

# N 2X GAME CHANGERS NEWSLETTER

January-March 2022



*Future Healers Got Zoo Buddies kids, their parents, volunteers, and Chris at their kick-off event at the Louisville Zoo in February*

## *Greetings from Christopher 2X*

With the arrival of spring, I am reflecting on the first three months of 2022, a whirlwind of activity for our Future Healers and Future Healers Got Zoo Buddies programs, and so much more featured in this newsletter.

Future Healers programming continues to grow with more than 90 kids and their parents participating, up from 50 kids when the program launched last year. The growth underscores a community need to help increasing numbers of kids impacted by gun violence. Unfortunately, Louisville continues to experience record homicide levels and shootings, and more families and kids are traumatized.

Future Healers kids are healing, learning, and having a blast interacting with nature and animals at the Louisville Zoo and with inspiring University of Louisville medical students, doctors, and health care workers. We are grateful for the volunteer support from the Zoo, the UofL National Medical School Association and UofL Health-surgery and trauma teams.

The kids who lose someone close or suffer in other ways because of exposure to gun violence deserve our support and attention so they can avoid going down a path of violence and instead see hope and promise in their future.

Helping these kids and our community is my life's work, possible because of people like you. Thank you for your support!

Christopher 2X • Executive Director • Christopher 2X Game Changers

# PLANET SAVERS ZOO CLUB FORMED TO EXPAND ZOO ACCESS

Video can be downloaded here: [Planet Savers Zoo Club](#)



Kids from 100 families are experiencing the therapeutic and healing power of nature and animals as part of Planet Savers Zoo Club established by Christopher 2X Game Changers.

In partnership with the Zoo and an existing Community Access and Engagement grant they received from the Brown-Forman Foundation, the 100 Game Changers families were gifted family level memberships to the Zoo to enhance their connection and engagement as Planet Savers.

The annual membership provides the families flexibility to visit the Zoo and experience all it has to offer at times that are most convenient for them. During the year, families will be notified in advance of Zoo events and activities such as scavenger hunts and art projects. They also have access to online family membership resources.

In all, 300-400 kids in these families are benefitting from Zoo visits. Many of the kids are also enrolled in our Future Healers program, with the majority from West Louisville.

## KELSIE SMALL FUTURE HEALER AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to UofL trauma surgeon Dr. Keith Miller and UofL medical student Karen Udoh, this year's recipients of the second annual Kelsie Small Future Healer Award presented by Christopher 2X Game Changers.

The award honors the life of Kelsie Small, a Northern Kentucky University nursing student who was shot and killed in Louisville in May 2020.

This year's recipients are volunteer leaders of the Future Healers program, and exemplify what the award recognizes – compassionate, skilled health care workers.

*Photo to Right: Karen Udoh, Dr. Keith Miller, and Chris at the Kelsie Small Future Healer Award ceremony*



## CHEERS TO MALAKAI ROBERTS & KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Future Healer Malakai Roberts, 6, who was left blind because of senseless gun violence, continues to inspire his friends, and amaze the adults around him.

In March, Malakai had the highest math score in his first-grade class at Breckinridge Elementary in Lexington. With Future Healers, he, and his mother, Cacy Roberts, also started a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of healthy eyes and eye care.

Also in March, Chris organized a gathering for Malakai and the Kentucky School for the Blind, where Malakai attends part-time.

Kentucky Education Commissioner Jason Glass, who attended, wrote in a message to school superintendents from around the state that the experience was “such a great reminder of our WHY in education and the importance of creating a more vibrant experience for every student and collaborating with our communities.”

Others who attended and participated in a round-table discussion included U.S. Sen. Rand Paul, Louisville Zoo Director Dan Maloney, Kosair Charities Board Chairman Ken Reiss, Kentucky School for the Blind Principal Peggy Sinclair Morris.



## CHRIS EVANS, FORMER DEA CHIEF, JOINS BOARD, AND NEW BOARD OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 2022



*Chris Evans*

We are honored and excited to have Chris Evans, former Acting Administrator and Chief of Operations for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, join our Board of Directors.

