MOKANKC.ORG

MOKAN

EMPOWERING YOUTH || TRANSFORMING LIVES

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CONNECTIONS MAKE **OPPORTUNITIES**

OPPORTUNITIES MAKE **A DIFFERENCE**

DEAR **SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS,**

What if basketball had the power to change lives? At MOKAN, we know it does. We have witnessed it firsthand, again and again.

"EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOUNG MEN ARE WALKING AWAY FROM THE PROGRAM WITH THE TOOLS NECESSARY TO CREATE REAL CHANGE."

In our award-winning documentary, *I am Marvin Clark*, we detail the remarkable life transformation of one of the young men in the MOKAN program. The film reveals the enormous challenges Marvin faced growing up in Kansas City and how he was able to change his circumstances with the support of MOKAN.

While Marvin has endless possibilities before him today, many other youth find themselves stuck in the life he once knew. Facing issues such as poverty, fatherlessness, failing schools and fractured communities, these students simply miss out on opportunities other youth receive.

MOKAN strives to empower students in our community through mentoring, academic support, basketball and service learning. Our program inspires youth to lead healthy lifestyles, be engaged students and become agents of change in their communities. By providing youth with caring mentors and a structured environment designed to build high character learders, MOKAN is changing the purpose of sport.

More than competition, basketball for students in MOKAN's program is a source of empowerment and transformation. For example, 100 percent of MOKAN participants who have completed the program have graduated from high school AND received college scholarship assistance. Even more importantly, young men are walking away from the program with the tools necessary to create real change.

In our minds, there's nothing more valuable than seeing a student receive the opportunity to overcome their circumstances in life and become the husband, father and leader that their community needs.

We are a unique 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that combines elite basketball competition, academic assistance and service learning into a comprehensive program that emphasizes physical activity, health, education and civic engagement. This interconnectedness inspires our mentors and student- athletes to see the "big picture" and make connections between the court, the classroom and the community.

In order to continue the transformational work taking place within MOKAN, we need the help and support of those in the Kansas City area and throughout the region. We are dependent upon the assistance of generous individuals and corporations across our community for continued success.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PLEASE CONTINUE TO READ ON TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WORK, AND THE RESULTS IT BRINGS.

Sincerely,

Matt Suther
Founder

MOKAN
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VALUES

EMPOWERMENT

MOKAN believes that students have complete control over their attitude and effort regardless of circumstances. We desire to guide students toward habits that lead to success in the classroom, on the court and in their relationships with family and friends.

INSPIRATION

Using sport to change lives, MOKAN inspires youth to think beyond what they know, daring them to be the absolute best they can be. Words of encouragement from a mentor are a powerful thing.

COMMITMENT

Success doesn't happen overnight. Anything worthwhile is not easy. MOKAN emphasizes perseverance and dedication; lifeskills that translate beyond the court.

TEAMWORK

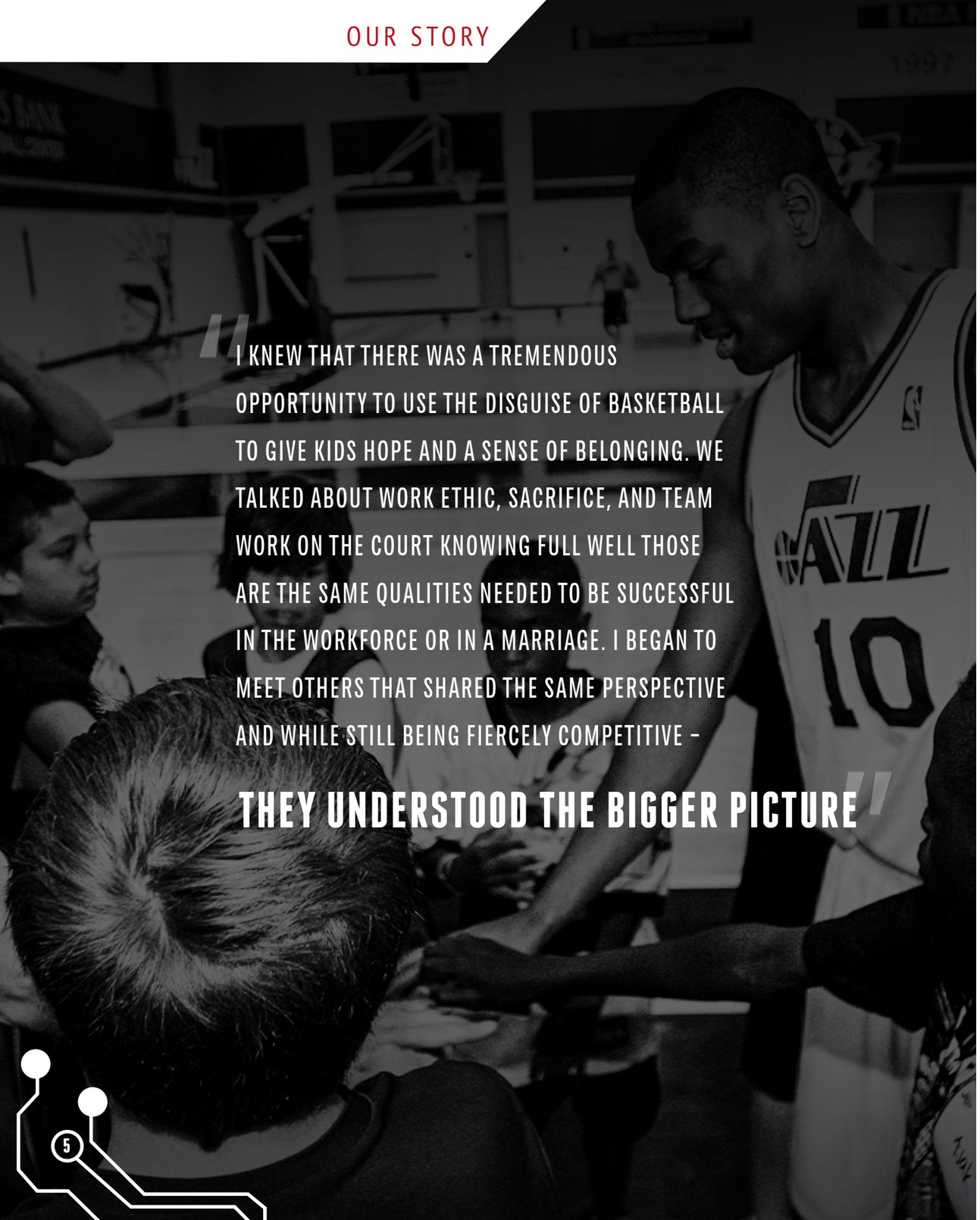
MOKAN provides a safe, constructive learning environment allowing students to express individuality while working together towards a common goal. Significant achievement requires the work of many.

WE KNOW TODAY'S YOUTH ARE
PASSIONATE
ABOUT BASKETBALL

THIS PASSION GIVES US THEIR
ATTENTION

THEIR ATTENTION GIVES US AN
OPPORTUNITY

AN OPPORTUNITY WE USE TO
TRANSFORM LIVES.



"I KNEW THAT THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE DISGUISE OF BASKETBALL TO GIVE KIDS HOPE AND A SENSE OF BELONGING. WE TALKED ABOUT WORK ETHIC, SACRIFICE, AND TEAM WORK ON THE COURT KNOWING FULL WELL THOSE ARE THE SAME QUALITIES NEEDED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE WORKFORCE OR IN A MARRIAGE. I BEGAN TO MEET OTHERS THAT SHARED THE SAME PERSPECTIVE AND WHILE STILL BEING FIERCELY COMPETITIVE – **THEY UNDERSTOOD THE BIGGER PICTURE**"

OUR **STORY**

After playing collegiate basketball and graduating from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, MOKAN founder Matt Suther began to miss being around the game and the relationships that came with the experience.

