

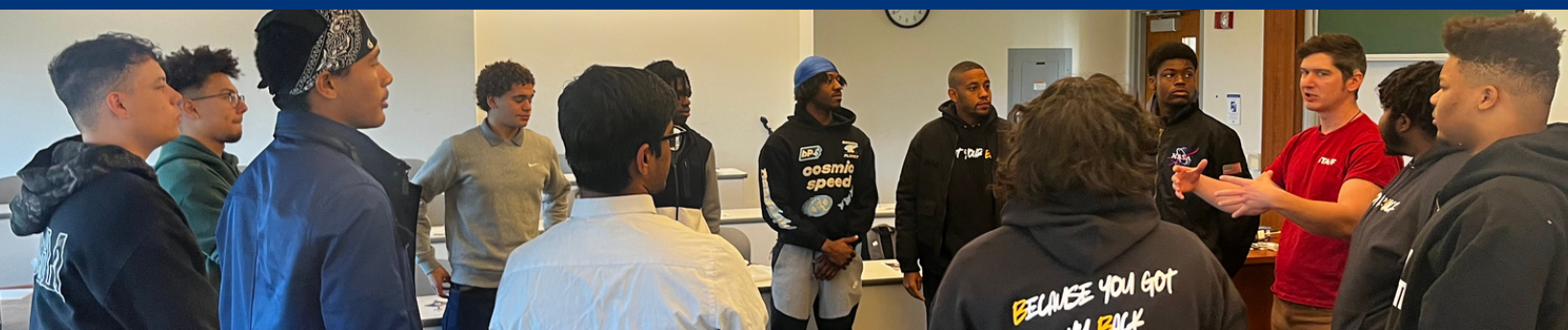
# Building Better Brotherhood Retreat 2025

