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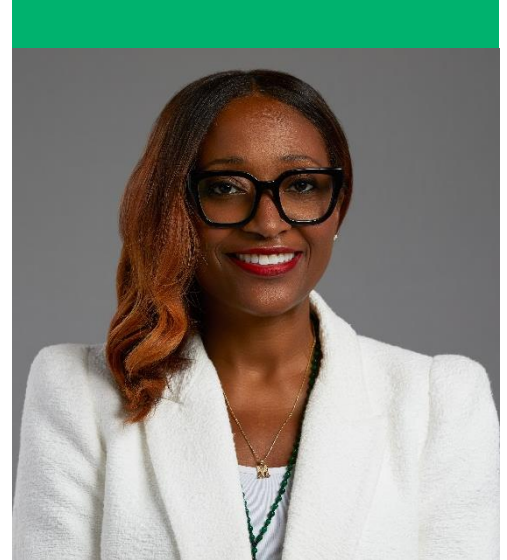
Advancement of Nursing

In 2024, I served in my first year as Independence Foundation Professor of Nursing Education at Rush University. My professional mission is to dismantle systemic structures that drive inequities in the representation of minorities in nursing research, education and practice. My research team created Black Girls Move, a culturally responsive program that centers the mother-daughter bond as a vehicle for health promotion and disease prevention. The program is rooted in community voices and shaped by the real needs and strengths of Black families. With support from a three-year \$1.1 million National Institutes of Health pilot grant from 2022-2025, we're testing the feasibility and impact of the program and integrating innovative frameworks to evaluate recruitment, engagement and retention of participants.

Research

Thanks to your generous support, I have been able to accomplish several milestones in advancing knowledge around obesity prevention for Black mother-daughter dyads. Your investment has made it possible to hire master's-prepared nursing students as research assistants. This opportunity not only contributes to the scientific mission of the [Black Girls Move laboratory](#) but also provides these students with invaluable experience in the research process and the opportunity to co-author scholarly manuscripts, strengthening the future pipeline of nurse scientists.

With these efforts, our research team successfully presented findings at the Society of Behavioral Medicine national scientific meeting, helping to shape discourse in the field. In addition, your support enabled the lab to mentor three junior faculty members, guiding them through scholarly development and research dissemination. One of these faculty members recently secured internal funding to support a branch of the obesity prevention work. The faculty member is beginning to





examine how mental wellness and trauma exposure relate to obesity prevention strategies. This work has the potential to expand our collective impact.

Education and Community Outreach

Through the preliminary work built by the Black Girls Move laboratory, we have partnered with eight Chicago Public Schools to foster engagement and health education. In one of these schools, we tailored and delivered a career pathways curriculum, inspiring students to explore opportunities in health care and STEM-related professions. These initiatives reflect our commitment to being responsive to community-identified needs by creating tangible, community-centered programs.

The Year Ahead: 2025 and Beyond

Looking forward, we plan to expand our research activities to include additional urban schools and deepen our understanding of culturally responsive interventions. We aim to secure external funding to enhance the scale of our work and continue mentoring emerging scholars. The laboratory will also work to co-develop tools and training with community partners to address systemic barriers to health and educational equity.

With Gratitude

This work would not be possible without your continued generosity. Your support has been instrumental in creating opportunities for student learning, faculty development, community engagement and the advancement of nursing knowledge. Thank you for believing in the mission of this work and in the power of research to create change. We are deeply grateful for your partnership.