A basketball enthusiast, Matt began to closely follow the high school basketball scene in the greater Kansas City area. He observed a pattern of highly talented kids leave the city for opportunities, only to return a year or two later because they weren't properly prepared for the demands or structure of the college environment. Attributing his success to the principles he learned from his parents and coaches, Matt began to search out coaching opportunities where he could pass on those lessons.

Matt believed that exposing kids to college level practices was the only way to truly prepare basketball players for success at the next level. He was certain that his basketball knowledge would be his greatest asset to the kids he was going to coach. Matt soon realized he couldn't have been more wrong.

"OUR GOAL IS TO CREATE EVEN GREATER IMPACT WITH THOSE WE SERVE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME **CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE THAT NEED IT THE MOST**. IT IS WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE THAT WE THANK THOSE WHOSE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE."

His first team was comprised of mostly inner-city youth from single parent homes who lacked many of the necessities most youth take for granted. By the end of the first month, he realized that basketball wasn't the most pressing need.

Most of the kids lacked the financial resources to afford the basics like uniforms, shoes, and tournament entry fees. Transportation to practice and games was constantly a challenge in the single-parent families. Kids often showed up to practices without having eaten lunch and sometimes even dinner. Some of the parents worked nights making it difficult to monitor their son's academic progress and study habits. Something that was intended to be solely about basketball quickly became so much more.

The relationships formed from that first team and lessons learned are something that Matt will treasure forever. Four years later, they became MOKAN's first graduating class. The personal growth each student-athlete made from their initial interactions as freshman in high school until graduation was incredibly rewarding to watch.

Most inspiring is the fact that every single student-athlete from this first group not only graduated from high school but received a college scholarship. These dedicated pioneers set the standard for all who followed them, as both of those statistics remain true eight years later.

One team turned into two and two grew to four. Fast forward to today: MOKAN serves more than 300 young men annually ranging from third grade to highschool in the metro Kansas City area. With the help of a network of mentors, friends and partners, MOKAN has become a consistent source of hope for area participants.

Since 2004, more than 110 student-athletes have received college scholarships through the platform provided by MOKAN. We have alums at some of the most recognizable educational institutions across the country. from the University of California–Berkeley to Duke University.

MOKAN

EMPOWERING YOUTH)|(TRANSFORMING LIVES

OUR PURPOSE

• MENTOR

The needs of the young men within are program are complex, multifaceted, and often vary on an individual basis. The cumulative effect of the time our staff, spouses, mentors and volunteers invest in our youth allow us to create lasting, impactful relationships. While setbacks and challenges are inevitable, our student-athletes know they have a community of people on whom they can rely for future support.

• CONNECT

MOKAN has the capacity to connect youth in need of amended environments. Some of our most inspiring stories occur when a family opens their home and hearts. In addition to the basic care that every kid deserves, we believe that young men desperately need hope and stability. We work diligently to make those connections happen.

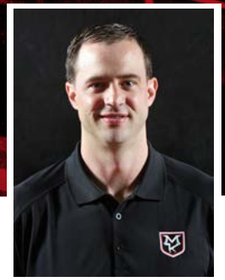
• EQUIP

MOKAN strives to create generational change. Each participant is exposed to life skills training intended to lay a foundation for future success. Life skills topics include social media, personal finance, chivalry and decision making. Academic assistance including ACT prep, goal setting, tutoring and transcript evaluation ensures that students succeed in the classroom.

• FACILITATE

Our high school students and their families receive college planning assistance while they make one of the most important decision of their lives. To date, 100 percent of our 17u participants have been offered college scholarships equaling assistance valued at more than $6 million since the first graduating class in 2008.

HIS GOAL IS TO CONTINUE TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF YOUNG MEN THROUGH THE GAME OF BASKETBALL.



MATT **SUTHER**

FOUNDER

MOKAN founder Matt Suther knows both sides of basketball: playing and coaching. A first team all-state selection in Kansas in high school, Matt enjoyed a successful collegiate career at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Graduating with a liberal arts degree, Matt also completed his master's degree in sports management at UMKC.

Desiring to share his basketball experiences with a younger generation, Matt formed and coached what would become the original MOKAN team in 2004. Matt currently oversees all aspects of MOKAN including fundraising, business development and programming.

Serving in various management roles in the financial and insurance industries for more than 10 years, Matt has kept his passion for basketball alive through his work with MOKAN. Matt lives in Lenexa, KS with his wife, Cherie and two sons, M.J. and Mason.

HIS GOAL IS TO GIVE YOUNG MEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A FREE EDUCATION.

DEREK **EVANS**

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Growing up in Olathe, Derek Evans is well aware of the rich basketball tradition in the Kansas City area. While earning a bachelor's degree in sports management at the University of Kansas, he worked with the Adidas office within the Kansas athletic department giving him a behind the scenes look at high level college athletics.

While earning a master's degree in Sports Studies at Kansas, he simultaneously served as a graduate assistant for the UMKC basketball program where he met fellow MOKAN staffer Drew Molitoris. At UMKC, Derek assisted with all aspects of program specializing in game film breakdown and edits.

Prior to joining the MOKAN staff in 2012, Derek was accepted into the prestigious Teach for America program and taught middle school math at an inner city public school in Jacksonville, FL. Derek's draw to MOKAN has a significant personal connection as he cites his former youth coaches and mentors as some of the most influential people in his life.

Derek assists with all aspects of the organization including day to day operations, youth programing and business development. Derek lives in Overland Park, KS, with his wife Mandee and two sons, Benton and Duncan.

HIS GOAL IS TO PREPARE YOUTH FOR COLLEGE AND LIFE IN GENERAL, BY EXPOSING THEM TO WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

JIM **HUBER**

CO-FOUNDER / PROGRAM ADVISOR

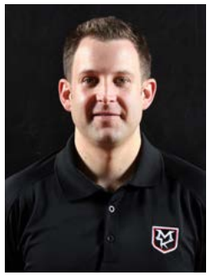
A constant presence in the youth basketball scene in Kansas City, Jim Huber has devoted a large portion of his professional career towards developing youth through sport. A graduate of St. Thomas Aquinas High School, Jim also played collegiately at Avila University.

A former college head coach at Avila University, Jim brings a wealth of basketball knowledge and coaching experience to MOKAN. His relationship with MOKAN founder Matt Suther dates back to Matt's playing days at UMKC when Jim served on the UMKC coaching staff. In 2010, Jim led the expansion of the MOKAN program to include programming for those in third through eighth grade more than doubling the opportunities MOKAN provided to area youth.

As head coach of the MOKAN 17u team, he led this group to earn a spot in the prestigious Nike Peach Jam tournament held in N. Augusta, S.C. in July 2013. Receiving national recognition for his coaching efforts, Jim was selected to coach at the Nike Elite 100 camp as well as the Nike Global Challenge that featured the top amateur basketball talent from the U.S., Brazil, France, Canada & Africa.

Assisting Matt Suther with the original MOKAN team, Jim has been instrumental in helping more than 70 high school student-athletes earn college scholarships. Jim lives in Olathe, KS with his wife, Ashley and his son, Kaden.

HIS GOAL IS TO GIVE KIDS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD GRIT AND RESILIENCE INTO THEIR PERSONAL CHARACTER.

