




CTHENTER

FOR BLACK EXCELLENCE AND CULTURE





Imagine a place built by the Black community where we can provide solutions and opportunities.

Imagine a place that the Black community owns and utilizes to strengthen our voice and share our excellence with our children as well as the broader community.

Imagine a place where Black children are seen as future leaders and not as problems to be solved.

BLACK INSPIRED


For over 30 years, Rev. Dr. Alex Gee has sought meaningful Black solutions for his native city of Madison. The Center is his vision – and the community’s conduit – for challenging structures that impede diversity and sustained Black advancement.

BLACK DESIGNED

Over 800 Black voices have shaped the vision for The Center. Strategies formed by Black planners and a space designed by Black architects ensure that Black culture shapes every facet of the Center’s creation.

BLACK LED

Black elders and youth are an anchor in our culture, and they will be an anchor in the facility. From fundraising to program development, Black leadership, regardless of age, is central to The Center’s success.



“The Black community wants to be proud to call Wisconsin home. A space to celebrate our culture and showcase our excellence makes this possible.”

Rev. Dr. Alex Gee is a lifelong Madison resident, pastor of Fountain of Life Church, founder/ CEO of the nonprofit Nehemiah Center of Urban Leadership and host of the podcast Black Like Me.



THE CENTER FOR BLACK EXCELLENCE AND CULTURE

For the first time in history, Black Madison is leading every aspect of a multimillion-dollar initiative.

Boldly built by Black minds, hearts, and hands, The Center brings together a collective Black brilliance to affirm, inspire, and advance the Black community in Madison and beyond. It is a community gathering space that will provide opportunities for the Black community to innovate, network, celebrate, be empowered, and feel a deep sense of home.



Black Excellence Is All Around Us

Black people have infused Madison with an extraordinary amount of energy and talent. The starting point for positive outcomes in every segment of society is the same – culture. Culture is the snapshot of society that explains how and why we function. Culture gives us a sense of place in the world, allowing us to survey the past and assess the present to determine our future.



Health & Wellness

How does cultural connection stimulate Black wellness?

Medical research shows that strong social and cultural connection is key to building a community where Black people live healthier, longer lives because they feel valued and that they belong.

“Wellness is more than medical treatment. Wellness requires the creation of an environment where people can be in spaces where they can laugh, reflect, recharge, and see themselves and others like them in the most positive light. It is holistic healing. The Center of Black Excellence and Culture will be that for the Black community.”

- Dr. Jasmine Zapata, MD, MPH,
Mother, Pediatrician,
Public Health Leader



Leadership & Innovation

“Leaders aren’t just selected, they are groomed and developed. The fact that The Center for Black Excellence and Culture will create space for enhancing personal and professional development and leveraging social capital creation while mentoring Black innovators is a game-changer for our entire community.”

- Ray Allen, Former Wisconsin
Secretary of Workforce Development and
Department of Financial Institutions



Where can Black innovators find a place for mentorship and to build social capital?



Madison’s Black innovators need a place to grow their talents, pursue entrepreneurial ambitions, and improve financial literacy, building Black wealth in the process.

Performing & Visual Arts



Where does the Black community take center stage?

Madison is full of untapped artistic potential. Black culture is experienced profoundly through the arts – and it needs a home where it can be revered.

“The Center for Black Excellence and Culture is a dream come true and embodies what I’ve always envisioned for Madison – a place that will finally celebrate, cultivate, and empower artists within our culture and community.”

- Cassandra Marzette
Artist, Teacher



Youth & Students



“While growing up in Madison, Black mentors provided a safe space for me to learn, fail, be held accountable, and be inspired. I believe that all Black youth need these kind of cultural relationships to push them towards being their best selves. The Center will connect youth with Black leaders who will believe in them and will invest in their future.”

