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# Brittney A. Smith

Youth Development | Youth Advocacy |  
Community Development and Engagement

Brittney Alexandria Smith is a proud Ohioan, born and raised in the inner-city of Cleveland. With her upbringing and love for positive community change and youth advocacy, Brittney used that love to connect and work with a variety of populations, from county government to community development corporations and organizations throughout her career. She has had the opportunity to connect and work with community leaders to impact change. She continued on to use her passion and experience to create an organization dedicated to the development of young black girls from Cleveland, Positively Empowering and Restoring Ladies Self-Esteem (PEARLS), Inc., a mentoring group that services girls ages 11-17 years old. She is compassionate about the nurturing and guidance of brown and black girls who may be overlooked, misrepresented, and misunderstood. Additionally, Brittney founded Gyr! and Co. LLC, a small consulting company that works to provide social experiences to better help inspire community amongst leaders, youth, and individuals.

Brittney received her Bachelors in Social Work from Cleveland State University and a Professional Certification in Family Development from The University of Connecticut. Brittney has been working in the social service field for over 12 years with experience in youth development, community engagement, and mental health. With PEARLS, she has had the privilege of working with some of the most phenomenal girls in Cleveland, helping to connect them to resources and assisting them with navigating their lives by way of mentorship, exposure, and confidence building activities. Through her work with PEARLS, she has been able to develop several relationships with community partners to help launch an extension of her organization, the PEARLS Girls Community Closet, a thrift store that offers free gently-used clothing and hygiene products to girls and women. In addition, through partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, replicated the service inside of three schools within the community as "mini-closets" serving over 2000 people with an inclusive, wraparound approach to service.

In 2022, she was awarded the Neighborhood Improvement Award from the Northwest Neighborhood CDC and received recognition from the State of Ohio House of Representatives for her work with PEARLS. In 2023 she traveled to Washington D.C. where she had the opportunity to participate in the Mentoring Summit's Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, expressing the importance of youth mentoring services and programmatic funding. Most recently, Brittney has been accepted as a 2023 Fellow with the Cuyahoga County Youth Institute and Case Western Reserve University. In 2024, she was awarded a Certificate of Resolution from the City of Cleveland for her work with teen girls. In her spare time, Brittney loves to run, volunteer, travel and spend time with her family and friends.