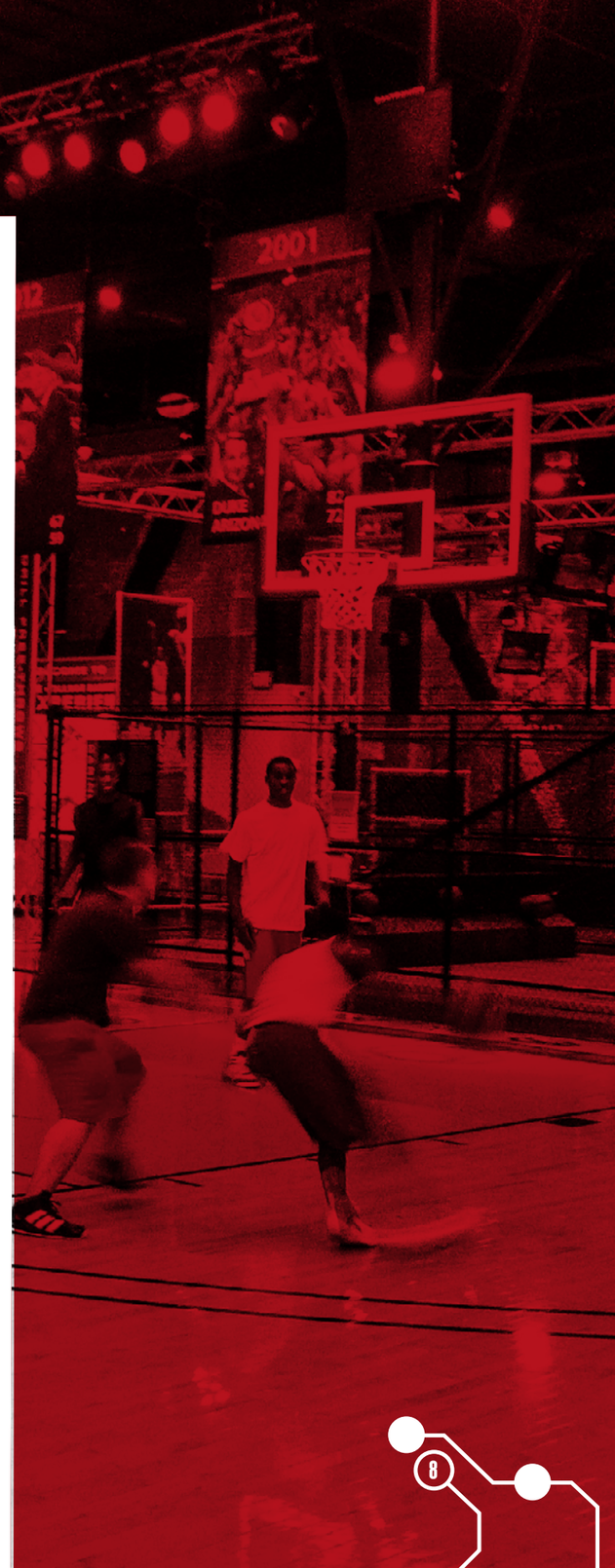


DREW **MOLITORIS**

PROGRAM ADVISOR

Drew Molitoris has been involved in the basketball community since 1999. While earning a degree in health and physical education from the University of Georgia and a master's degree from Florida State University, he served on the basketball staff at both universities. Drew assisted with all facets of both basketball programs including recruiting, player development, film breakdown, scouting and public relations. During his time at UGA & FSU, he was a part of two NCAA tournament teams and worked with five future NBA players.

Originally from Atlanta, Drew came to Kansas City in 2007 to serve as the Director of Basketball Operations at UMKC where he was introduced to MOKAN founder, Matt Suther. While coaching a middle school team in spring 2011, Drew became captivated by the opportunity to combine mentoring and coaching with a diverse group of students. With MOKAN, Drew assists in all aspects of the program from fundraising, academic assistance, curriculum development and special events. Drew lives in Leawood, KS with his wife, Cassie and daughter, Harper



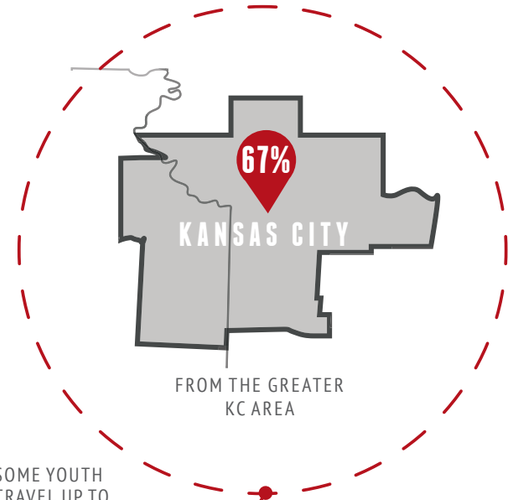
"MOKAN PROVIDED ME WITH DIRECTION AND SHOWED ME HOW HARD YOU HAVE TO WORK TO BE SUCCESSFUL. I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT SACRIFICE AND COMMITMENT FROM THOSE EXPERIENCES."

DAVID KRAVISH **MOKAN CLASS OF 2011** UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKLEY

"WITHOUT MOKAN, I WOULD BE GOING NOWHERE. I WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN BETTER, PROBLEMS WITH MY FAMILY WOULD HAVE BEEN WORSE AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE I WOULD BE LIVING. JUST BEING AROUND SO MANY LOVING PEOPLE WAS A REAL GOOD LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND A GREAT FOUNDATION FOR MY FUTURE."

MARVIN CLARK **MOKAN CLASS OF 2014** ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

MOKAN BY THE NUMBERS



FROM THE GREATER KC AREA

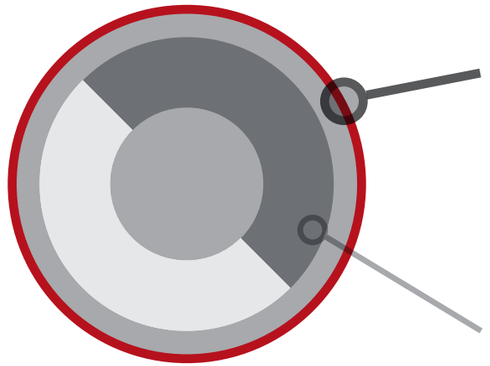
SOME YOUTH TRAVEL UP TO **250** MILES

WORKS WITH

9 YR OLDS – 17 YR OLDS

95%

OF PAST PARTICIPANTS ARE ENROLLED AND PROGRESSING TOWARD A COLLEGE DEGREE



100%

OF MOKAN PARTICIPANTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL

COMPARED TO 57%

THE GRADUATION RATE IN THE KCMO SCHOOL DISTRICT

75% COME FROM LOW-TO MODERATE-INCOME FAMILIES

TOTAL NEEDED EXPENSES FOR **STUDENT-ATHLETES**

ACADEMIC PROGRESS + ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT + MENTOR

AVERAGE COST PER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE
$3,138

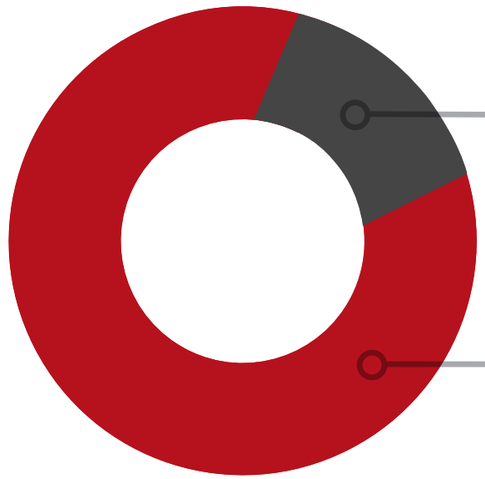
AVERAGE COST PER MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE
$1,040

2016 BUDGET $448,762
(67% CONTRIBUTIONS / 33% EVENTS)

2017 PROPOSED BUDGET
$480,183.43

As a community improvement program, MOKAN accepts youth from many backgrounds and walks of life. These statistics reflect the students that your donations support.

