

# **The Turning Point of Lansing** **“Transforming Boys to Men”** **Lansing, Michigan**



## **The Turning Point of Lansing**

### **Elder Orientation Packet**

The Turning Point of Lansing transforms boys to men by providing an afro-centric, group mentoring experience that gives young African American males an opportunity to explore life's challenges all while developing strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities.

**overview**



# The Turning Point of Lansing

## “Transforming Boys to Men”

### Program Overview

#### **Program Theme**

Transforming Boys to Men

#### **Program Mission**

The Turning Point of Lansing will transform boys to men by providing an afro-centric, group mentoring experience that gives young African American males an opportunity to explore life’s challenges all while developing strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities.

#### **Program Vision**

To meet the cultural and social needs of young, African American males in Ingham, Clinton, and Eaton Counties (Michigan) by providing them with an effective support network of role models that are determined to help them realize their fullest potential in society.

#### **Program Goals**

In order to meet the program mission and vision, The Turning Point of Lansing seeks to:

- Establish pride in African American males
- Provide motivation for academic and personal achievement
- Provide direction on tough issues
- Provide a forum for discussion
- Establish meaningful relationships through group mentoring

#### **Program Overview**

The Turning Point of Lansing gives African American males in the 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades developmental and emotional support through the direct and regular interaction with African American male adults serving as program elders that supplement the work of parents and teachers. Grounded by the 7 Principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba), The Turning Point of Lansing is positioned to be a change agent for the African American male population in the Greater Lansing area. The Turning Point of Lansing offers monthly seminars and workshops that address several key issues, such as: education, communications skills, financial responsibility, health, relationships, and sexual responsibility. These seminars and workshops allow young men to become more aware of their role in society, their responsibility as men, and how they can start making their societal impact immediately. The culmination of the program’s annual activities is a Rites of Passage ceremony, where graduating seniors are recognized. The ceremony is also symbolic of the graduating seniors moving into manhood.

The specific objectives of The Turning Point of Lansing are: (1) a directed focus on young, African American males, which by mainstream channels are considered the most at risk demographic in America and deserves unconditional nurturing, where the young men at all times are the primary focus of the program; (2) strict adherence and promotion of Nguzo Saba to provide a unique approach to nurturing young, African American males that is truly symbolic of transforming boys into men where they not only gain recognition for their accomplishments, but are exposed to their roots; (3) providing customized information that directly relates to the specific mission and vision of The Turning Point of Lansing that addresses the specific issues and challenges faced by its participants, not only in the Greater Lansing community, but around the world to its program participants in a way where it is both understandable and its seriousness is not overlooked; (4) a directed focus on goal setting, which allows its participants to dream big and have a greater understanding of the fact that anything is possible with proper planning and preparation; and (5) at all times teaching the heritage and culture of African Americans so that the young men have a definite understanding of what it truly means to be an African American male.

The Turning Point of Lansing’s overarching purpose is to groom and nurture young, African American males into the future by giving them a greater understanding of their cultural heritage and directing them to success.

### **7 Principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba)**

The Turning Point of Lansing provides its program participants with cultural awareness, positive attitudes, and professional skills through Nguzo Saba (7 Principles of Kwanzaa). The principles of Nguzo Saba are:

- ***Umoja*** (pronounced OO-MO-JAH) (translated as Unity): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
- ***Kujichagulia*** (pronounced KOO-GEE-CHA-GOO-LEE-YAH) (translated as Self-Determination): To define us, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.
- ***Ujima*** (pronounced OO-GEE-MAH) (translated as Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.
- ***Ujamaa*** (pronounced OO-JAH-MAH) (translated as Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.
- ***Nia*** (pronounced NEE-YAH) (translated as Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
- ***Kuumba*** (pronounced KOO-OOM-BAH) (translated as Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- ***Imani*** (pronounced EE-MAH-NEE) (translated as Faith): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

# Elder Overview



# The Turning Point of Lansing

## “Transforming Boys to Men”

### Elder Screening Process

To maintain the professionalism and social character of The Turning Point of Lansing, it is imperative that interested elders are properly screened. While volunteers have the best intentions, it is the responsibility of The Turning Point of Lansing to ensure maximum protection of its mentoring experience and program participants. Steps in the elder screening process include:

1. **Interested elders must complete an application.** The application includes:

- Personal information on the applicant
- Statement of the applicant’s expectations
- Special interests, which are helpful in matching elders with youth
- Employment history

Applicants are asked to sign a release statement, to which they agree to a background check and to abide by the rules and regulations of The Turning Point of Lansing, fully discharging the program from liability and claims.

