



# THE CARDINAL CHRONICLE

Bloomfield High School - 2077 Park West Road  
North Bloomfield, Ohio 44450, Volume 12- Issue 2- October/November 2018

## BLOOMFIELD ALUMNA TACKLES HOMELESSNESS by Olivia Foster

Tomiquia Moss, a 1995 alumna of Bloomfield High School, is the CEO of Hamilton Families Center (HFC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to "ending family homelessness in the San Francisco Bay area," according to the agency's mission statement. She joined HFC in 2017 and has since boosted the company \$30 million in funding and plans to raise at least \$200 million to eliminate homelessness in San Francisco. According to Moss, her greatest achievement throughout her career was working to help establish "a community court in San Francisco that diverted people out of incarceration and into treatment and services to address the root causes of their criminal behavior."

Early in her life, Moss suffered great loss. Both of her parents died within less than a year apart: her mother from cancer and her father, after being shot by security guards while on a picket line for the Cleveland steel factory where he worked. As a result, when she was a toddler she moved from Cleveland to North Bloomfield to live with her grandparents on their 125 acre farm. On her grandparents' farm, she had lots of space to play and explore with her three sisters. Of her time here in Bloomfield, Moss states, "Growing up in Bloomfield was comfortable. I had great family and community around me and it was a safe and tight knit community."

Though she had much support, Moss was impacted by the lack of cultural and ethnic diversity within the community, being only one of three African American students and found it challenging at times to fit in. She states that Bloomfield had "limited economic opportunities and cultural institutions for families, but it was a good place to grow up."

For those experiencing loss, Moss offers a piece of advice, "I think it is important for students to understand that loss is a part of life. If you have people who love you surrounding you to help you get through the loss, it really helps to keep you going. My family was there for me my entire life and although I experienced a lot of loss as a child, I didn't often feel that loss because the love around me was so intact. It is really easy to feel alone but surround yourself with people who support you and you can weather many storms in this life." For any students facing loss, the school guidance counselor and staff at Bloomfield can be a support to lead them in the right direction.

Moss' high school experience was comfortable, yet very busy. She was always focused on her studies and involved in many extracurricular activities and worked hard to ensure that she would have the ability to attend college and compete with her peers. Moss felt that it was challenging at times with the lack of diversity, and though she had two other African American students in her class, she did not have any African American teachers throughout her entire high school career. Although it was strenuous at times she states, "I had great friends and family that helped me get through high school and prepare for my future."

Though Moss is now a CEO, she didn't get there overnight. Moss first attended college at Ohio Wesleyan University originally, to

pursue a degree in law, but changed course after she took an internship mentoring kids in a local public school district. This led to another internship with the National Low Income Housing Coalition, based in Washington D.C. She finished her internships and moved to San Francisco. A social worker by day and a college student by night, Moss attended night classes at Golden Gate University where she later earned her master's degree in public administration.

In the future Moss hopes to end homelessness in the San Francisco Bay Area and to "create a regional strategy that allows for people experiencing homelessness anywhere in the Bay Area to have a responsive social safety net that allows them to be housed and thrive in their lives."

Though Moss works hard, she says that she always makes sure to have dinner with her family and to "do things that rejuvenate me and keep me going."



Photo: Courtesy of Tomiquia Moss



Photo: Courtesy of Tomiquia Moss