2015 **FINANCIAL EXPENSES**



24%
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

76%
PROGRAM

- ONLINE ACT PREP
- COORDINATED ACADEMIC TUTORING
- TRANSCRIPT EVALUATION
- COLLEGE VISITS
- TRANSPORTATION
- COLLEGE PLANNING ASSISTANCE
- SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS
- TOURNAMENT COSTS
- FINANCIAL AID ASSISTANCE
- FACILITY RENTALS
- ONGOING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

RECRUITMENT LOCATIONS

BIG 12 CONFERENCE

SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE

PAC-12 CONFERENCE

BIG TEN CONFERENCE

OHIO VALLEY CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC 10 CONFERENCE

MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE

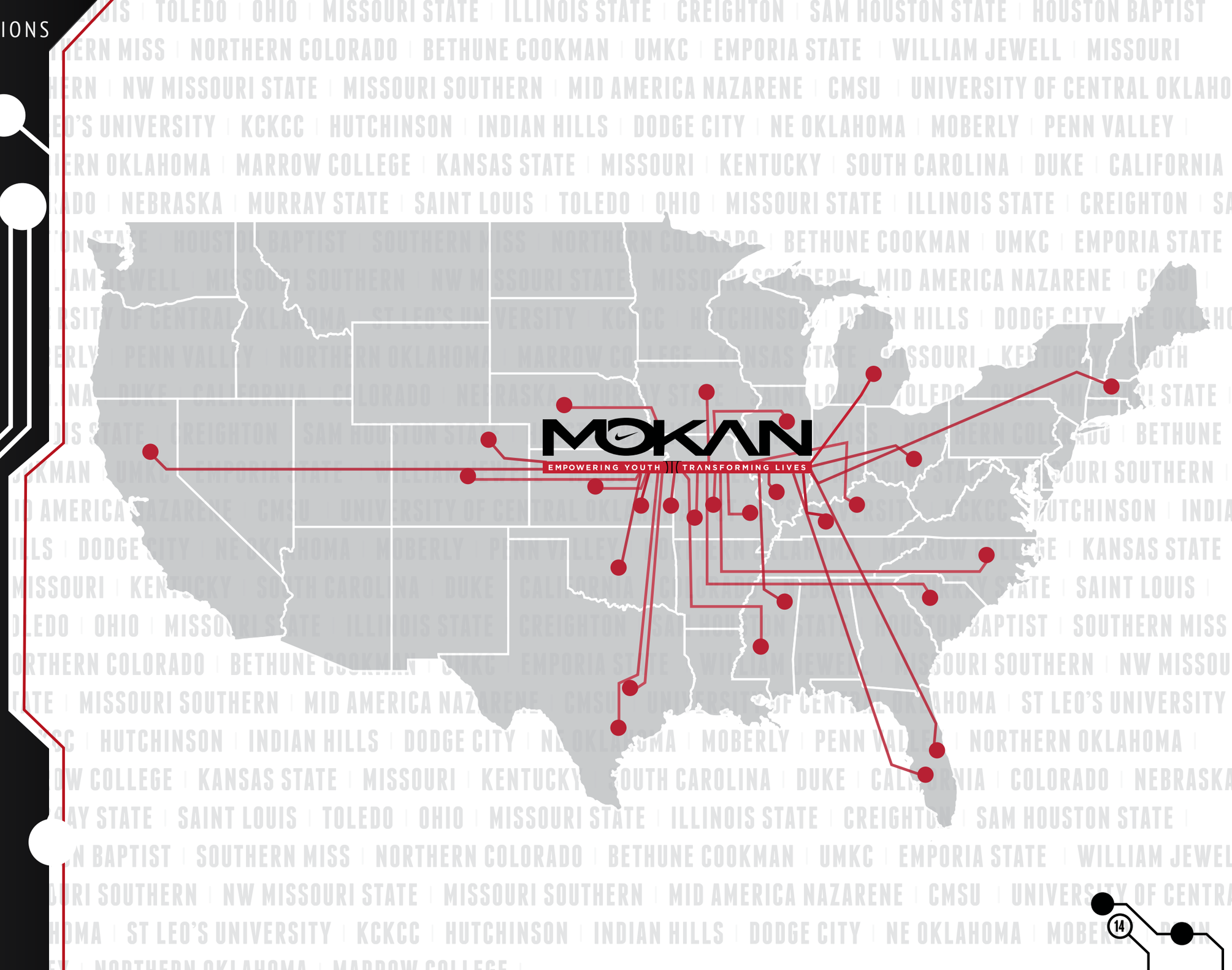
SOUTHLAND CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE USA

WESTERN ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

BIG SKY CONFERENCE

MID-EASTERN ATHLTEIC CONFERENCE



CHANGING MANY LIVES

Originating in 2004, one team turned into two, and two grew to four. Supporters such as Shannon Spradling, Jim Huber, Derek Zeck, Rodney Perry and Robin Lucas all volunteered their time and talents to help provide opportunities for the youth in the metro Kansas City area. Their goal was to ensure that no kids were turned away based on lack of financial means.

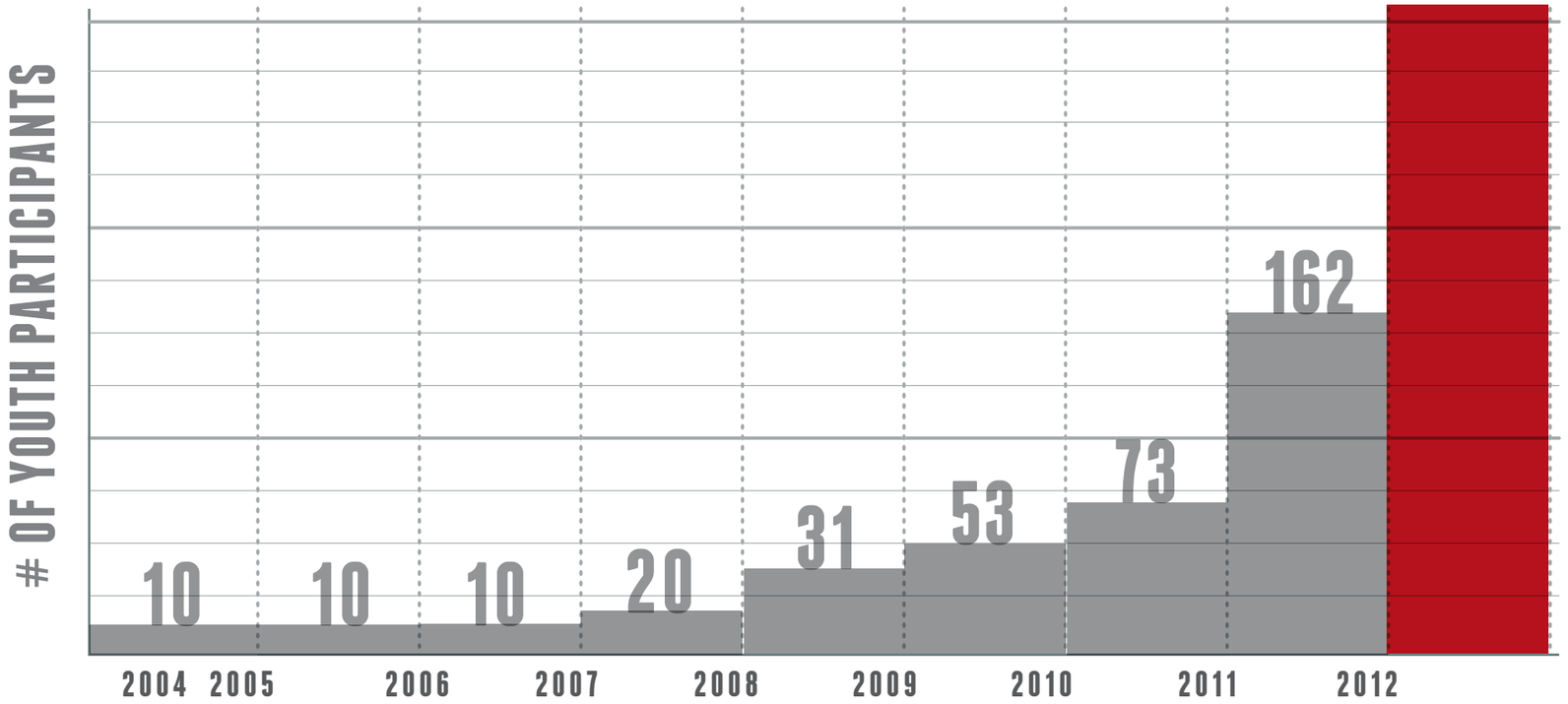
From the initial team in 2004 to today, more than 95 student-athletes have received college scholarships through the platform provided by the MOKAN program. From the University of California-Berkeley to Duke University, the program has alumni at some of the most recognizable educational institutions across the country. While we reminisce with pride on the past,

OUR FOCUS REMAINS FIXED ON THE FUTURE.

