



**IKG CULTURAL  
RESOURCE CENTER**



# African Link Initiative (ALI)

## 2021 in Review

In Partnership with:



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF MERCER COUNTY**



**AFRICAN  
ANCESTRY**



**United Way  
of Greater Mercer County**



## A Message from Our Founder



Congratulations to the first graduate cohort of the African Link Initiative! I salute you for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to changing the narrative by learning your origin story - and sharing it with the world. While 2021 was wrought with uncertainty, I am inspired by your growth and feel blessed to witness where you will grow from here.

Thank you to our partners, African Ancestry, Anthony Browder and IKG, Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County, Crucial Learning, Global Connections Foundation of N.J., the TED organization, and United Way of Greater Mercer County. This program would not be possible without your collaboration and support.

A special thank you to our African Link Initiative parents, donors, and volunteers. I am honored to work with and be supported by such a dedicated group of people who give so much so freely.

To our board members, thank you for taking on a special level of commitment to transform the way our babies see their world, themselves, and their birthright. Your continued support helps keep my head in the game.

To those who personally mentor me and support my personal growth through this journey, thank you from my whole heart.

Last but definitely not least, to my family and my ancestors — thank you to those whose names I know, and to those whose names I will never know. Thank you for not knowing how to give up.

Thank you, God - for it all.

With Gratitude,

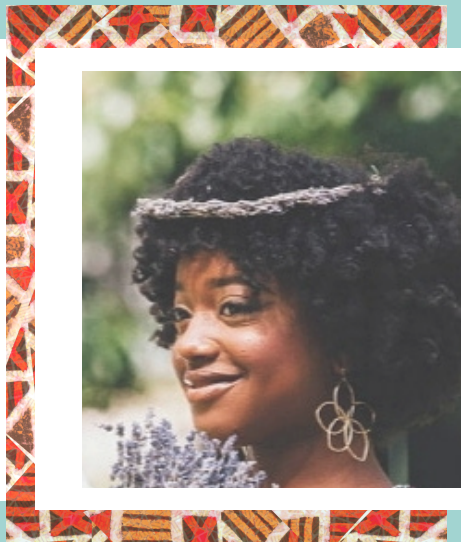
*Shazel Muhammad*



# Meet Our Scholars

Elizabeth Deravil  
Grade 12

[Watch Elizabeth's TED-Ed Talk](#)



Ifasadun Tella-Swan  
Grade 9  
ALI Intern

[Watch Ifa's TED-Ed Talk](#)

Nia Joi Singleton  
Grade 8

[Watch Nia's TED-Ed Talk](#)



Brandon Russell  
Grade 8

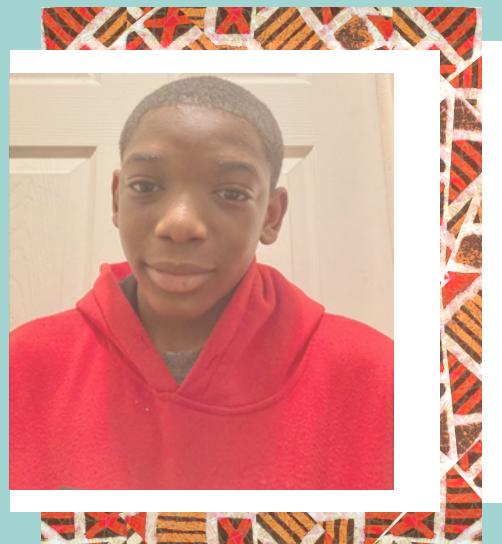


Jermaine Blount, Jr.  
Grade 11

[Watch Jermaine's TED-Ed Talk](#)



