Member Oswald Feliz's office. The officials engaged youth and parents in a financial literacy workshop.



Reckoning with Harm and Building Community Alternatives to Foster Care



On September 25, Graham hosted a collaborative Summit that brought together parents, youth, foster parents, staff, Board members, and community partners for a day of reflection and innovation. Participants reviewed key insights from the Reckoning conversations held over the past year, explored community-based alternatives to traditional systems, and brainstormed new approaches that better support families.

On November 5, Graham and the [New York City Narrowing the Front Door Work Group](#) co-hosted "Putting Families First: The Other Side of the Reckoning, an Urgent Community Conversation." The powerful convening discussed reckoning with harm to rebuild a future rooted in family justice and integrity, with our President & CEO, Kym Watson, sharing her own family's story of involvement with the child welfare system. [Check out Kym's interview with Urban Matters.](#)



Graham SLAM Expansion Continues, Reaching More Youth

We are making significant progress toward our Vision 2029 goal of [expanding Graham SLAM to reach 900 youth each year](#). Graham SLAM provides youth with long-term, structured coaching and supports from 8th grade to a living-wage pathway.

In the past seven months, generous gifts for SLAM have enabled us to hire 10 additional coaches and two "Graham grown" supervisors. With these new roles, we have already paired 133 youth with SLAM Coaches. This puts us well on the way to achieving our near-term milestone of providing coaching to an additional 180 youth and 580 youth overall by mid-2026!