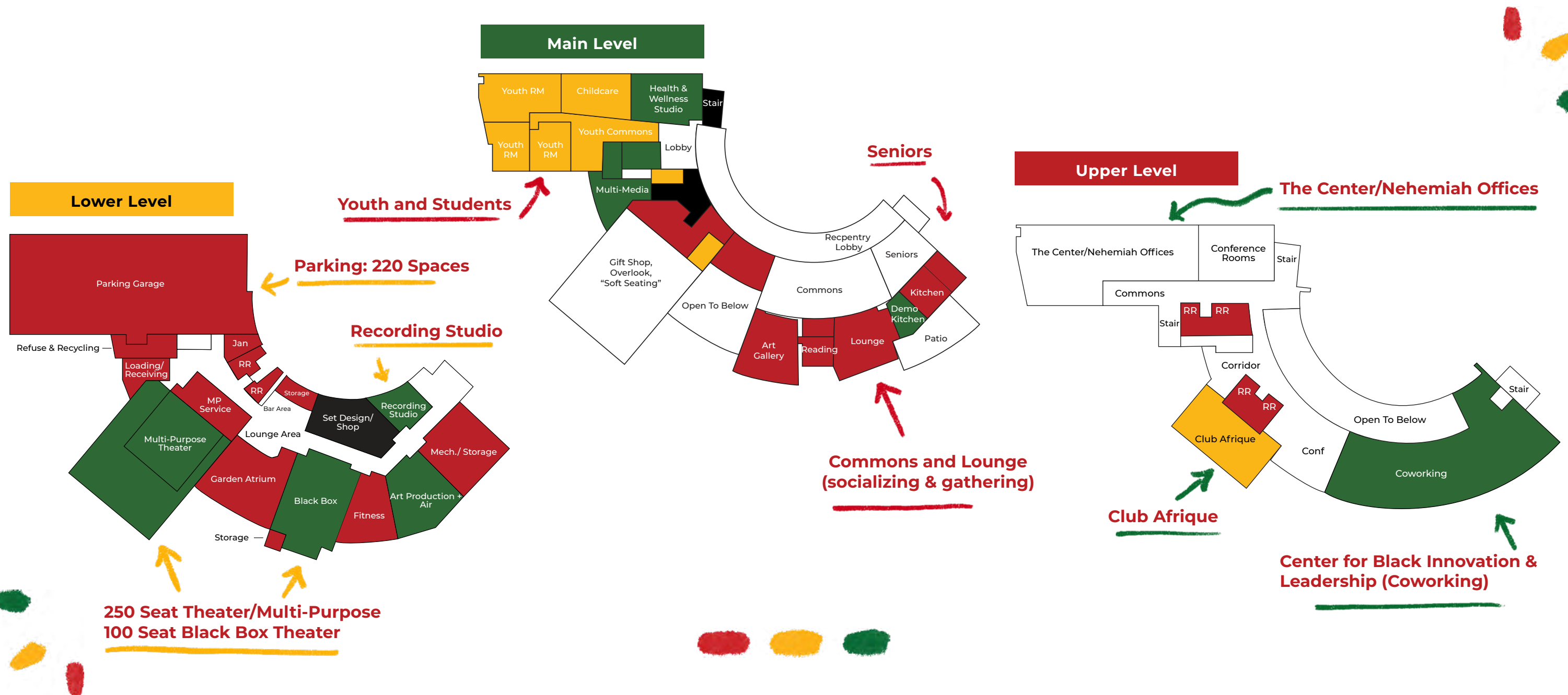
- Alexandra Lewis,
Preacher, Teacher, and Speaker

How do we inspire the next generation of dreamers?

Our youth crave a welcoming and galvanizing place to dream and prepare for a bright future, while our elders need space to act as the brilliant pillars of support that they are for the community.



MAKING AN ENTRANCE



MADISON'S BLACK RENAISSANCE



Thousands will visit from across Wisconsin –

Located in South Madison, The Center will build upon the historic beauty and innovation of Black neighborhoods. The Center's impact will reach beyond the region, by sharing Black history and rich stories of Black trailblazers from across the state, celebrating their important contributions that helped shape Wisconsin life.

Building Black

When you walk through The Center's doors, all of your senses will be deeply immersed in the richness and resilience of Black culture.

This three-level, 65,000-square-foot destination will be a landmark in the region with its cultural and wellness impact as well as its physical imprint.





Every year The Center will support:

6,000 Students

learning Black history and inspired to dream and excel.

8,000 People

revitalized by Black performances and art.

500 Seniors

sharing their wisdom and experiences across generations.

175 Members

of The Center for Black Innovation and Leadership.



Project Budget & Timing

\$36,000,000
Capital Campaign



THE COMMUNITY IS LISTENING,
OUR MOMENTUM IS GROWING!

Led for and by the Black community: Over 300 Black donors and their honorees kicked off our fundraising effort.

In less than nine months, The Center has raised well over 60% of our \$36M capital campaign goal, and we're raising more dollars every day. We are so grateful for generous public and private support.

Join us in this historic moment for Madison and its Black community.





With your help, opening in 2025

We've made tremendous progress, but we need you to help us finish our campaign and make The Center a reality.

There's still time to give! To learn how you can support The Center, contact:

Rev. Dr. Alex Gee at agee@theblackcenter.org



Capital Campaign Committee

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- Alan Fish
Anthony Cooper, Sr.
Brian Burns
Betty Harris Custer
Cedric Ellis
George Austin
Hon. Frances Huntley-Cooper
Hon. Rick Phelps
Jim Bower
Jim Yehle
John Milton
Kesha Bozeman
Kim Sponem
Marla Frank
Maurice “Mo” Cheeks
Michelle A. Behnke
Mike Victorson
Neil Heinen
Peter Feigin
Ray Allen
Rev. Dr. Alex Gee
Susan Pierce Jacobsen
Sverre Roang
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“I am thrilled to be working with Rev. Dr. Alex Gee on one of the biggest ideas in the city’s history, The Center for Black Excellence and Culture. The Center will be transformative, changing the narrative of the Greater Madison region and its future to one that is truly inclusive and welcoming. It will celebrate the culture and contributions of the Black Madisonians who have been a part of the fabric of Madison since its inception. And it will be a Black inspired and designed space where all can gather, learn, create, celebrate, and promote Black excellence and culture.”

– Neil Heinen, Capital Campaign Co-Chair



“It’s time! We are ready to showcase intergenerational Black achievement from yesterday, today, and for the future. Are you ready?”

– Hon. Frances Huntley-Cooper,
Capital Campaign Co-Chair



THE CENTER

FOR BLACK EXCELLENCE AND CULTURE

655 W. Badger Road, Madison WI, 53713
PO Box 259042, Madison, WI 53725-9042
theblackcenter.org