2. **Applicants must sign an agreement to:**

- Make a one-year commitment
- Annual donation of \$100 to The Turning Point of Lansing (donation can be made in installments throughout the program year)
- Attend training sessions
- Engage in the program with an open mind
- Be on time for scheduled meetings
- Keep discussions with students confidential (except where student’s safety or well-being is at risk; ask for help when needed)
- Be willing to provide assistance in any capacity when requested
- Accept guidance from Executive Director or students’ parents
- Notify the Executive Director of difficulty in their mentoring relationship
- Notify the Executive Director when unable to attend program sessions
- Notify the Executive Director of a significant changes in program participants
- Notify the Executive Director of any changes in employment, address and telephone number
- The Executive Director must be notified of student contact outside of the established parameters and supervised sites of The Turning Point of Lansing prior to the occurrence

3. **Applicants may be invited for a personal interview with The Turning Point of Lansing Board of Directors.** The interview will include questions that will provide information about:

- The applicant’s family relationships and history

- Interests and leisure activities
  - Attitudes and belief system
  - Experiences working with students
  - Reactions to stressful situations
  - Use of alcohol and drugs
  - Level of flexibility and time commitments
  - Ability to sustain relationship with participants
  - Education
  - Transportation requirements
  - Strengths and weaknesses
4. **Criminal background checks, conducted by the local or state police or private companies, will be performed on all prospective elders.** Applicants must sign a release agreeing to have these checks done. The results of this background check are reviewed by The Turning Point of Lansing Board of Directors, who keeps them confidential.
5. **Interested elders who pass the screening process are notified.** Persons who pass the screening processes and still wish to be involved in the program are invited to become elders.



# **The Turning Point of Lansing**

## **“Transforming Boys to Men”**

### **Elder Expectations and Session Decorum**

#### **Purpose:**

To give African American males in grades 7 through 12 developmental and emotional support through the direct and regular interaction with African American male adults in The Turning Point of Lansing that will supplement the work of parents and teachers.

#### **Expectations:**

The Turning Point of Lansing is a group mentoring program. Elders are volunteers but will be held to levels of commitment required to advance the program and provide needed support to participants. Individuals interested in becoming an elder must:

- Ensure that the success of participants remains the top priority.
- Make a minimum one-year commitment to the program in which the elder may be asked to work directly with a young man on certain aspects of their development or assist with programmatic tasks important to accomplishing the mission and vision of The Turning Point of Lansing.
- Make an annual donation of \$100 to The Turning Point of Lansing (donation can be made in installments throughout the program year)
- Serve as a role model to: 1) demonstrate the pride of being an African American man, 2) provide motivation for academic and personal achievement, 3) provide a listening ear, 4) provide direction on tough decisions, and 5) establish meaningful relationships with participants to ensure success in their lives, schools, and communities.
- Be willing to share personal stories of success including failures or learning opportunities that may prevent participants from experiencing the unnecessary hardships.
- Support the self-realization and improved self-esteem of participants.
- Have the ability to accept and relate to youth that may not share the elder’s lifestyle and values. Elders should respect participants’ right to self-determination and independence.
- Regularly exhibit acceptance, common sense, friendliness, intelligence, maturity, responsibility, and sensitivity in developing participants and other elders.
- Serve on various elder committees to ensure the progression of The Turning Point of Lansing.

#### **Time Commitment:**

The average elder volunteers approximately 10-15 hours each month in services to The Turning Point of Lansing. While many elders serve longer than one year, the minimum expectation of any elder will be one year. Elders unable to make an event should give prior notice so plans can be made accordingly to fill personnel gaps.



**Meeting Decorum:**

- The dress code for The Turning Point of Lansing sessions is business casual (no jeans) for elders and participants, unless otherwise specified. All individuals are expected to wear their official Turning Point of Lansing shirt.
  
- Elders are to arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of session and will assist with duties including, but not limited to:
  - Ensuring that participants' shirts are tucked in
  - Reminding participants to use the restroom prior to the start of sessions
  - Directing participants to fill the first rows of seats upon entering the room
  - Assisting with food set-up and service
  - Limiting unnecessary movement during sessions to ensure that full, undistracted attention is given to presenters
  - Assisting with clean-up after sessions
  
- Elders are highly encouraged to sit among participants during sessions.
  
- Elders will model proper room etiquette during sessions, by limiting unnecessary movement.
  
- Elders will limit the use of cell phones and other electronic devices during sessions.
  
