

ABOUT US

RnD Associates is a U.S.-based nonprofit dedicated to strengthening communities through human capacity building. Founded by Rebekha Atnafou-Boyer, MPH, a Research Associate at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, we equip everyday community leaders with knowledge, tools, and confidence to transform their environments. We believe that strong communities are built from the inside out, by empowering trusted community members to educate, engage, and advocate for better health.

Our mission is simple:

We build people, and people build strong communities.



WHO WE SERVE

We focus on individuals and communities most affected by inequality in health access and health outcomes.

We serve:

- Youth, adults, and seniors in Baltimore's priority ZIP codes: 21215, 21213, 21218, 21224, and 21217
- Students at local universities and HBCUs
- Faith communities and spiritual leaders
- Barbers, beauticians, and wellness professionals
- Returning citizens and people transitioning back into community life
- Business Community

We take education directly into everyday environments, meeting people where they are.

OUR

GOAL



To strengthen communities through healthy relationship, reproductive and sexual health education, HIV prevention, and leadership development using trusted community members as ambassadors.

Our work aims to:

- Promote healthy relationships and emotional wellness
- Increase awareness of HIV/STI prevention (including PrEP & PEP)
- Reduce stigma and barriers to care
- Connect individuals to screening, treatment and prevention services

We don't wait for people to come to the clinic, we take prevention to the community.



- ✓ **Community-Led**
- ✓ **Relationship-Centered**
- ✓ **Evidence-Based**
- ✓ **Culturally Grounded**
- ✓ **Collaborative**
- ✓ **Accountability and**
- ✓ **Measurable impact**
- ✓ **Target population focus**



TESTIMONIALS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

"I felt safe and not judged. No one talks to us about sex, but here we were heard." - Youth Participant

"I didn't know PrEP was for women. Seeing someone like me made the message real." - Parent Participant

"We don't get this kind of information in barbershops. We need more of this." - Barber & Beautician

OUR MODEL

RnD Associates uses a community-embedded model:

1. Recruit locally - from churches, barbershops, campuses, housing developments.
2. Train ambassadors - on sexual health, PrEP/PEP, stigma reduction, and communication.
3. Deploy ambassadors - into their own communities to educate and refer.
4. Support and grow - through monthly learning sessions, leadership development, and group problem-solving.

This model ensures ownership, sustainability, and community transformation.



TESTIMONIALS FROM AMBASSADORS

"We met with the women, we prepped them, we educated them. Awareness takes multiple touchpoints. You build trust first." - Mama Ngina, Own Your Ase, LLC

"This is a space and a place where we talked, felt safe and where we exchanged. The real relationship retention is still continuing." - Deltra Williams

"I take this work personally. I want to do it differently-because the community deserves better." - Wesley Hawkins, Nolita Project

"I have a bunch of youth and young girls who don't have anyone to ask questions or talk about things to but RnD Associates provides listening ears" - Sharmie

THE AMBASSADORS

1

Nolita Project - Youth Development & Leadership

Nolita Project focuses on youth in underserved communities, especially teens and young adults exposed to trauma, violence, or instability. Their work makes sexual health conversations feel relevant and empowering for young people navigating real-life challenges.

2

Each1Save1 - Mentoring, Returning Citizens, Violence Prevention

Each1Save1 works with returning citizens, court-involved youth, and families affected by violence. They bring sexual health education into spaces that are usually not reached - reentry programs, mentoring groups, and youth empowerment workshops.

3

Queens Sisterhood Society - Women Empowerment

Queens Sisterhood Society provides healing and growth spaces for women through community dinners, sister circles, and empowerment workshops. They create environments where women feel safe discussing sexual health, relationships, emotional wellness, and PrEP/PEP.

4

Own Your Ase - Rites of Passage & Cultural Healing

Own Your Ase blends African-centered rites of passage practices with health education, self-identity, and empowerment. They engage adolescent girls and young women through workshops that explore culture, self-worth, sexual responsibility, and emotional healing.

5

For My Kidz - Youth Development, Harm Reduction & Returning Citizens

For My Kidz serves youth and parents, including those impacted by community trauma, substance use, and incarceration. They bring sexual health conversations to families as a unit, not just individuals. Their strength is family-centered engagement.

6

Brothers Helping Brothers / Apex Holistic Wellness - Returning Citizens & Men's Health

This ambassador focuses on supporting men, especially those formerly incarcerated or reentering society. They remove shame and fear around sexual health conversations and help men access PrEP/PEP and STI testing discreetly.

7

More Than a Shop - Barbers & Beauticians Network

More Than a Shop is a coalition of barbers and beauticians across Baltimore who use their shops as hubs for community education. They engage people in everyday conversations about health, relationships, and PrEP making sexual health education feel natural, relatable, and stigma-free.

8

Women's Wellness Lounge - Wellness, Safe Spaces & PrEP Education

Women's Wellness Lounge focuses on emotional wellness, restoration, and self-care for women. They integrate sexual health into holistic wellness practices, including conversations around pleasure, boundaries, consent, and empowered decision-making.

9

Michelle Petites - Empowering confident health choices.

Michelle Petites uses her deep expertise in behavior change and mindset coaching to help individuals overcome fear and emotional barriers that prevent them from seeking sexual health services & PrEP. She empowers people to advocate for their own wellness, make informed decisions, and access PrEP

GET IN TOUCH

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