Sylvester Sommerselle  
Grade 8



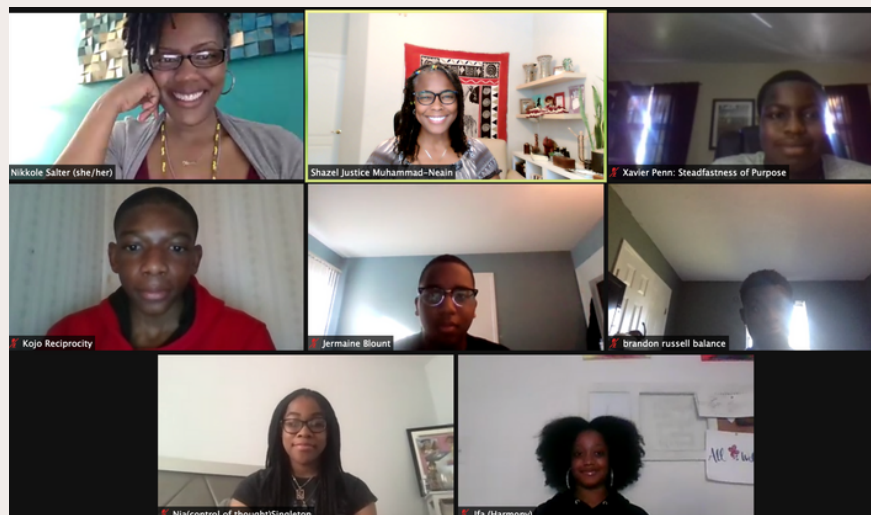
Xavier Penn  
Grade 8

[Watch Xavier's TED-Ed Talk](#)

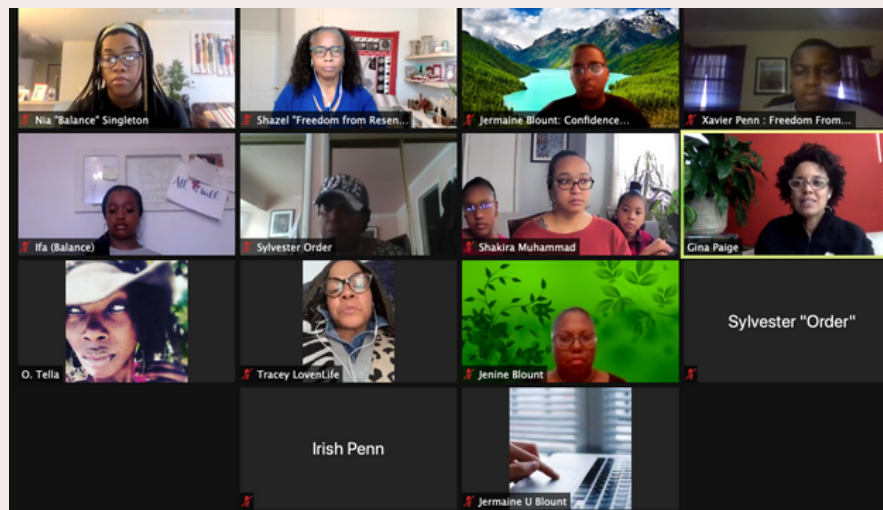


A talk with authors, Anthony Browder and Atlantis Browder

**180+ hours of group workshops**  
**100% Virtual**



A visit with actress, activist, and playwright, Nikkole Salter



A chat about DNA and ancestry with African Ancestry Co-Founder & President, Dr. Gina Paige



## Family Reunion & African Ancestry Reveal

99 attendees (via Zoom)

### Countries and Ethnic Groups Revealed



Bioko Island/  
Equatorial Guinea  
(Bubi)



Cameroon  
(Tikar, Bamileke)



Gabon  
(Fang)



Ghana  
(Fante)



Nigeria  
(Yoruba, Fulani,  
Hausa)



Sierra Leone  
(Mende)



# African Link Initiative **TEDEd**Club

**TED-Ed's presentation literacy program**



Connects students to a global community of youth voices

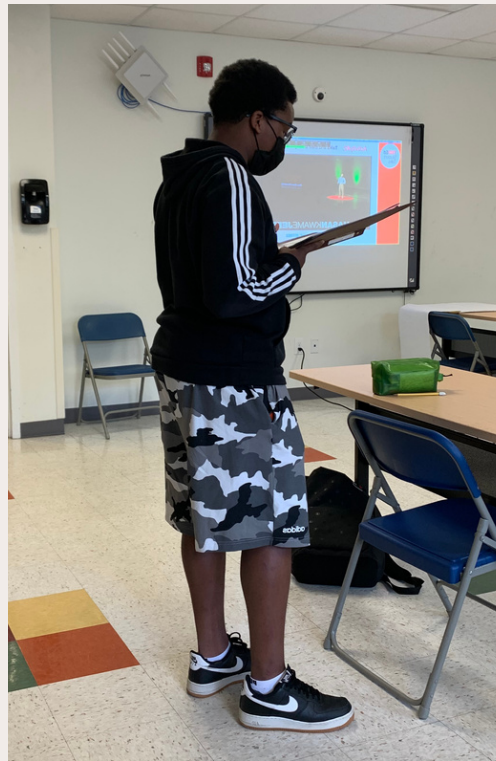
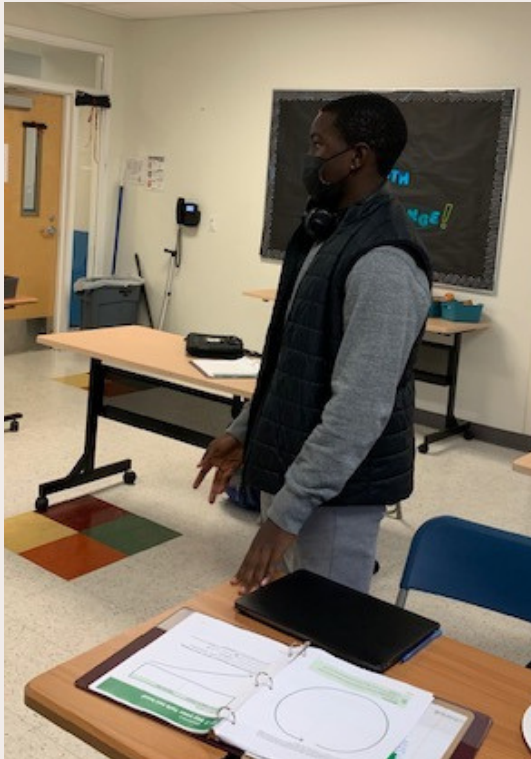