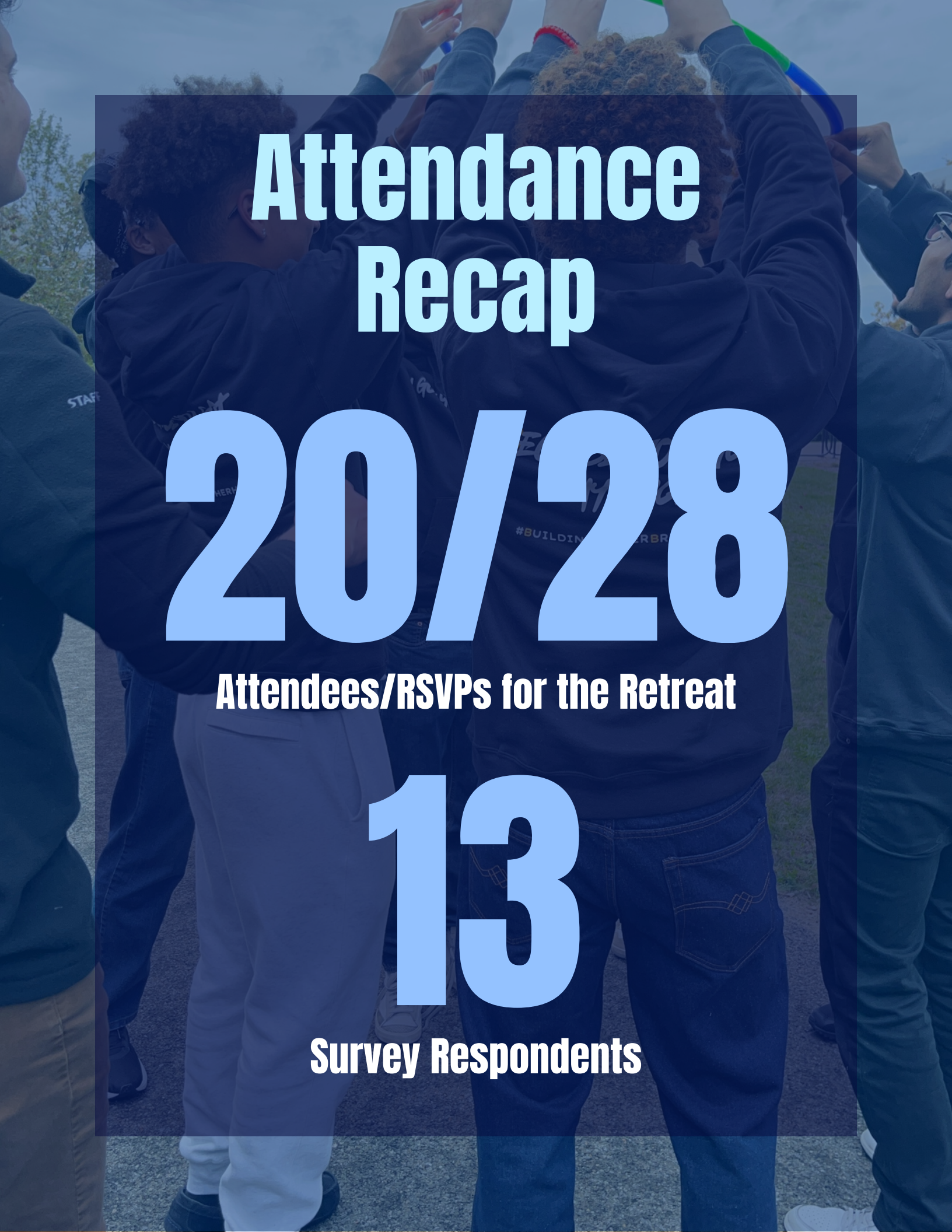
## October 11

The Building Better Brotherhoods Retreat is a transformative, **full-day experience** designed to empower BIPOC male-identifying, masculine, and non-binary students. This retreat fosters community, connection, and personal growth through meaningful dialogue, shared activities, and an enriching excursion/experience. Participants may engage with community leaders who share their identities, build lasting bonds, and reflect on their unique challenges.

This was the **inaugural** event; it was initially planned for March 2025, but was rescheduled to the beginning of the following academic year as we believed this would have a greater impact on **community building**, especially among first-year students.

We invited **two guest speakers** to facilitate activities alongside Cliff-Simon Vital (Director, Unity Center) who led the retreat. Rev. Nicholas Young, M.Div., LMSW to lead meaningful dialogue and activities for **improved mental health and personal development**. And Benjamin Mumford-Zisk, Lead Facilitator within the Cornell Team and Leadership Center, to lead the ropes course activity which incorporated **trust building and leadership skills into fun games and low-ground obstacle courses**.



A background image showing a group of people, mostly young adults, in a huddle. They are wearing dark hoodies, some with text like "STAFF" and "#BUILDING" visible. They appear to be holding hands or a central object, suggesting a team-building or group activity. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue rectangle containing the text.

# **Attendance Recap**

# **20/28**

**Attendees/RSVPs for the Retreat**

# **13**

**Survey Respondents**

Breakfast and lunch were inclusive of gluten-free, pork-free, beef-free, shellfish-free, and nut-free diets with a fully customizable continental breakfast and burrito bowl buffet.

All attendees received a hoodie designed by Mac Murray (Assistant Director, Unity Center) with the phrase **"I got your back...Because you've got mine"** to represent the ultimate theme of the retreat. These were worn by everyone for the day.



Participants were receptive to all facilitators throughout the retreat. Rev. Nic's workshop received a **4.82 out of 5-star rating** and he was **well received by 100% of attendees**. One student shared, "Rev. Nic Young facilitated a necessary conversation surrounding societal views and expectations of black, brown and Latino men and how social media amplifies these views". Others shared similar sentiments stating, Young was energetic, empowering, informative, and connected well with the group. 81% of respondents believe we should reinvite Young for next year's retreat.

Ben's trust building workshop received similar responses (**4.73/5 star rating**) with 100% of respondents believing he should return next year. Respondents shared, "Benjamin was very flexible and really helped with the team building", "Ben is reliable and very trustworthy (no pun intended)", and that, "This activity is great to bring groups together and learn about an area resource."

