



News Release

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My Brother My Sister to receive \$25,000 prize

CLEVELAND, OH -- **My Brother My Sister has been selected to receive the \$25,000 Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award for its program that helps young people of color to stay in school, graduate and go on to college.** The award is presented annually by the **Cleveland Foundation** and **The Center for Community Solutions** for outstanding community service.

My Brother My Sister was created by **Malcolm Burton** in 2008 when he was 16-years-old while attending Copley High School in Akron. Burton noticed that many of his peers—especially young African-American men—spent more time in detention than in class, so he began to organize group sessions where teens could use hip-hop music, movies and other media to openly discuss the challenges and issues they face. The sessions became a support system, and participants started to help each other with homework and other issues. The group eventually began to involve teachers and others to help address concerns. It worked so well that he continued to host the group even after graduating.

After attaining his masters of social work degree from Case Western Reserve University, Burton began working at East End Neighborhood House (EENH), while still working with young people on his own time, with his own resources. After a request from EENH, he expanded the group he started in high school and began engaging middle-schoolers who were at-risk of not even entering high school.

Burton recently gave notice that he plans to devote all of his attention to growing My Brother My Sister Global, which will be run as an independent organization housed at EENH. To help cover some of the costs, he developed an online clothing line—4everbright—that highlights youth culture and appreciation for hip-hop; a percentage of all purchases directly supports MBMS.

Burton noted that, in addition to using hip-hop, MBMS “uses technology as a way for young people to work on short stories telling their truth through digital storytelling related to community, love and culture.”

“We are one of the only resources in the communities we serve that allow young people to have access to what we provide. This award will strengthen our youth’s access to safe spaces that give a much-needed sense of security, personal development, support and college and technical opportunity all while in a place the youth are encouraged to be themselves,” he said.

“In a county where one in seven people age 16 to 24 aren’t working and aren’t in school, this program is an outstanding achievement in that it reports that all of its participants graduate high school and 96 percent go on to graduate college,” said **John R. Corlett**, Community Solutions’ president and executive director.

“This is especially an important issue for young students of color. According to our report, [The \\$44,000 Question: Examining Disengaged Youth in Cuyahoga County](#), African-Americans make up a disproportionate share of disengaged youth. Young people of color are less likely to be engaged in the workforce or careers than their white peers. This disparity perpetuates generational poverty and presents challenges for their future. But it starts in the classroom where they can prepare to become part of the workforce. So investments to help youth become and remain engaged with school can pay long-term dividends for them.”

“Edith Anisfield Wolf would have been delighted to see My Brother My Sister receive this prize,” said **Karen R. Long**, manager, Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards of the Cleveland Foundation. “She believed in building the beloved community, in increasing literacy and learning, and tuning all our eyes and ears to art and beauty. How formidable that Malcolm Burton got to work on this as a teenager.”

The award will be presented to My Brother My Sister during Community Solutions’ 2019 Celebration of Human Services Luncheon at Noon on **Friday, October 25**, at the Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center—Downtown.

The Anisfield-Wolf Memorial Award is one of two awards established in 1964 by the late Edith Anisfield Wolf—poet, philanthropist, and civic leader. It is named after her father, John Anisfield, and her husband, Eugene Everett Wolf. Known as a quiet and reserved woman, Edith was ahead of her time in her thinking on social issues. She left her mark on Cleveland and its institutions with her main focus being to eliminate racial friction.

*A nonprofit, non-partisan think tank, **The Center for Community Solutions** focuses on solutions to health, social and economic issues. With offices in Cleveland and Columbus, Community Solutions identifies, analyzes, and explains key health, social, and economic data and issues, and proposes non-partisan solutions to improve the lives of Ohioans. Established in 1913. For more information, visit www.CommunitySolutions.com and follow us on [Facebook.com/CommunitySols](https://www.facebook.com/CommunitySols), Twitter @CommunitySols, and Instagram @Community_Solutions.*

Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation and one of the largest today, with assets of \$2.5 billion and 2018 grants of more than \$100 million. Through the generosity of donors, the foundation improves the lives of residents of Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties by building community endowment, addressing needs through grantmaking and providing leadership on vital issues. The foundation’s program areas include: arts and culture, economic and workforce development, education, environment, neighborhoods, and youth development and social services. For more information, visit www.ClevelandFoundation.org and follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ClevelandFoundation), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ClevelandFoundation) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ClevelandFoundation).

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