Evans, who served 29 years with the DEA, retired in December 2021, and returned to Louisville where he had served in 2018 as the first Special Agent in Charge of the Louisville Field Division over Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

"Christopher 2X Game Changers' dedication to supporting the community, through childhood education opportunities, advocacy, and support for victims of violence is a mission that we can all stand behind and support and is a great way for me to support the city we call home," Evans said.

New officers for 2022 are:

Josh Crawford, executive director of the Pegasus Institute and former Vice Chairperson of the board, was elected Chairperson. He replaces David Nicklies, President, and CEO of Nicklies Development, who stepped down as chairperson and will remain on the board.

Russell Coleman, former U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, and a lawyer with the Frost Brown Todd firm, was elected Vice Chairperson.

Rich Gimmel, former Chairman, Atlas Machine and Supply Co. and volunteer Executive Director, Kentucky Race Track Chaplaincy and Vice President, Race Track Chaplaincy of America, will serve as Treasurer.

Kay Stewart, Chief of Operations for the organization, joined the board as Secretary.

## FIVE-TIME GRAMMY WINNER MASTER P IS OUR NEW SPECIAL YOUTH ADVISOR

Five-time Grammy winner, entertainment mogul and philanthropist Percy "Master P" Miller is teaming up with us as a special youth advisor.

Miller will engage with Future Healer kids, age 4-13, their parents and program partners through Zoom presentations and social media to inspire and motivate families impacted by gun violence. Master P also will be featured on the Christopher 2X Game Changers website, [www.2xgamechangers.org](http://www.2xgamechangers.org).

Master P, who has collaborated on youth advocacy projects with 2X for more than 10 years, said "I love what Christopher 2X is doing with these kids and the promise of the Future Healers program. I love the spirit of these kids and the fact that their parents and caregivers are involved. I appreciate them, and want to help because they deserve encouragement, appreciation, and support."



*Percy "Master P" Miller with Future Healer Shane Richardson*

## VOICES!, OUR MONTHLY PODCAST WITH THE PEGASUS INSTITUTE, EXPLORES SOCIAL ISSUES



*Jared Crawford, Christie Welch, and Chris on the recording set for the Voices! podcast*

Christopher 2X Game Changers launched a monthly podcast, Voices!, in January in collaboration with the Pegasus Institute.

The podcast provides a space for voices with insightful and often different perspectives to be heard about subjects impacting our city and country from a young perspective.

Christie Welch, our Deputy Director, and Jared Crawford, Communications Director at the Pegasus Institute, lead the conversations. So far, they have addressed issues relating to violent crime, early childhood education, and discussed Black History Month.

In a recent episode, they engaged in a conversation about mental health with guest Aqueelah Haleem, a licensed clinical social worker and board member of Christopher 2X Game Changers.

The podcasts can be accessed by searching Pegasus Institute on major podcast streaming platforms including [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Soundcloud](#), and [Google Podcasts](#).

## CANDLELIGHT VIGIL REMEMBERS GUN VIOLENCE VICTIMS OF 2021

'Voices of Survivors: Black Healing Month Candlelight Vigil,' held in February during Black History Month, honored, and remembered the 188 lives lost in Louisville to gun violence in 2021.

Families of those killed were in attendance as a candle was lit for each homicide victim. A single, large candle was also lit for the 641 individuals wounded by gunfire last year.

Chris, Deputy Director Christie Welch, who leads the Voices of Survivors program, Mayor Greg Fischer, and Georgetta Calloway were among the speakers. Calloway shared comments from a survivor's perspective about losing her husband, Duane, in January of 2021.



*Chris and Christie at the candlelight vigil*

Anne Walter, Director of Drepung Gomang Center for Engaging Compassion, spoke about Louisville Arms of Compassion. The ceremony closed with a prayer for peace from Geshe Rapgyal, Executive Director for DGCEC.

Thanks to our Voices of Survivors committee for organizing the ceremony with Christie. News coverage from the event can be viewed [here](#).