



Equity on Every Level: How Wakanda 365 Merged Culture, Sport, and Science for Immunization Success



MKE Black Grassroots
Network for Health Equity

THE
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WELLNESS
COLLECTIVE

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Overview of Wakanda 365

- Persistent disparities in vaccination rates continue to affect Black and Brown communities due to systemic mistrust, misinformation, and limited culturally resonant outreach.
- Wakanda 365, a collaborative led by initiatives
 - Health Connections Inc.,
 - MKE Black Grassroots Network for Health Equity (MBGNHE)
 - MKE Wellness Collective
- Leveraged the **IMWI 2024-2025 Grant** to reimagine vaccine outreach through the lens of cultural relevance, community engagement, and science-based education.



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Why This Work Matters?

- **Persistent Disparities:** Milwaukee's Black communities continue to experience lower vaccine uptake and higher health disparities.
- **Declining Visibility:** Public conversation around COVID-19, RSV, and HPV has diminished, yet misinformation persists.
- **Community Strength:** MBGNHE leverages trust, local leadership, and culture to re-engage the public with evidence-based health messaging.
- **Goal:** Rebuild trust and increase health access through **culturally rooted, intergenerational, and interactive events.**



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Our 3-Part Immunization Intervention Model

- **Slam Dunk Cancer Awareness Health Fair & Basketball Game**
 - A family-centered event combining competitive sports with free vaccine administration and interactive public health exhibits.
- **Immunization Communication Ambassador Training**
 - A peer-led curriculum that equipped trusted community members with vaccine facts, conversation strategies, and digital literacy tools to counter misinformation.
- **Vaccine Symposium: From Hesitation to Confidence**
 - A curated public forum featuring expert panels, storytelling, multimedia, and facilitated audience dialogue to address historical and contemporary barriers to vaccine uptake.



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Summary of Three Key Health Events 2024–2025

- Highlight outcomes from each event
- Share impact stories and lessons learned
- Celebrate community leadership in advancing health equity

