

Dwell with Dignity Reveals Largest Project Yet: Library Transformation at The Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy



Lawrence Stokes Jr., Library Media Specialist, The Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy Chris Blackburn, Texas Counter Fitters Co-Founder Jessica Vitela, Manager, Community Relations and Events, State Fair of Texas Ashley Douglas, Vice President, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas / Southern Dallas Thrives / PepsiCo Teresa Charnock, Executive Director, Dwell with Dignity Kristyn Ampofo, Community Projects Designer, Dwell with Dignity Nakia Douglas, Founding Principal, The Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy Photo credit: Dwell with Dignity

DALLAS– Dwell with Dignity, a nonprofit dedicated to transforming lives through design, celebrated the grand reveal of its largest project to date: a library transformation at Dallas ISD’s Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy (BOMLA). The Eula Harris-Williams Library Media Center, which has been transformed into a vibrant hub for learning and growth, reflects the vision of more than 400 students who shared their ideas for the transformation.

“This library is a testament to what thoughtful design can achieve and the heart of what our work is about,” said Teresa Charnock, executive director of Dwell with Dignity. “It’s been an incredible honor to help bring the vision of the BOMLA community to life. Their creativity and insight have shaped a space that will serve as a foundation for learning, connection and growth for years to come.”

Members of the BOMLA community, including students, educators and local leaders, gathered to celebrate the library’s transformation. The event included remarks from Nakia Douglas, founding principal of BOMLA, and Chris Blackburn of Texas Counter Fitters, lead sponsor, as well as performances by the BOMLA band and a tour of the transformed spaces.

Renovated spaces include:

Library: A welcoming environment with updated seating for reading, studying and group collaboration.

- **Campus Community Hub:** A space where students can access uniforms, school supplies, toiletries and food, underwritten by United Way of Metropolitan Dallas.
- **Podcast Room:** A creative studio for students to record and share their stories.
- **Student Success Center:** A private space for college and career counseling, helping first-generation college-bound students prepare for the future.
- **Historical and Art Center:** A showcase of Oak Cliff’s rich history through photography and student artwork.
- **STEM Learning Space:** Featuring stones, gems and minerals donated by Texas Counter Fitters, this hands-on area introduces students to geology and STEM learning.

“This library is more than a transformation – it’s a testament to the potential within our students and the power of their voices,” said Nakia Douglas, founding principal of BOMLA. “It’s a space where their ideas come to life, and they can find the tools, inspiration and support to pursue their dreams with confidence.”

The transformation of the BOMLA library was a collaborative effort between Dwell with Dignity, BOMLA and key sponsors including Texas Counter Fitters, lead sponsor, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas and the State Fair of Texas. Their generous contributions and commitment to the BOMLA community helped turn the vision for this library into a reality.

ABOUT DWELL WITH DIGNITY:

Founded in 2009, Dwell with Dignity is a Dallas-based nonprofit with a mission to transform lives through design. By providing and installing interiors for family homes and community spaces for individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness, the transformations inspire people to lead their best lives and thrive in a safe, functional and beautiful environment. Dwell with Dignity has completed more than 250 home design projects and 50 community spaces, and in 2024 the organization served more than 3,000 people through their home and community projects. The nonprofit is backed by the support of over 100 designers, 1,100 dedicated volunteers and 150 sponsors and donors. Learn more at www.dwellwithdignity.org.

ADDITIONAL QUOTES:

Chris Blackburn, Founder and Owner, Texas Counter Fitters:

“The young men of Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy are incredibly impressive. They are dedicated to their studies and shine outside the classroom as well, demonstrating talents in music, photography and art. We understand the power of having a beautiful space to inspire these young minds. That’s why we wanted to partner with Dwell with Dignity to transform the library AND create a brand new podcast room for the boys to tell their stories.”

Jessica Vitela, Manager, Community Relations and Events, State Fair of Texas:

“At the State Fair of Texas, our mission extends far beyond 24 days. We are deeply committed to strengthening our community through education, growth and opportunity. Supporting projects like this library reflects our dedication to creating spaces where students can learn, dream and prepare for a brighter future.”

Ashley Douglas, Vice President, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas / Southern Dallas Thrives / PepsiCo:

“United Way Metropolitan’s Southern Dallas Thrives initiative is excited to expand our campus-based Community Hub resources and services to Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy. Designed to holistically support sector scholars through targeted academic engagement and resources that help families thrive, we are thrilled to increase this network of support on the campus. Through this collaborative approach alongside community partners, we are committed to ensuring that our students remain positioned to continue to thrive.

“This transformation of the library space will provide new motivation, inspiration and opportunities for all of our stakeholders. Not to mention, it will create new resources for increasing levels of success for the BOMLA community. The possibilities are endless. Thanks go out to Dwell with Dignity and the United Way for empowering the future of BOMLA.”

Mr. D. Legington, M.Ed./CI, Visual Arts Educator, The Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy:

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Mr. Lawrence Stokes Jr., Library Media Specialist, The Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy:

“This transformation of the library would put new life into the heartbeat of this school. The library is the focus point of all small gatherings in the school. Its use goes far beyond our students, faculty and staff, but for our community and other visitors. “This 2025 Transformation gives us a heightened sense of pride and joy as the central hub of higher learning through reading, art, music, and technology. Thank you, Dwell with Dignity and United Way.”

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