

Daniel Pledge-Johnson

Daniel Pledge-Johnson, known in the Wellington Heights Community as “Mr. Johnson,” is the Executive Director of Children of Promise Mentoring Program Inc. serving Cedar Rapids and Waterloo, IA. Mr. Johnson himself started out with humble beginnings as he himself had been in the system and set out to be a presence in the community that he was able to receive as a youth.

In 2004 Daniel was hired by the 6th Judicial Dept. of Corrections non-profit program Community Corrections Improvement Association as program coordinator of Children of Promise, being responsible for overseeing mentor and mentee relationships, and recruiting mentors and families to the program. Initially, the program was given 2-3 years of survival due to its limited funding, but the program was given an additional 16 years because of his passion for the families and kids and belief in COMMUNITY IMPACT. After the program dissolved he had to reevaluate how he could still aid the kids and their families. Mr. Johnson created community awareness around youth who are facing struggles with having a parent incarcerated. Mr. Johnson cultivated great relationships in the community with businesses, administrators, and community leaders.

Since 2020, during COVID, Mr. Johnson utilizes his own personal experiences utilizing his Masters of Social Work Administration degree from the University of Northern Iowa, to continue building programming for youth who have incarcerated parents, by providing mentors for students, student advocacy for diverse populations, to revamp the program because there is still a need in the community. He tirelessly developed a platform that encompasses the “wholistic” approach. Mr. Johnson oversees the development of the programs vision by developing fundraising initiatives and advancing youth programming from the community to school, farming and most recently mental health intervention.

Mr. Johnson has 19 years of experience in program mentoring, community advocacy and outreach. For the last seven years he has spearheaded a middle school, high school and college leadership initiative to prepare young students of color and/or at-risk students, to thrive for greatness through discovering their God-given talent through his program Beyond the Bell Leadership Program that he conducts with his wife and business partner.

Daniel has served on a number of boards throughout the years. He currently serves on the Cedar Rapids Community Foundation Board as a trustee, ChildServe Community Advisory Board member and the Linn County Coalition for Safe and Healthy Communities. His past board experiences have been on the Adverse Childhood Experiences Committee, Cedar Rapids Food Environment Alliance and other committees, board and initiatives.

This year, Mr. Pledge-Johnson was presented with the Unsung Hero Award by EYI and its Executive Director Mrs. Sarah Swayze. Mr. Johnson was recognized with a host of others in the community for his years of work being done to build his youth and community.

A native of Cedar Rapids Iowa, Daniel earned his AA in Computer Network Engineering from Hamilton College, a BA in Social Work and a Masters in Social Work Administration, both from the University of Northern Iowa. Daniel was honored as the homecoming king of his alma mater Cedar Rapids Washington. He and his wife, Giovannia are the parents of Kaylese, Janae, Jayla, Danica, and Gianna. Grandparents to three awesome and vibrant grandkids, Daelyn, Brooklyn and Ziyel.