- In an effort to respect the expertise of invited speakers, elders are to limit additional comments during the sessions unless recognized by the moderator.
  - While Turning Point of Lansing elders have vast amounts of experience and expertise, we do not wish to take away from the invited speakers.
  
- Announcements for sessions must be submitted to the moderator prior to sessions and will no longer be allowed from the floor.
  - Announcements will be limited to those directly related to the mission and vision of The Turning Point of Lansing and for the direct benefit of participants.
  - This also applies to civic organizations and church announcements.

Elders not in compliance with these expectations are welcome to join the audience for the session and not play an active elder role.

# Program Overview



# The Turning Point of Lansing

## “Transforming Boys to Men”

### Nguzo Saba Session Overview

#### What is Kwanzaa?

Kwanzaa is a celebration that was established as a means to help African Americans reconnect with their African cultural and historical heritage by uniting in meditation and study of African traditions and Nguzo Saba, which is the “seven principles of African Heritage”. The Turning Point of Lansing will transform boys to men by providing Nguzo Saba sessions that allow young African American males to develop strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities all while gaining a keen understanding of their cultural heritage.

#### Nguzo Saba Overview

Kwanzaa is celebrated via 7 principles, more commonly known as Nguzo Saba. These seven principles comprise *Kawaida*, which is a Swahili term for tradition and reason. The seven principles are as follows:

- ***Umoja*** (pronounced OO-MO-JAH) (translated as Unity): To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
- ***Kujichagulia*** (pronounced KOO-GEE-CHA-GOO-LEE-YAH) (translated as Self-Determination): To define us, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.
- ***Ujima*** (pronounced OO-GEE-MAH) (translated as Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together.
- ***Ujamaa*** (pronounced OO-JAH-MAH) (translated as Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.
- ***Nia*** (pronounced NEE-YAH) (translated as Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
- ***Kuumba*** (pronounced KOO-OOM-BAH) (translated as Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- ***Imani*** (pronounced EE-MAH-NEE) (translated as Faith): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

These 7 principles provide a basis that will guide each of The Turning Point of Lansing’s monthly sessions, as well as provide a framework for monthly teachings.

## **Nguzo Saba Session Objectives:**

In order to achieve the goal of helping participants to develop strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities, The Turning Point of Lansing enacts the following objectives via its Nguzo Saba sessions to ensure success:

1. Help participants achieve a broad understanding of the meaning of Kwanzaa and its seven principles.
2. Facilitate an environment that promotes the cultural heritage of African Americans.
3. Facilitate the involvement of all participants in the teachings of Nguzo Saba through team building activities.
4. Help participants develop a personal sense of responsibility and accountability.
5. Aid in the improvement of verbal communication skills among participants.
6. Aid participants in gaining a sense of self-confidence and self-respect.

## **Skills to be Learned:**

Via Nguzo Saba, The Turning Point of Lansing will instill the following skills and concepts in its participants:

- **Communication** – helping to facilitate the exchange of thoughts or information verbally
- **Motivating others** – helping to facilitate a process by which the group at large is responsible for each other's actions
- **Advocating ideas** - helping to facilitate a process by which participants feel comfortable standing up for what they believe in
- **Self-Branding** – helping to facilitate a process by which participants match their own self-concept with the image of what they aspire to be
- **Self-Confidence** – helping to facilitate an environment that helps participants relate self-assuredness in their own personal judgment and abilities
- **Self Determination** - helping to facilitate an environment that promotes participant motivation and personalities
- **Life Skills** – helping to facilitate an environment where problem solving behaviors are used appropriately and responsibly in the management of one's life; this is taught via direct experiences of elders in handling problems and questions that are commonly encountered in life
- **African American Heritage** – making sure participants fully understand their cultural heritage
- **Respect** – helping to facilitate an environment that gives participants a positive feeling of esteem towards others and that teaches the specific actions and conduct representative of that esteem
- **Taking Ownership of one's life and community** – helping to facilitate the process by which participants take ownership in their own lives and the communities surrounding them
- **Responsibility (Accountability)** – helping to facilitate an environment where participants are held responsible for their actions and the actions of their peers

- ***Ethical Decision Making*** – helping participants to understand how they are affected by how they utilize the decision making process and how they incorporate ethics into that process

### **Elder and Participant Responsibilities:**

In order to achieve the goal of helping participants to develop strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities, The Turning Point of Lansing participants and elders must share in the following responsibilities:

- With the help of elders, participants must set explicit expectations to help them fully understand their heritage and the principles of Kwanzaa early on in the program year.
- Participants must keep elders informed throughout the program year of different activities in which they may wish to participate to facilitate their development process.
- Elders must help participants get acquainted with local resources that are available to them that may aid in their development.
- The Turning Point of Lansing will provide awards and incentives to reward and encourage participants take ownership in their development and investment in the program.
- Elders must encourage participants to fully invest in the program.