# Retreat Snapshots

**4.8** ★ /5

**Rating of Enjoyment of the Retreat**

**4.91** ★ /5

**Rating of the Slide Deck Facilitation**

**4.83** ★ /5

**Rating of the Icebreaker Activity**

**4.7** ★ /5

**Rating of the Lunch Option**

**4.67** ★ /5

**Rating of the Breakfast Options**

# 66%

of respondents felt the slides  
provided the necessary foundation  
on Masculinity & related topics  
needed for the retreat



# Major Impacts



When asked how they plan to apply their learning in their personal and professional life, many respondents shared that they plan to keep a more open mind when engaging others. One planned to, "[Be] more patient and understanding of others. [Because] everyone comes from a different background and childhood". Another added,

***I will take more account of my and others intersectionality***

Many had an improvement in their communication skills and plan to, "come to an equal understanding" when in dialogue. Looking towards future leadership positions, a student commented,

***I plan to hold conversations related to these topics around campus***

## Feedback Responses

*"This event gave me a chance to talk about a very unseen at first glance part of myself and allowed me to express my natures"*

*"It was a welcoming environment and allowed for good dialogue"*

# 100%

**of respondents felt seen & heard at this retreat**





# 100%

of respondents felt the topics  
discussed were “relevant”

85% believed the topics were “very relevant”.

# Special Thanks

When asked what the most impactful moment of the retreat was, respondents shared that the discussions and connections among the group were the most important. Some further elaborated, stating:

***"Discussing masculinity and societal expectations created space for vulnerability for a young group of men entering the adult world"***

***"Everyone was comfortable and open to sharing. There was beauty to [the] vulnerability"***

Thank you to our facilitators for helping our students to build a greater sense of community with their peers and develop their personal identities. Your guidance is integral to their development as leaders.