Our goal is to make a positive impact on the students we serve while at the same time creating additional opportunities for those that need it the most. Without the support of generous donors, our growth over the past 10 years would not be possible.

"MOKAN BELIEVED IN ME WHEN OTHERS DIDN'T AND **REALLY CHALLENGED ME** BOTH ACADEMICALLY AND ATHLETICALLY. THEY'VE BEEN IN MY CORNER FROM DAY ONE AND I'M REALLY THANKFUL FOR EVERYTHING THEY HAVE DONE FOR ME OVER THE YEARS."

WILLIE CAULEY-STEIN **MOKAN CLASS OF 2012**
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY



IT STARTS WITH A **PLAN**

STEP 1 ACADEMIC GOAL SETTING
Plans are created based on individual needs to create personal accountability.

STEP 2 TRANSCRIPT EVALUATION
Ensures students comply with high school graduation requirements in addition to the recently updated NCAA academic guidelines.

STEP 3 TUTORING
Accessible to all MOKAN participants through partnerships with local high schools and online through Khan Academy.

STEP 4 ACT PREPARATION
Practice tests and content review in English, Math, Reading, and Science prepare students for test day.

STEP 5 COLLEGE NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Guides families through the decision making process by identifying factors most important to the individual student

BOOSTING ACADEMIC SUCCESSES

MOKAN believes that youth should be given every opportunity to succeed academically. We recognize the need to support and actively encourage the academic development of our student-athletes at all ages.

100%

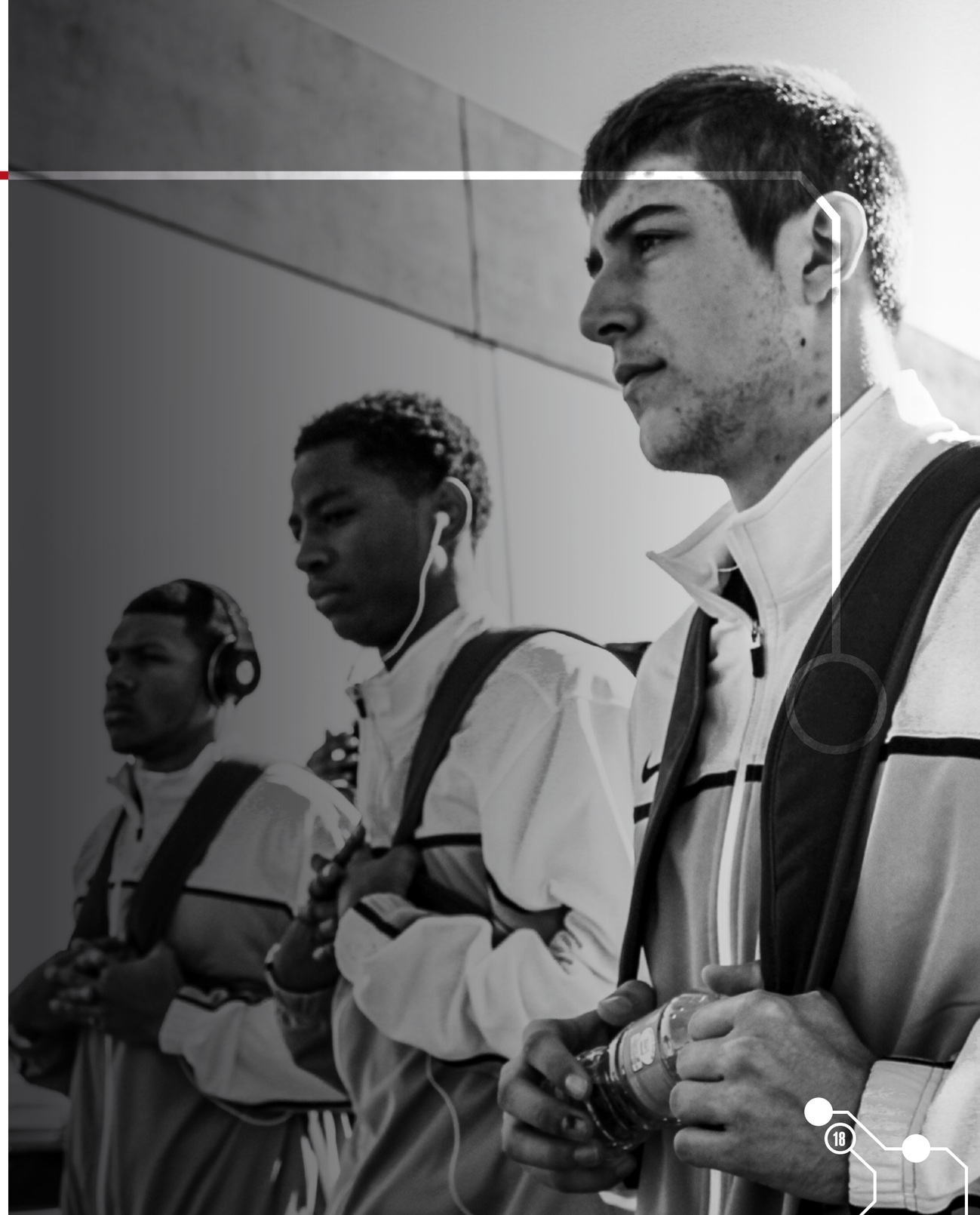
OF PARTICIPANTS COMPLETING THE PROGRAM HAVE GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL

98%

OF PARTICIPANTS COMPLETING THE PROGRAM HAVE RECEIVED COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS.

95%

OF ALUMNI ARE ENROLLED AND PROGRESSING TOWARD A COLLEGE DEGREE



BASKETBALL IS **OUR ENTRY**

While we are undeniably brought together by a shared passion surrounding the game of basketball, it's only a small part of who we are as individuals. "Ball is life" is a phrase that is popular and often thrown around among middle school and high school basketball players these days.

BASKETBALL IS NOT LIFE; IT'S A PART OF LIFE.

We hope it's an extremely important part of every MOKAN participant's life, but it is not life.

IF WE EFFECTIVELY TEACH YOUNG MEN HOW TO BREAK A FULL-COURT PRESS

BUT DON'T EMPHASIZE KINDNESS AND HONESTY; WE HAVE FAILED.

IF WE HAVE PLAYERS THAT UNDERSTAND HOW TO ATTACK A ZONE DEFENSE

BUT DON'T HAVE AN APPRECIATION FOR THOSE DIFFERENT THAN THEM;

WE HAVE FAILED.

LESSONS

EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE WEEKLY TOPICS COVERED WITH MOKAN PARTICIPANTS

ATTITUDE

Our attitude is so important because it affects the decisions we make and the actions we take. There are so many things that happen to us that are out of our control. Our response, however, is a decision that we control every time. Those with a positive outlook will do what is necessary to move forward. Others may make excuses or point the blame at others around them.

It's often been said that life is "10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we respond to it." Our coaches and players will be tested throughout the year both on and off the court. Challenge yourself this week at school, at home and on the court to have a positive attitude and be an example to those around you!

BODY LANGUAGE

Researchers argue that 90 percent of all communication is nonverbal body language. Little things add up to make a big difference in the way others see us. Eye contact, body posture, and facial expressions are all extremely important when trying to make a good impression.