### **Nguzo Saba Session Structure:**

In the process of transforming boys to men by providing direction and leadership in the area of understanding cultural heritage, The Turning Point of Lansing will enact 7 Nguzo Saba sessions that allow participants to develop an understanding of their cultural heritage and to help them formulate strategies for success.

#### **Session 1 (September): Theme: Umoja**

- Program kick off and informational session, where the community gets an overview of The Turning Point of Lansing and its annual programming.

#### **Session 2 (October): Theme: Kujichagulia**

- Discuss the concept of personal responsible for one’s destination and how to motivate ourselves to take the challenge by making our communities better.
- Discuss the concept of being responsible for the success of our communities.
- Other topics shall include:
  - Building self-esteem
  - Focusing on one’s goals
  - Facing peer pressure
  - How to deal with bullying
  - Learning to say “no” in appropriate situations
  - Building a positive self-image
  - How to build your personal network

**Session 3** (November): Theme: Ujima

- Share stories of community activities that have made an impact and why they are important.
- Challenge participants by setting up a community service project to which they are fully responsible for the implementation of the project.
- Other topics shall include:
  - Learning the concept of “he ain’t heavy, he’s my brother”
  - Personal accountability
  - Using team work for the mutual benefit of all
  - Learning the concept of giving back in community building

**Session 4** (January): Theme: Kuumba

- Challenge participants to create a new idea or concept to address a community issue.
  - This idea(s) or concept(s) should be presented to the community at large.
- A team building activity will also be developed to help participants learn to work as a team.
- Other topics shall include:
  - Learning a personal sense of self-expression
  - Building confidence
  - Branding Yourself

**Session 5** (February): Theme: Nia

- Challenge participants to gain an understanding of their purpose in society.
- Introduce the notion of furthering education as an essential tool for preparing participants for their role as active citizens, workers, and head of household.
- Other topics shall include:
  - A continued discussion on gaining self confidence
  - The importance of education

**Session 6** (March): Theme: Ujamaa

- Facilitate a discussion of how the economy works and to be productive citizens in it.
- Discuss the importance of saving, investing, and sharing money and information about money.
- Potentially bring in Black business owners to share their personal experiences
- Create an activity on how to decide to make purchases to allow the young men to better appreciate spending
- Other topics shall include:
  - Personal budgeting
  - Entrepreneurship

**Session 7** (April): Theme: Imani

- The main focus is to teach participants to believe in themselves, their people, teachers, communities, leaders, and the struggle
- A focused discussion on the spiritual aspects of our people and how spirituality has always been a major part of our lives.
- Any invited speaker should challenge participants to look deep into their spirits and define their purpose.



# The Turning Point of Lansing

## “Transforming Boys to Men”

### Goal and Leadership Development

#### What is Leadership?

Leadership skills can be developed and enhanced by any individual seeking to make a difference in their personal lives or surrounding communities. This includes all of the qualities necessary to become a change agent, and is inclusive of personal knowledge, skills, the ability to establish meaningful relationships others, and having a keen sense of reaching ones goals. Leaders must understand a variety of leadership styles, skills, qualities, and know how to apply them in appropriate situations. An ideal leader must be able to lead, as well as take advice, whether positive or negative, from their peers. A leader willingly shares his talents with others for the mutual benefit of communal growth. Leaders become effective by modeling the skills and characteristics they seek to pass on to others. The key to becoming an effective leader is by gaining the trust of peers and surrounding communities through exhibiting good character and empowering others. For a leader to be effective, leadership must be a belief that is put into action.

The Turning Point of Lansing will transform boys to men by providing goal planning and leadership training that allows young African American males to develop strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities.

#### Goal and Leadership Development Objectives:

In order to help young African American males to develop strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities, The Turning Point of Lansing enacts the following objectives through its goal and leadership development plan:

1. Help participants achieve a broad understanding of the meaning of leadership and the qualities of a leader.
2. Help participants develop and achieve a keen understanding of their short and long term goals.
3. Facilitate the involvement of all participants in leadership development through team building activities.
4. Help participants develop a personal sense of responsibility and accountability.
5. Aid in the improvement of verbal communication skills among participants.
6. Aid participants in gaining a sense of self-confidence and self-respect.

