



## Christopher 2x & the Game Changers

### **This really is a Game Changer!**

At a time when our city is experiencing unprecedented gun violence, we wonder where to turn and what can be done. Christopher 2X, Founder of Game Changers, has been stepping up to help for 20 years. He understands that to stop the violence, we must break its cycle by showing children there's hope outside of trauma.

He knows what he's talking about. His own life story includes addiction to cocaine, crime, and multiple incarcerations in both federal and state prisons. In 1991, he left prison for the last time. He says that at the time he had something of an epiphany: that he could heal himself and would devote his life to helping others heal.

Since then, he's been at the forefront of peacemaking in Louisville. When a violent crime occurs, he's among the first called in. He meets with victims, their families, the police, and sometimes even perpetrators, often encouraging them to turn themselves in--all with the intent of healing and creating a future where these incidents occur less and less.

To reach that future, he relentlessly promotes early childhood education. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, 70% of all incarcerated adults cannot read at a 4th grade level, "meaning they lack the reading skills to navigate many everyday tasks or

hold down anything but lower (paying) jobs.” Early education helps prepare children for success in school providing an antidote to poverty, despair, and the crime that often results.

The Game Changers organization also studied and created the 2019 report: “VIOLENCE Impact on Children Learning.” It details the challenges children have in school after experiencing gun violence, showing that children impacted by trauma have more difficulty learning and thus are more likely to continue the cycle of low education and incarceration. The report was later entered into the Congressional Record. To address the trauma outlined in the report, Game Changers has partnered with Kosair Hospital to provide therapeutic opportunities for children in hopes of reaching them before they ever pick up a weapon. “Kids can’t verbalize what they’re going through,” 2X said.

His approach always focuses on healing: healing the body hurt by violence, healing the spirit hurt by poverty and trauma. He tells parents, teachers, etc. they should look at a child’s behavior as a **symptom of an illness**. “If a doctor diagnosed the child with a physical disease, you wouldn’t turn your back on him. You wouldn’t lock him away. You would do everything you could to make him well. That’s how we work with kids who have behavior issues. They should not be shunned, but given more attention, more patience. Find out what’s going on. Intervene with compassion.”

In every way, Christopher 2X works to spread healing and hope for the future. His mantra for young people, “You were brought to this world for a purpose.”

His latest program, “**Future Healers**,” takes this to the next step. In partnership with University of Louisville School of Medicine, they bring in children from underserved communities ages 4 to 13 to learn about the medical field from medical students, doctors and nurses (many of the people of color). Lessons include medical terms, anatomy, (making organs from clay, for example), and how to help in an emergency. The older kids even get the opportunity to witness surgery in the operating room. They are given mindfulness activities to help with focus and calm. 2X notes an important aspect of this program is to have children surrounded by positive role models. The goal is to show children there is a different path. “We want to make sure that they have a choice to at least drown out some of the negativity and start to embrace some hope in their hearts,” 2X said.

To see Future Healers in action, watch this short video

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heL\\_By6qN4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heL_By6qN4s)

2X talks about his life and experiences with racism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSGnGtRZdn0>

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has been an active voice for the voiceless since 2004.

2X is a familiar figure in Louisville where he often serves as a mediator to calm tensions in the wake of racial violence. His peace, justice, and early childhood education work through his non-profit organization Game Changers has been hailed by citizens, politicians, and law enforcement on both sides of the political divide. By age 13 Christopher Anthony Bryant was in juvenile detention for drug dealing. In the 1980s and 1990s, he served multiple stints in state and federal prison for drug possession, cocaine trafficking, and theft.

When he left jail for the final time in 1999, Bryant set about healing himself. He joined the Nation of Islam and took the name Christopher 2X. He also committed to working in the community to help ensure other young people didn't fall into the same traps of crime and violence that he did.

2X founded his Game Changers organization to create educational initiatives to help children who are exposed to violence in their homes and neighborhoods, and to keep them on a positive and productive path in life. He says the old model of trying to address youth misconduct among older children is outdated.

"We've got to intervene now, unfortunately, at the preschool level," says 2X. "We've got to do strong intervention in elementary school and definitely middle school before they even take that next step into high school."

he says the ones that are exposed to traumatic experiences like a neighborhood shooting can have a harder time focusing and learning in the classroom, which can also lead to a downward spiral

2X talks about his life and experiences with racism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSGnGtRZdn0>

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To learn more here:

<https://www.ket.org/program/connections/community-activist-christopher-2x/>

Action: Support Game Changers:

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He knows what he's talking about. His own life story includes teenage addiction, crime, and multiple incarcerations. In 1991, he left prison for the last time, now saying that on doing so he had something of an epiphany: that he could heal himself and would devote his life to helping others heal.

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## The Future Healers

### IPP Peacemaker of the Year in 2021

#### Future

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His organization sponsored an extensive study and created the resulting 2019 report: “VIOLENCE Impact on Children Learning.” It details the challenges children have in school after experiencing gun violence. The report was later entered into the Congressional Record and is referred to in policy making. To address this trauma, Game Changers has partnered with Kosair Hospital to provide therapeutic opportunities for children in hopes of reaching them before they ever pick up a weapon. “Kids can’t verbalize what they’re going through,” 2X said.

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who have behavior issues or commit crimes. They should not be shunned, but given more attention, more patience. Find out what's going on. Intervene with compassion.”

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