When you walk past someone in the hallway, having your head up and making eye contact signifies confidence. When our teachers, parents or coaches speak, we listen with both our eyes and our ears. As we go through this week, make sure to focus on our body language on and off the court.

A WIN IN OUR BOOKS-

OUR **ULTIMATE MEASURE OF SUCCESS** WILL NOT BE DEFINED BY WINS, TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONSHIPS OR EVEN COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS.

THE **CORE OF EVERYTHING** THAT WE DO IS TO CREATE GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN THE YOUNG MEN WITHIN OUR PROGRAM. REGARDLESS OF WHAT INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES THEY MAY COME FROM, WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE AND OPPORTUNITY TO HELP YOUNG MEN BREAK THROUGH THE CYCLES THAT HOLD SUCH A TIGHT GRASP ON OUR SOCIETY.

THROUGH **PURPOSEFUL AND PLANNED INTERACTION**, OUR COACHES, MENTORS AND VOLUNTEERS SEEK TO HAVE LASTING IMPACT BY PROVIDING CONSISTENT ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT.

OUR HOPE IS THAT THE SAME LESSONS WE TEACH AND INSTILL THROUGH THEIR PARTICIPATION IN MOKAN ARE USED TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS LATER IN THEIR **FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.**

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WITH MOKAN'S MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAMS ▲

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE WITH MOKAN'S HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS ▲

HARVESTERS WITH MOKAN'S HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS ▲

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Service learning teaches youth to look beyond their needs and examine how they can help others and give back to the community. Places where MOKAN has served the Kansas City community include:

THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

HARVESTERS

THE SALVATION ARMY

GUARDIAN ANGELS PARISH FOOD PANTRY

"HOOP & HELP" CHARITY TOURNAMENT
-RAISED $16,000 FOR HURRICANE SANDY VICTIMS

ALEC BURKS BASKETBALL CAMP
-HOSTED FREE CLINICS FOR AREA YOUTH

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY HOPE LODGE

PART OF THE TEAM

TEAM MANAGER PLAYS MAJOR ROLE IN SUMMER SUCCESS

When the high school basketball season ended, Olathe South senior Jackson Byrd assumed his time on the basketball court was over. While participating in the Kansas Special Olympics state basketball tournament, Jackson was introduced to MOKAN coach Jim Huber. "I could tell how important basketball was to Jackson and thought it might be fun for him to help out with our team," said Coach Huber.

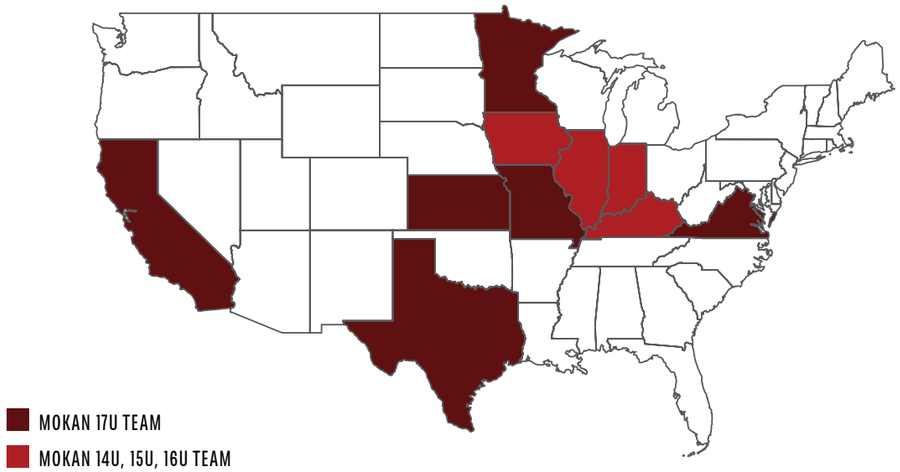
Jackson was invited to help the MOKAN 17u team and soon became a fixture at practice and games. He quickly developed a special bond with his new teammates. MOKAN's Ben Richardson was quick to point out the important role Jackson played throughout the season. "Our coaches talk all the time about doing your role to the best of your ability and valuing everyone's contribution. I know everyone appreciated all he did for us."

"I HAVE A LOT OF RESPECT FOR JACKSON AND WHAT HE DID THIS PAST SEASON. HE WAS ALWAYS POSITIVE AND FUN TO BE AROUND. HE WAS A BIG PART OF OUR TEAM."

NOAH KNIGHT **MOKAN CLASS OF 2014**
University of Missouri-Kansas City

"MOKAN GAVE ME THE **OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP** BOTH AS A PERSON AND A PLAYER. I WAS ABLE TO PLAY ELITE COMPETITION WHICH EXPOSED ME TO BASKETBALL AT A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL."

JACKIE CARMICHAEL **MOKAN CLASS OF 2009**
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY



MOKAN 17U TEAM
MOKAN 14U, 15U, 16U TEAM

MOKAN HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS PARTICIPATING COURTSIDE AT A HEAT BASKETBALL GAME ▲

MOKAN 17U TEAM AT A TOURNAMENT IN LOS ANGELES ▲

• COMPETE AGAINST MORE THAN 8,000 HIGH-SCHOOL ATHLETES

MOKAN's high school participants have the opportunity to play against the top competition in the country. These experiences allow college coaches to make crucial evaluations prior to offering scholarships.

• SEEN BY TOP COACHES

Tournaments are specifically chosen to maximize opportunities for student-athletes to showcase their abilities in front of hundreds of college coaches from schools across the country.

COACHES SCOUTING AT THE HARDWOOD CLASSIC

• COMPETE IN TOP TOURNAMENTS

- NIKE ELITE YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUE (EYBL)
- NIKE PEACH JAM
- HARDWOOD CLASSIC
- KC CLASSIC
- NEXT LEVEL NATIONALS

MARVIN **CLARK**

SOPHOMORE ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

"HE WAS GOING THROUGH HIS TEENAGE YEARS WHILE STILL TRYING TO BE STRONG FOR HIS LITTLE BROTHERS AND SISTERS. THEY WOULD COME OVER AND PICK MARVIN UP WHEN HE NEEDED THAT TIME. HE NEVER REALLY HAD A POSITIVE MALE INFLUENCE IN HIS LIFE BECAUSE HIS FATHER PASSED. THEY ARE THEIR FOR HIM WHEN HE NEEDS ANYTHING."

"THEY'VE BEEN LIKE MY FATHER FIGURES, HELPING KEEP ME IN LINE AND MAKE GOOD DECISIONS. THEY'VE HELPED ME OUTSIDE OF BASKETBALL TOO. JUST BEING ABLE TO HAVE A ROOF OVER MY HEAD. AND I REALLY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THEM THAT WELL AT THE TIME. THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW THE ORGANIZATION IS ABOUT FAMILY. IT'S ABOUT HELPING PEOPLE."

When Marvin Clark was five, his father died unexpectedly from a rare heart condition while driving home from work. Soon after, Marvin's mother found herself in a string of abusive relationships. As an eight year-old boy, Marvin and his brothers witnessed what no one should ever have to see – his mother being abused. "My brothers and I were in our room just playing and then we heard something happening in the other room. We came out and watched my mom get beat. It was rough. It was tough seeing my mom getting treated like a dog and you can't do anything about it," he said.

In an attempt to protect the kids, his mother moved the family all over the city, staying with friends, relatives, shelters and domestic violence centers. The stays usually lasted anywhere from one month to six months before the family found another place to stay. Finding a spot big enough to house his mother and six siblings was a challenge. Between the ages of nine and 15, Marvin changed schools nine times and moved more than 20 times.

While attending Imagine Renaissance Academy, a charter school in Kansas City, Marvin was introduced to Buzzy Caruthers. A local high school coach, Buzzy was also the brother-in-law of MOKAN founder, Matt Suther. Marvin's mother said the timing of Buzz coming into Marvin's life couldn't have been better. Buzz and Matt both noticed striking similarities between Marvin and other recent MOKAN alums."Kids need stability. We've seen firsthand some **INCREDIBLE TRANSFORMATIONS** with young men when you can take the worry of where they are going to sleep and what they will eat off their hands," said Matt.