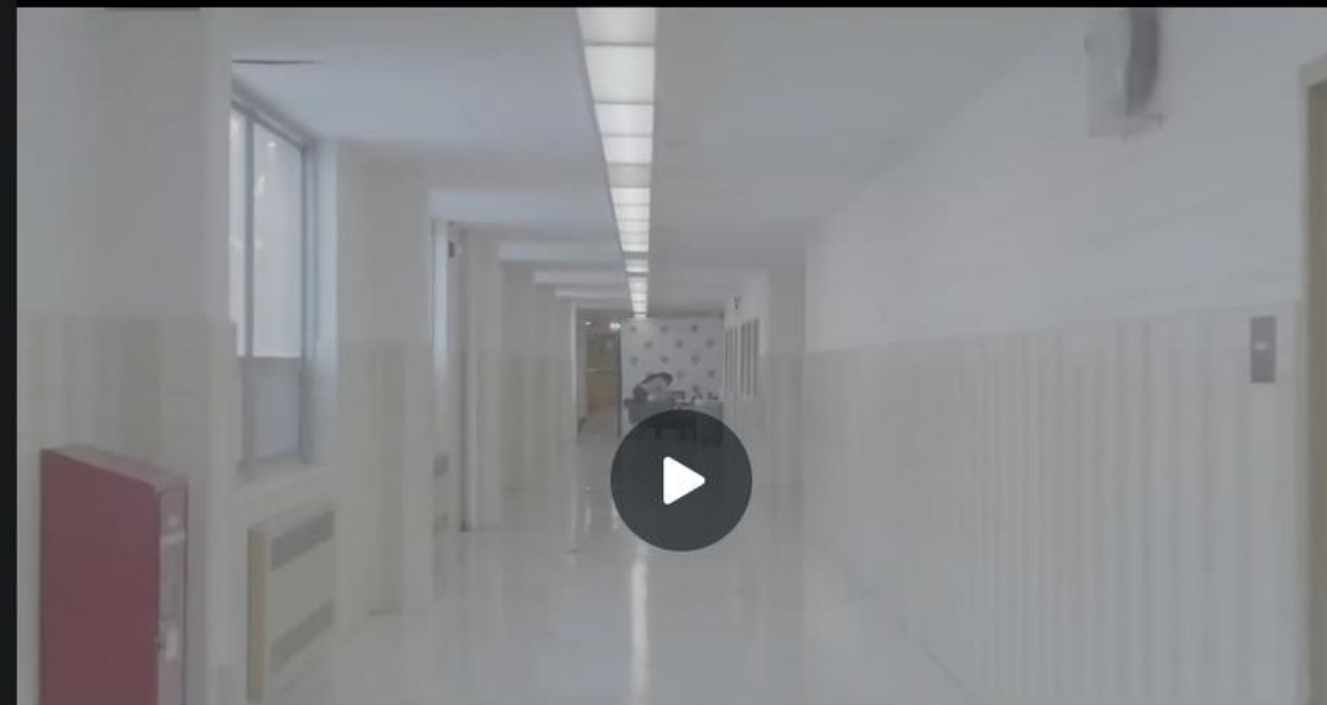


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INTER-GENERATIONAL
**HEALTH FAIR & CHARITY
BASKETBALL GAME**
SUPPORTING COLORECTAL AND
PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS
2024 RECAP



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GET TICKETS TO ATTEND THIS YEAR'S
GAME ON MARCH 15, 2025

Slam Dunk Cancer & Vaccine Awareness

~ Saturday, Mar 15, 2025 ~

What We Did:

- 200+ attendees & 20+ community partners & vendors
- Health Fair Services included PSA testing, colorectal screening, COVID-19 & flu vaccinations
- Community basketball game: Players = elected officials vs. local partners
- Health fair with music, food, and intergenerational engagement

Impact Highlights:

- 1 flu + 1 COVID-19 vaccine given; 6+ people completed cancer screening, almost all Participants completed the risk assessments
- 15 attended our post-event focus group on healthcare access
- Vendors included PPWI, MAGV, Molina, Milwaukee Rec, 414 Life, and more
- Engaged youth, elders, and families. **culturally relevant + joyful space = community trust built**



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Immunization Ambassador Training

~ Saturday, Apr 19, 2025 ~

What We Did:

- 13 completed training (30 registered, 6 waitlisted)
- Hands-on modules: vaccine science, motivational interviewing (OARS), culturally sensitive messaging
- Used storytelling, roleplay, myth-busting, and personal testimonies.

Impact Highlights:

- Participants showed increased knowledge (based on quiz scores and open responses)
- Addressed myths about vaccine safety, eligibility, frequency, and disease relevance
- Participants received certificates, solidifying their role as community vaccine messengers
- Participant quote: “I didn’t know I could talk about vaccines this confidently. Now I want to.”



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Vaccine Awareness Symposium

~ Tuesday, Apr 22, 2025 ~

What We Did:

- 14 attendees (20 registered)
- Panel on the social and political climate of immunization
- Community conversation space to ask questions and share

Impact Highlights:

- 2 COVID-19 vaccines and 1 flu shot administered
- Feedback showed attendees felt informed, motivated, and eager to “keep fighting for access”
- One attendee, who came to both the Wakanda365 Ambassador Training and Vaccine Symposium:
 - Shared their vaccine hesitancy with us.
 - Decided to get the COVID-19 vaccine for the first time ever.
 - A powerful marker of the success of our multifaceted approach.



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Reflections

Cross-Cutting Wins:

- Vaccine confidence improved through real-time transformation
- Participants felt empowered to talk to others
- Music, sports, and culture opened the door to health conversations
- Trusted spaces (not only clinics) are essential



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Conclusion

Next Steps:

- Sustain the Immunization Ambassador Network
- Secure future funding for more community-rooted education events
- Partner year-round with grassroots orgs to **build a culture of health equity**

By merging sport, culture, and science, Wakanda 365 demonstrated how equity-centered strategies can mobilize communities, build trust, and improve vaccine confidence. This model underscores the need for health initiatives to meet communities where they are—on the court, in conversation, and with cultural pride at the forefront.



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Questions and Discussion



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