#### Skills to be Learned in the Development Process:

Through its goal and leadership development plan, The Turning Point of Lansing seeks to instill the following skills and concepts in its participants:

- **Communication** – helping to facilitate the exchange of thoughts or information verbally
- **Decision making** – helping to facilitate the mental process that will result in the selection of a course of action that will position participants to be successful

- **Problem solving** – helping to facilitate a mental process which is the concluding part of the larger problem that is defined as a state of desire for the reaching of a definite goal
- **Conflict Resolution** – helping to facilitate the process involved in facilitating the peaceful and meaningful ending to any road blocks that may arise
- **Setting Expectations** – helping to facilitate a mechanism for participants to become accountable for their actions
- **Motivating others** – helping to facilitate a process by which the group at large is responsible for each other’s actions
- **Advocating ideas** - helping to facilitate a process by which participants feel comfortable standing up for what they believe in
- **Self-Branding** – helping to facilitate a process by which participants match their own self-concept with the image of what they aspire to be
- **Self-Confidence** – helping to facilitate an environment that helps participants relate self-assuredness to their own personal judgment and abilities
- **Self Determination** - helping to facilitate an environment that promotes participant motivation and personalities

### **Developing a Goal and Leadership Plan:**

Developing an effective goal plan requires careful preparation from participants. The time invested into developing this plan will benefit participants greatly and provide a positive outlook for their future. In developing a goal plan, participants should consider the following:

1. **Determine needs:** Participants must evaluate themselves and their surrounding communities to decide what demands, concerns, or interests could be fulfilled.
2. **Explore all available resources:** Participants must make a list of all available resources from people, organizations, and personal experiences that will help them achieve their goals. Participants should not hesitate to approach Turning Point of Lansing elders, as they will help in this process.
3. **Choose the best suitable resources and make a plan:** Participants must determine which of their listed resources will be used and develop a plan of action that will enable them to meet their specified goal(s).
4. **Set goal(s):** Participants must explicitly define what they would like to achieve in their goal planning process.
5. **Pursue the best suitable learning opportunities:** To help accomplish their goals, participants are encouraged to discuss their opportunities with family and Turning Point of Lansing elders who can assist them in their process.
6. **Share experiences throughout The Turning Point of Lansing program year:** This provides participants an opportunity to gain from the experiences of others by telling them what they have done and what they plan to do. Participants must be open to feedback, as they will learn tips from others that may cause them to revise their plans.



7. ***Listen to advice:*** Listening to advice from all that seek to help in the goal development process is imperative for participants. Participants are encouraged to ask questions in situations where they do not understand or need guidance.
8. ***Evaluate progress:*** Participants must measure the progress that they have made toward meeting their goal(s). It is the first step in being accountable for their own actions.
9. ***Reassess needs:*** Participants are to do another evaluation of themselves and their surrounding communities upon completion of a goal(s) and ask themselves two questions: 1) what did I gain from the experience? and 2) was it a worthwhile experience?

### **Elder and Participant Responsibilities:**

In order to achieve the goal of helping young African American males to develop strategies for success in their lives, school, and communities, The Turning Point of Lansing participants and elders must share in the following responsibilities:

- With the help of elders, participants must set explicit expectations to help them develop a goal plan early on in the program year.
- Elders must encourage participants to make a list of the most pressing needs in their lives and communities. Elders must assist participants in setting expectations and goals.
- Participants must keep elders informed throughout the program year of different activities in which they wish to participate that will help their goal development process.
- Elders must help participants get acquainted with local resources that are available to them that may aid in the process of achieving goals.
- In scheduled program meetings, elders must discuss with participants the progression of their goal plan. It is acceptable for participants to add, amend, or delete items from their original goals plan, but they must confer with elders before doing so.
- The Turning Point of Lansing will provide awards and incentives to reward and encourage participants take ownership in their interests and achievements.
- Elders must encourage participants to complete all required forms in the goal setting process.

### **Goal Plenary Session Structure:**

In the process of transforming boys to men by providing goal development and leadership training, The Turning Point of Lansing will enact 4 strategic goal development sessions that allow participants to develop strategies for success.

**Session 1 (October): Why set goals?**

- Prioritizing and Goal Setting
- Decision Making
- Setting Expectations

**Session 2 (December): How do you refine your goals?**

- Problem Solving
- Dealing with Peer Pressure
- Conflict Resolution
- Critical Thinking

**Session 3 (February): What is your purpose?**

- Gaining Self-Confidence
- Understanding your Heritage
- Answering the question, “why am I here?”
- Answering the question, “what is my personal contribution to society?”

**Session 4 (April): How do you communicate your plan?**

- Public Speaking
- Presentation Skills
- Taking Ownership and Being Responsibility for your Goals