



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 19, 2025



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**The Skillman Foundation Announces 2025 Skillman Visionary Awards,
Recognizing Education Changemakers**

Detroit, MI — March 19, 2025 — The Skillman Foundation is proud to announce the 2025 Skillman Visionary Awards, which honors extraordinary education changemakers. This award program underscores the Foundation's commitment to recognizing and supporting visionary leaders who are transforming the education system to better prepare students to navigate and shape the future. This is the second year of the program.

Through the Skillman Visionary Awards, the Foundation will provide \$50,000 unrestricted cash awards to individuals who are reimagining the education system in innovative, community-informed, and collaborative ways. Awardees represent a span of generations and roles, including education leaders working in school districts, youth programs, and policy advocacy in Detroit and beyond.

The 10 awardees selected for the 2025 Skillman Visionary Award are:

- *Saba Gebrai, foster youth advocate; current role: Program Director, Park West Foundation*
- *Wytrice Harris, community organizer & student success advocate; current role: Senior Director of College Success & Partnerships, Detroit Promise, Detroit Regional Chamber*
- *Mario Lemons, school leader & role model; current role: Head of School, Detroit Achievement Academy*
- *Sarah Winchell Lenhoff, education researcher; current role: Associate Professor of Education Leadership & Policy Studies and Founding Faculty Director of the Detroit Partnership for Education Equity & Research, College of Education, Wayne State University*
- *Jametta Lilly, parent organizer; current role: President & CEO, Detroit Parent Network*
- *Juan José Martínez, public charter school leader; current role: Superintendent, Cesar Chavez Academy School District*
- *Anika Akins McEvans, student athletics trailblazer; current role: Assistant Director of Athletics, Detroit Public Schools Community District*
- *Ambra Redrick, youth champion & cross-sector coordinator; current role: CEO & Co-Founder, Teen HYPE*
- *Alisa Ruffin, teacher leader & curriculum designer; current role: Senior Director of Leadership Development, Detroit Public Schools Community District*

- *Anisa Sahoubah, education nonprofit leader; current role: Director of Youth and Education, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services*

“Forming a future-forward education system requires many people working together,” said Angelique Power, president & CEO of The Skillman’s Foundation. “Our 2025 Skillman Visionary Awardees represent leaders working inside of school systems, the afterschool system, in community-rooted organizations, and in policy advocacy. Systems are transforming because of their work.”

The Skillman Visionary Awards program is rooted in several key aims that are integral to the Foundation's mission and [People Powered Education](#) strategy:

- **Expand who has a voice in policymaking.** It’s time to reimagine how decisions are made, expanding the table to ensure those who know our schools best are truly heard and included. When educators and advocates who work closely with students, parents, and schools have a meaningful voice in shaping education policy, schools thrive, students succeed, and communities grow stronger.
- **Uplift the visionary education change happening in Detroit.** Detroit isn’t waiting for change— it’s leading it. For years, Detroiters have been pushing for stronger, more student-centered schools. The Skillman Visionary Awards helps amplify their efforts, proving that when communities lead, transformation follows.
- **Elevate visionaries’ stories.** People working across the education system are leading innovations that are focused on what is possible and needed for students—but too often, their work goes unseen. Through a storytelling series, The Skillman Foundation will amplify the insights and experiences of awardees, inspiring others and encouraging collaboration.

“These awards not only celebrate individual achievements, they also serve as a down payment on the future of education,” added Power. “In recognizing their heroic feats and providing unrestricted support, we catalyze further innovation and progress that benefits students across Michigan.”

For more information and updates, please visit www.skillmanvisionary.org

About The Skillman Foundation:

The Skillman Foundation is a Detroit-based philanthropic organization. Through grantmaking and partnerships, the Foundation supports [People Powered Education](#)—the power of students, parents, and educators to modernize the education system in lockstep with policymakers and influencers across Michigan. Founded in 1960, The Skillman Foundation has granted out more than \$775 million and has served as a vocal advocate to strengthen K-12 education, afterschool programming, child-centered neighborhoods, youth and community leadership, and racial equity and justice.

Bestowed annually, **the Skillman Visionary Awards** is an example of People Powered Education. Visionaries represent a mix of educators, community organizers, and policy advocates

leading transformative change. The program recognizes up to 10 individuals who are updating and upgrading the education system in Detroit and beyond.

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