Through connections with MOKAN, Marvin had the opportunity to attend Sunrise Christian Academy in Wichita, Kan. A small, private school with an excellent academic reputation and a nationally recognized basketball program, Sunrise Christian offered an unbeatable opportunity. Marvin's mother convinced him to take advantage of the opportunity to get one step closer to receiving an opportunity to attend college. In the Spring of 2016, Marvin transferred from Michigan State to St. John's University to play for legendary NBA player, Chris Mullins.

WILL SPRADLING

GRADUATE OF KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRING 2014

"I WANT TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE A GREAT LIFE FOR MY FUTURE FAMILY AND THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT IS DOING SOMETHING THAT YOU LOVE."

As a member of one of the earliest MOKAN teams, Kansas State University graduate Will Spradling credits MOKAN with teaching him the merits of hard work. The business management major describes the program as **HELPING** him "improve as a basketball player and as a man."

Like other MOKAN alums that have go on to play at the college level, Will didn't fully realize how well prepared he was until he got to college.

"Everything we did with MOKAN in terms of basketball preparation or even academic expectations was exactly like it is in college. We were high school players getting a college-type experience," said Will.

While MOKAN prepared Will for his college experience on and off the court, it also provided him with opportunities to stay involved with the game during the off-season. Will has made a habit of coming back to Kansas City to connect with the basketball community working youth tournaments and camps as well as speaking to younger MOKAN participants attempting to follow in his footstep.

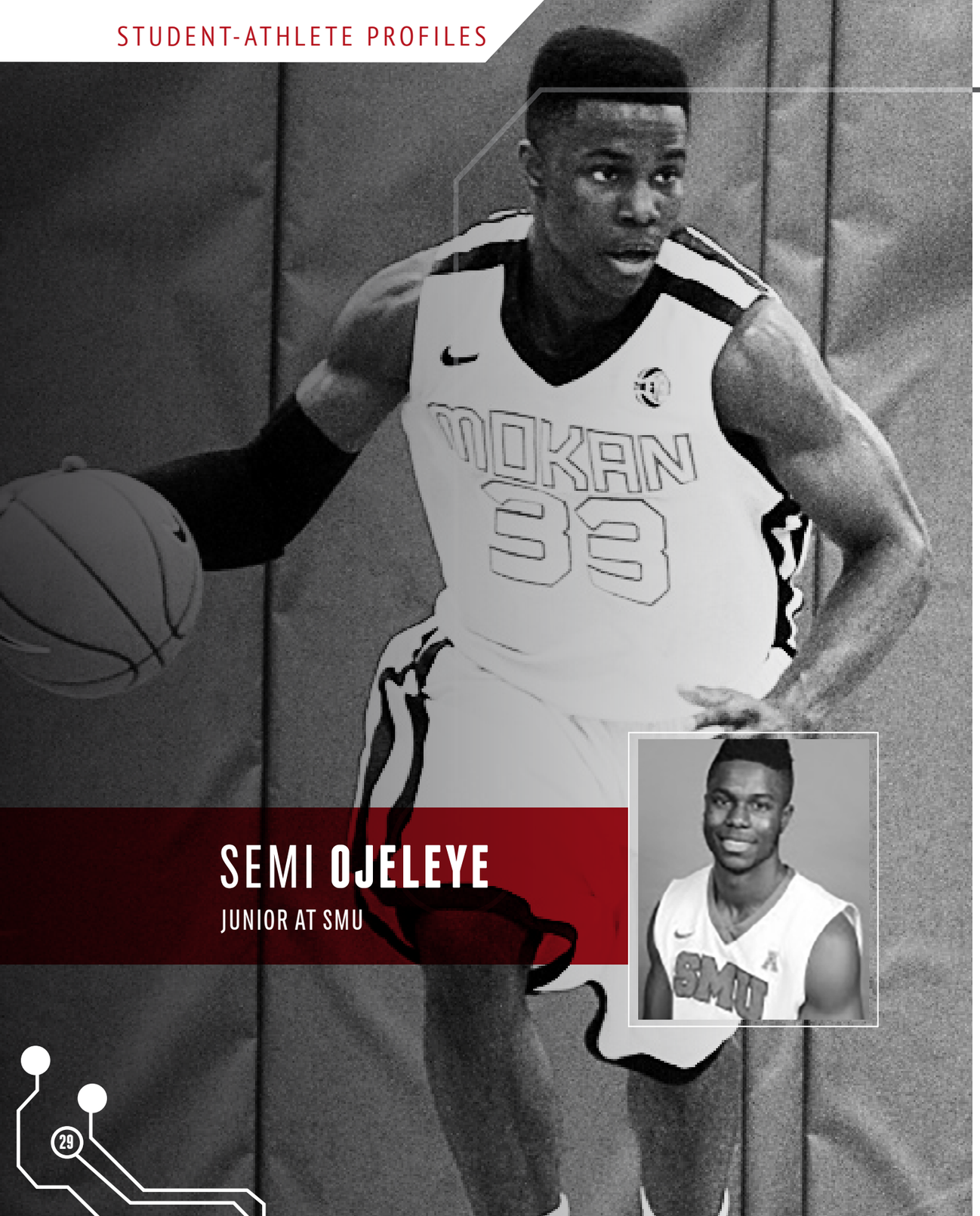
"I LEARNED THAT WHENEVER YOU PLAY, YOU HAVE PICK UP THE BALL AND GO IN WITH THE MINDSET THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO LOSE."

He credits MOKAN for teaching him how to focus – whether in life or in a game. Lessons that translate well beyond the court.

According to Will, every aspect of MOKAN was a learning opportunity. Practices were tough and ran with a purpose, while road trips taught players how to be professional with a business-type approach– something most student-athletes don't experience until they get to the collegiate level.

Will remains **GRATEFUL** for the recruiting assistance that his MOKAN coaches provided throughout his recruitment.

"It's such a long, tedious process that it really helps to have additional support when you are making your decision, said Spradling. "I'm thankful for all the guidance they provided me and my family."



SEMI OJELEYE

JUNIOR AT SMU

"NEVER LOSE HEART. EACH DAY PRESENTS ITS OWN CHALLENGES THAT HAVE TO BE OVERCOME TO BECOME A BETTER PERSON AND PLAYER."

Named Parade Magazine's 2013 National Player of the Year, current Southern Methodist University Sophomore Semi Ojeleye averaged 38 points a game during his senior year while breaking the state of Kansas scoring record (2,763 points). His accomplishments aren't limited to the court: Semi maintained a 4.0 GPA in high school, was a member of National Honor Society and was even Ottawa High School's valedictorian.

Teaching **RESPONSIBILITY**, leadership and discipline, Semi believes MOKAN is more than just a basketball program, calling it an extension of his family.

"MOKAN helped me develop both on and off the court," Semi said. He credits the program for helping him receive an opportunity to play for arguably one of the greatest coaches of all-time, Larry Brown.

"Without the exposure MOKAN provided, I wouldn't have had the same opportunities to continue my career at the college level," he said.

Joining MOKAN in the eighth grade, Semi takes **INSPIRATION** from his journey and how far he has come from where he started. His faith and support network has allowed him to, as he says, "find the drive to keep pushing."

This foundation has served him well. Semi's advice to other youth is perseverance, something that his MOKAN coach Rodney Perry discussed frequently. The coaches at MOKAN helped Semi transition on the court from a post to a wing player by developing his ball handling, shooting and passing.

These lessons certainly paid off in a big way as Semi's favorite MOKAN memory is hitting the game-winning three-pointer that helped qualify the program for the Nike Elite Youth Basketball League.