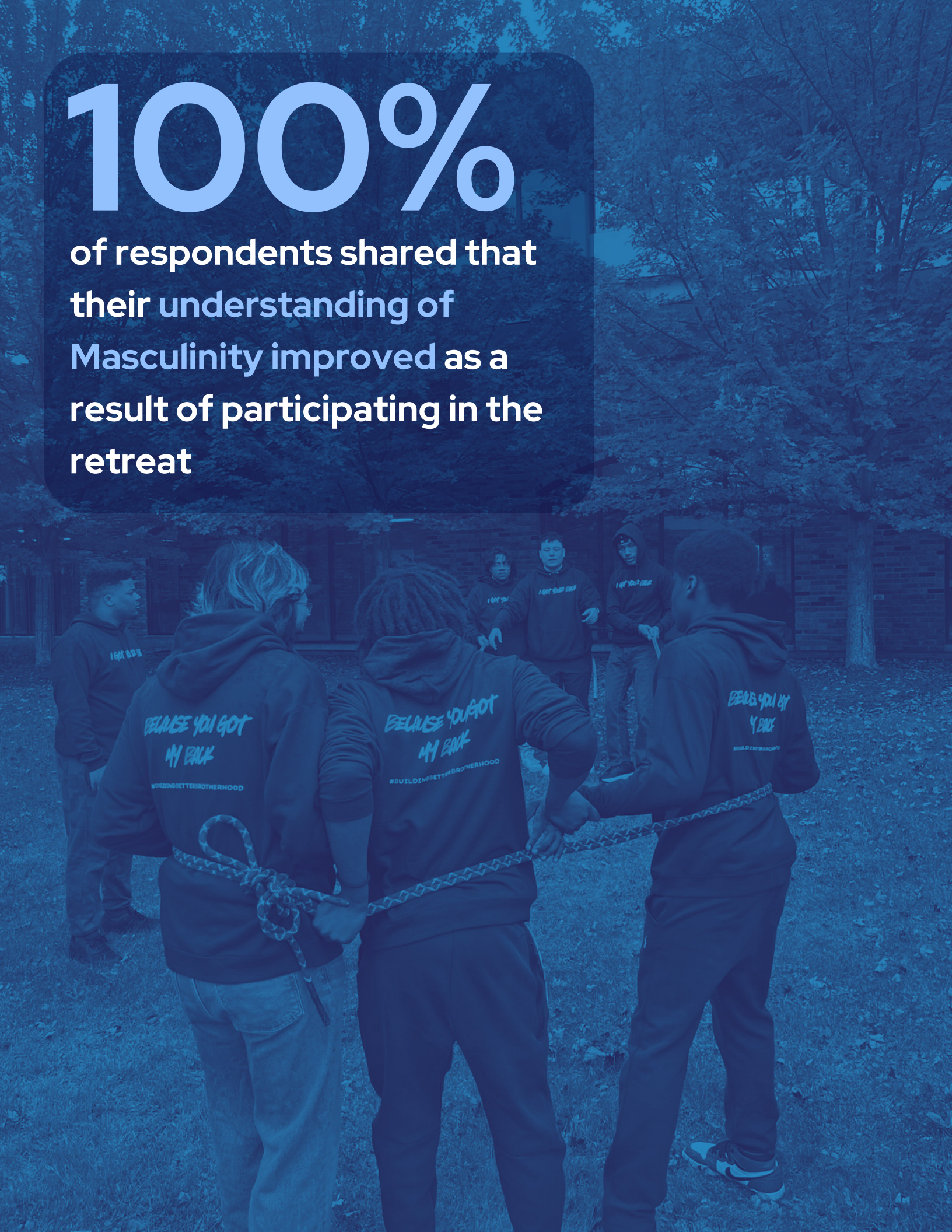


# 92%

of respondents felt  
**"comfortable"** participating in  
the activities & discussions

# 100%

of respondents shared that  
their understanding of  
Masculinity improved as a  
result of participating in the  
retreat





When asked to define what masculinity was to them, respondents shared:

*"Masculinity to me is a deep understanding of the traits that make a man, a man, as well as the **societal expectations** and **cultural pressures** that identify a man"*

*"Masculinity is being able to **recognize your own vulnerability** while being that person someone can rely on"*

*"Masculinity is all of the traits that I want to present to others that **allow me to be supportive and comfortable** in my community"*

Many shared descriptions that balanced personal definitions with societal expectations, some even included other factors such as faith.

# Major Impacts



In the creation of the Building Better Brotherhood Retreat, we set out some learning outcomes and goals to accomplish. These were later tracked in our feedback survey. The results are as follows:

## Learning Outcomes

### 100% of respondents were able to:

- Cultivate meaningful connections with peers and community leaders, fostering a strong sense of belonging
- Reflect on the complexities of your intersectional identities and how you shape personal and communal experiences
- Practice open and respectful communication to enhance listening and dialogue skills
- Recognize the value of community-building in addressing shared challenges and promoting collective empowerment
- Commit to creating a better, safer, and vulnerable community

### 89% of respondents were able to:

- Establish supportive networks for mentorship, collaboration, and long-term growth
- Redefine masculinity
- Have your perspective changed around the ideas of masculinity

## Goals

### 100% of respondents felt we were able to

- Create a welcoming and inclusive space where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences
- Celebrate the diverse identities within the group to promote self-confidence and cultural pride
- Equip participants with tools to navigate personal and professional challenges
- Encourage reflection and personal growth, leaving participants with a renewed sense of purpose and community

### 77% of respondents felt we were able to

- Inspire participants to contribute to campus equity and representation initiatives



# Looking Ahead



According to the feedback survey, attendees heard about our retreat through a number of different avenues (e.g., IC Engage, flyers, word of mouth, email, B4B meetings, Unity Center staff or PEs. Revealing that **all methods of advertising were equally important** to garner interest.

When asked how we could improve this retreat for the future, most said they had **no feedback** to share and enjoyed the event, some added that we should make more of an effort to **pull the quieter participants into the discussions** and others shared there should be more than one grand prize.

Many attendees were looking to win the PS5 which was ordered to gain more traffic to the event and was successful in doing so. For the sustainability of this event, we will research **different prizes or takeaway items** that can be dispersed to a larger number of participants.



# 89%

of respondents said they would attend this event in the future