Supports students in discovering, developing and presenting their big ideas



Brings the TED stage to students around the world

**60+ hours**  
of public speaking &  
presentation training  
(virtual & in-person)





LIVE!



## African Link Initiative TED Ed Student Talks







ALI presents

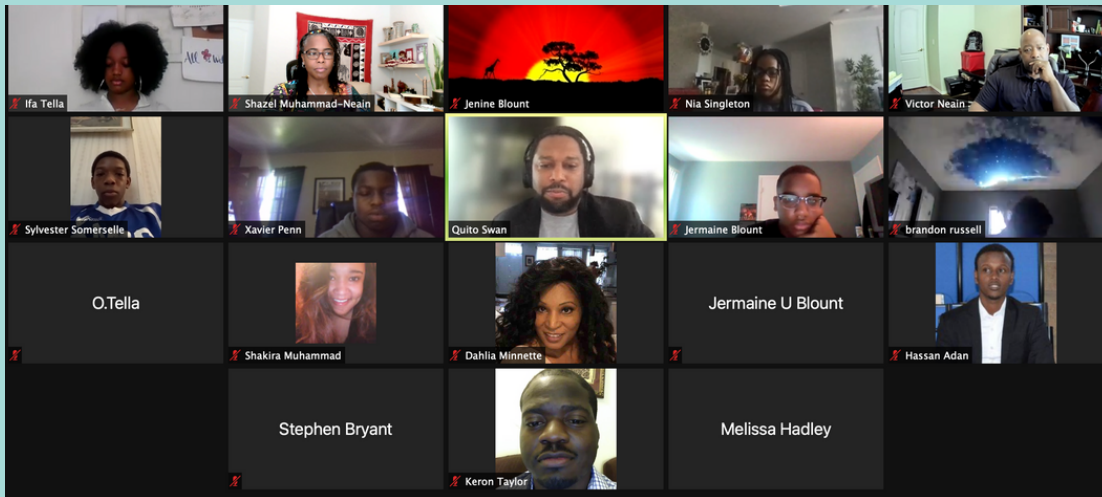
# TEEN SUMMIT

Community dialogues curated by Black teens for Black teens

## RACISM, SOCIAL MEDIA & THE N\*WORD

*Has social media changed racism?  
Is the N\*Word a nuanced part of Black vernacular? An unacceptable racial slur? Or something in between?*

Internship Project:  
Youth-led community dialogue  
49 attendees (via Zoom)





Elizabeth Deravil  
Grade 12  
ALI TED-Ed Speaker

ALI's TED-Ed Student Talks Program was enlightening because it helped me to learn more about my strengths, weaknesses, and fears. This opportunity will also help me in my future because I have a better understanding of public speaking and sharing ideas that I am passionate about.



Xavier Penn  
Grade 8  
ALI & TED-Ed Speaker

Participating in the African Link Initiative helped me to understand how expansive African history truly is.

# Testimonials





Zoubir Yazid, Ph.D  
Chief Learning Officer  
Boys & Girls Clubs of  
Mercer County

Simply put, the ALI program is by far one of the most innovative/engaging research-based programs I have had the chance to implement within our organization.

# Testimonials



Oluwatoyin Tella  
Parent of ALI Scholar

ALI is an experience for young adults that helps them formulate and contextualize who they are. ALI is a safe and nurturing space that reinforces the positive in their history, their community and lineage and gives them a foundation in self-worth. I think self-worth is a key word for this program.



Thank You & God Bless  
From my family to yours,  
*Shazel Muhammad*