NINO **WILLIAMS**

GRADUATE OF KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2014

“EVERYTHING WE DID WAS TO HELP ME REACH MY GOAL OF GETTING TO COLLEGE. NO MATTER HOW HARD IT WAS, I KNEW THE OUTCOME WOULD HELP GET ME CLOSER TO WHERE I WANTED TO GO.”

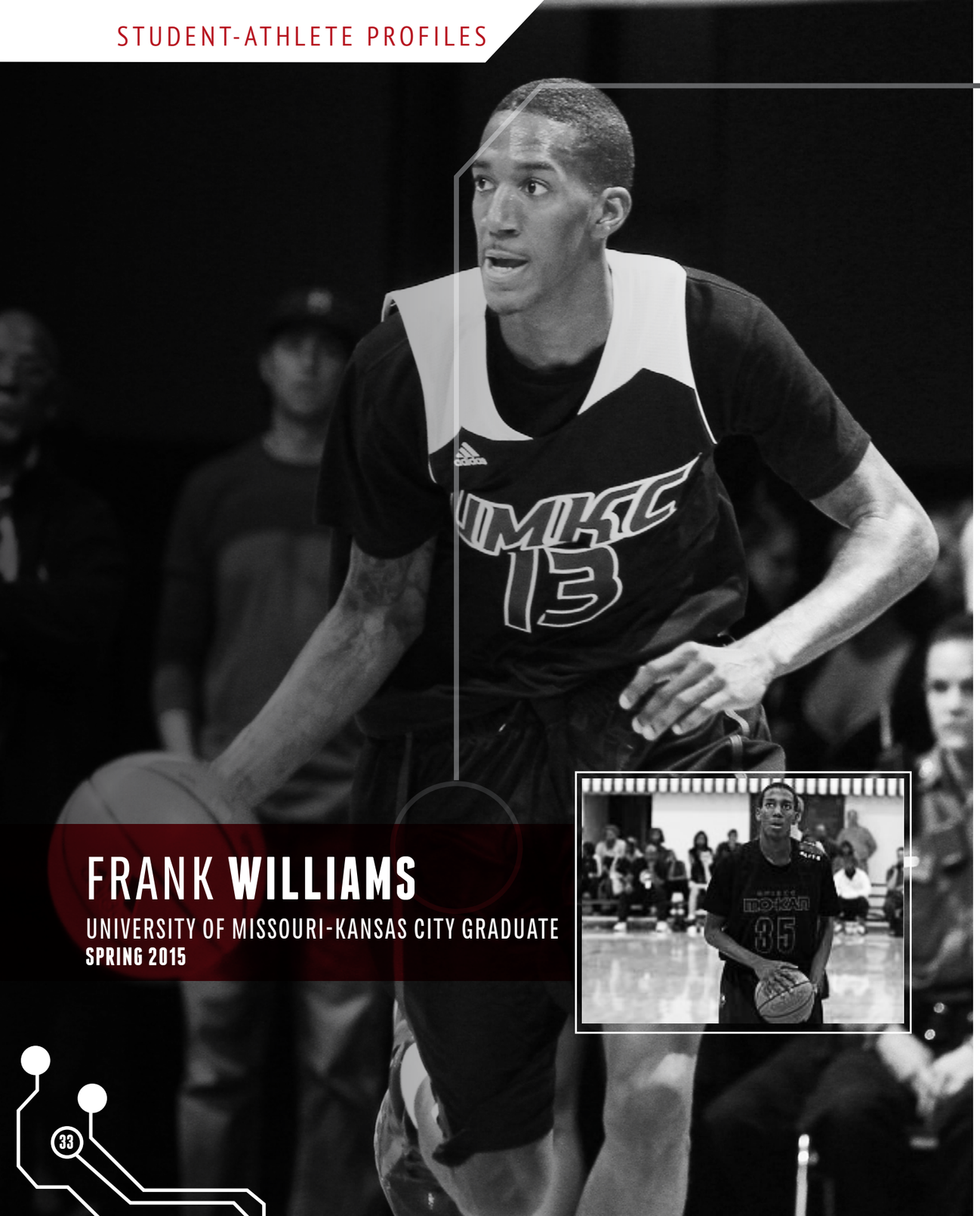
Ask Nino Williams about MOKAN and he might not even mention basketball. Originally from St. Louis, Mo., Nino Williams came to Kansas City before his sophomore year of high school to attend a brand new prep school just east of downtown called Milestone Christian Academy. When the school shut down halfway through the year, Nino was in a desperate situation.

MOKAN founder Matt Suther met Nino earlier that year when he attended a practice at Milestone. Worried about a kid sold on broken promises, Matt reached out to his friend, Derek Zeck when the school’s situation began to get worse. Weeks later, Derek, his wife Ali and three kids opened up their Leavenworth home and added Nino to their family.

When Nino arrived at Leavenworth High School, he was a full semester behind because his previous school credits were useless. His GPA was extremely low as he was entering his third high school in three years. With stability and support from the Zeck family, Nino began to make great strides in the classroom and on the court.

By his senior year, Nino had raised his GPA to a 3.0 and made up all his lost credits so he could graduate on time. With the help of summer classes, Nino even cleared the much more demanding NCAA academic requirements making him **ELIGIBLE** to attend a NCAA Division I University.

Nino finished his basketball career at Leavenworth as one of the greatest players in school history, earning all-conference and all-state honors as well as the title of “Mr. Kansas Basketball.” He earned a full scholarship to continue his education and playing career at Kansas State University. Nino graduated in May of 2014 with a degree in Social Science.



FRANK **WILLIAMS**

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY GRADUATE

SPRING 2015

"EVERYONE ALWAYS STRESSES 'STAYING IN SCHOOL' AND 'WORKING HARD.' BEING WHERE I AM NOW IN MY CAREER AND MY DEGREE, IT'S STILL 100 PERCENT TRUE."

For Frank Williams, now a graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, MOKAN is a second family. While it has been a number of years since he put on a MOKAN uniform, he still keeps in contact with his former coaches and mentors by routinely attending activities and events for the program.

MOTIVATED to succeed for his family, Frank's fondest MOKAN memories highlight some of the special opportunities participants like Frank have received since 2004.

"MATT DROVE ALL THE WAY TO RAYTOWN, COMING TO MY HOUSE TO PERSONALLY TELL ME THAT I HAD BEEN INVITED TO THE PAUL PIERCE AND LEBRON JAMES SKILLS ACADEMY FOR THE TOP HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS IN THE COUNTRY," HE SAID. "I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THAT."

Frank spent his first two years at Indian Hill Community College before coming back home to attend UMKC. He credits the program with assisting in two different college choices that allowed him to continue his education. Frank's mentors at MOKAN encouraged him to do homework on the schools recruiting him so he could make an educated decision.

Graduating as a communications major, Frank said the most important lessons from MOKAN didn't take place on the basketball court. The program taught him how to handle every day challenges.

"It's all about your attitude and effort. My experiences with MOKAN taught me that I always have control over how I respond to a situation."

COLLEGE ACADEMIC **STATISTICS**

MORE THAN 50
NCAA DIVISION 1 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO MOKAN'S STUDENT ATHLETES

MORE THAN 110
TOTAL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

MORE THAN $24.9 MILLION
WAS AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE

MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOUNG MEN ARE WALKING AWAY FROM THE PROGRAM WITH THE TOOLS NECESSARY TO CREATE GENERATIONAL CHANGE!

MOKAN
EMPOWERING YOUTH | TRANSFORMING LIVES

PARTNERSHIPS

NIKE
KD
DEMDACO
lift the spirit
Dimensional Innovations
Spintek
designing health & comfort
WACHTER
usbank
LEGACY DEVELOPMENT
copaken brooks
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
Mariner
WEALTH ADVISORS
YAEGER ARCHITECTURE
Cerner
POPULOUS
George J. Shaw CONSTRUCTION
STINK BOSS

MAKE YOUR CONNECTION

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