

2025 IMPACT BUS TOUR



STOP 3: UNLOCKING POTENTIAL: UNIQUE STUDENT SUPPORTS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Charisma DuBois, Senior Program Director, Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology (BCAT)

Charisma was previously with Teach for America as Director of Alumni Leadership, where she developed and managed alumni engagement and outreach and developed a number of programs designed to create and fill a leadership pipeline in the education sector. She has considerable coaching and leadership development experience, has served as an adjunct professor at Canisius College (now Canisius University), and taught high school science at the Bushwick (now Brooklyn) School for Social Justice and The New York City Teaching Collaborative, both in Brooklyn, NY.

In addition to our leadership work at BCAT, Charisma is actively involved in the community, including Board positions with InfoTech WNY and Mount Cavalry Cemetery, where she is supporting the organization in launching a new 501(c)3.

James Ballin, Associate Director, Project Play WNY

James Ballin is the Associate Director, Project Play WNY at the Community Foundation. In his role, he assists with Project Play WNY, a Youth Sports initiative launched by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to ensure all children in Western New York have the opportunity to be active through sports and build physical literacy. James helps coordinate the collective impact model for Project Play WNY with a focus on grants and philanthropy support. He also oversees the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Fund for Youth Sports, one of four endowment funds at the Community Foundation created by the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

Prior to joining the Community Foundation, James worked at Success Academy Charter Schools in New York City where he organized and implemented program logistics, led professional development of a team of coaches, and developed a youth sports network across communities in Brooklyn, Harlem and the Bronx. Previously, he worked as a Senior Coach at the New York Red Bulls, and was an intern at Major League Soccer.

James received his B.A in International Relations from the State University of New York at Geneseo and his M.S. in Sport Management from Liberty University.

Daphne Ross, Chief Impact Officer, Say Yes Buffalo

Daphne Ross is the Chief Impact Officer for Say Yes Buffalo, responsible for fundraising & development, marketing communications and the management of external partnerships.

Daphne has been on the Say Yes Buffalo team for 12 years in various roles, including leading the

rollout of the Buffalo College Success Network which created supports and services for Say Yes Buffalo scholars at SUNY Erie, Buffalo State and Villa Maria to persist and complete their two and four-year degrees. She has also led the rollout of the CareerWise Greater Buffalo Modern Youth Apprenticeship Program that bridges the gap between local workforce demands and Buffalo students, providing pathways to family sustaining salaries that do not require a two- or four-year degree at entry. Additionally, Daphne has managed the organizations marketing and communications strategy since joining the organization in 2013, with the goal of increasing awareness and understanding of Say Yes Buffalo initiatives, services and supports.

Daphne is a lifelong Buffalo resident and was educated through the Buffalo Public School system, graduating from City Honors School. After high school, Daphne attended Canisius College earning a bachelor's degree in Communications and St. Bonaventure University earning a masters degree in Integrated Marketing Communications.

Daphne is actively involved in the Buffalo Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., where she serves on several committees and initiatives. Additionally, Daphne is a Board Trustee of Villa Maria College, Leadership Buffalo and has served on the 5/14/22 Survivors Fund led by Tops Markets and the National Compassion Fund.