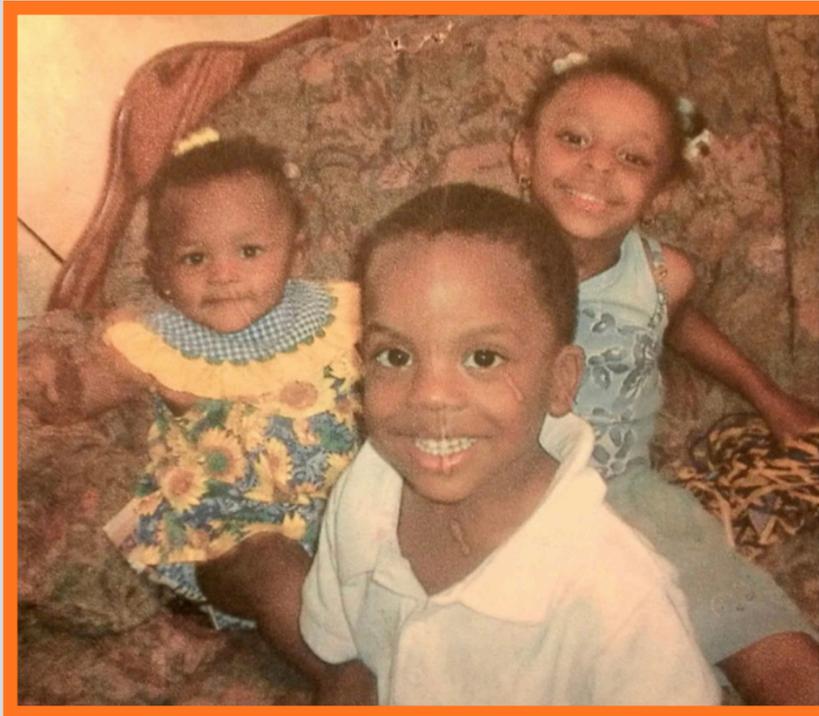
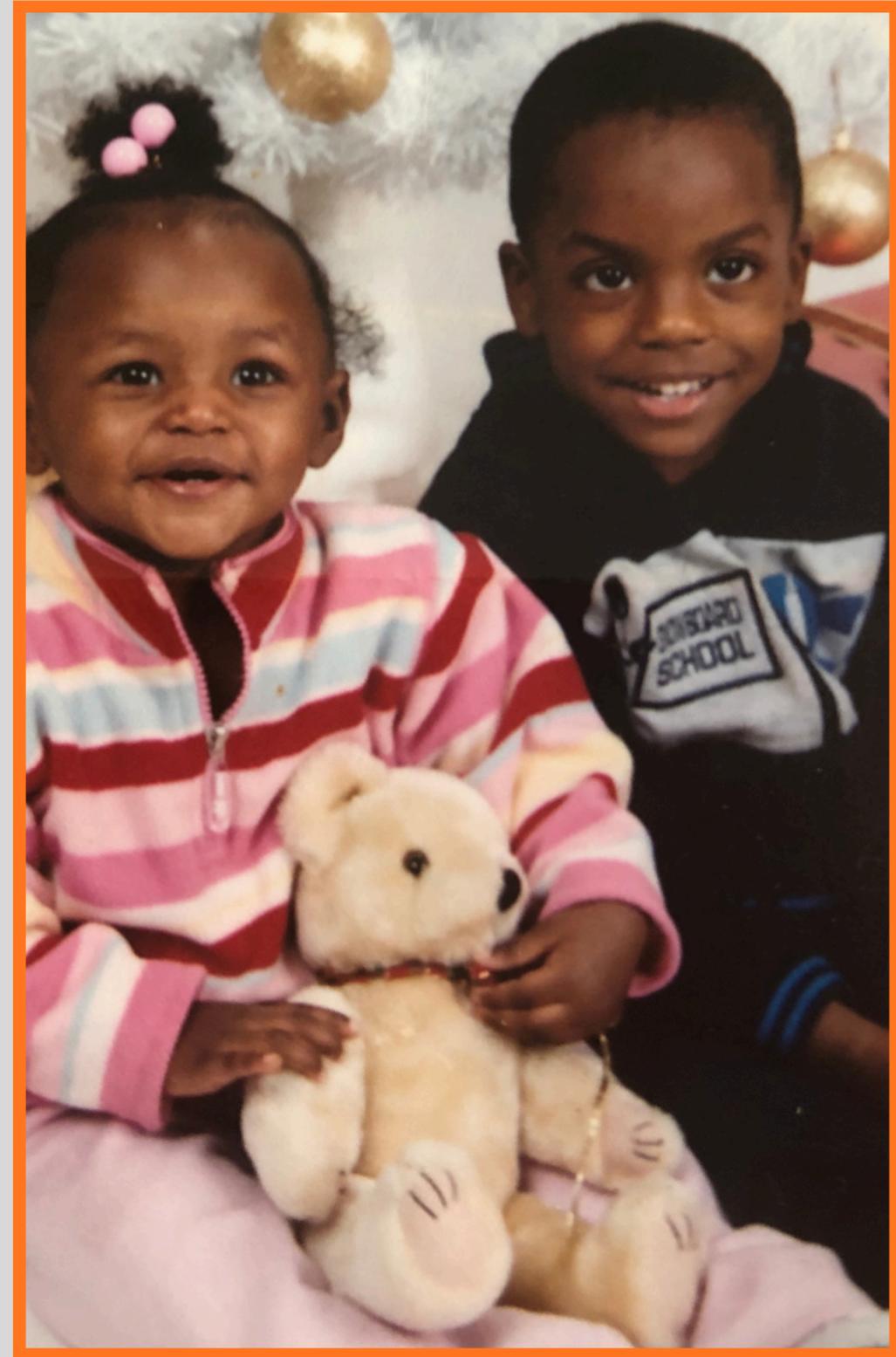
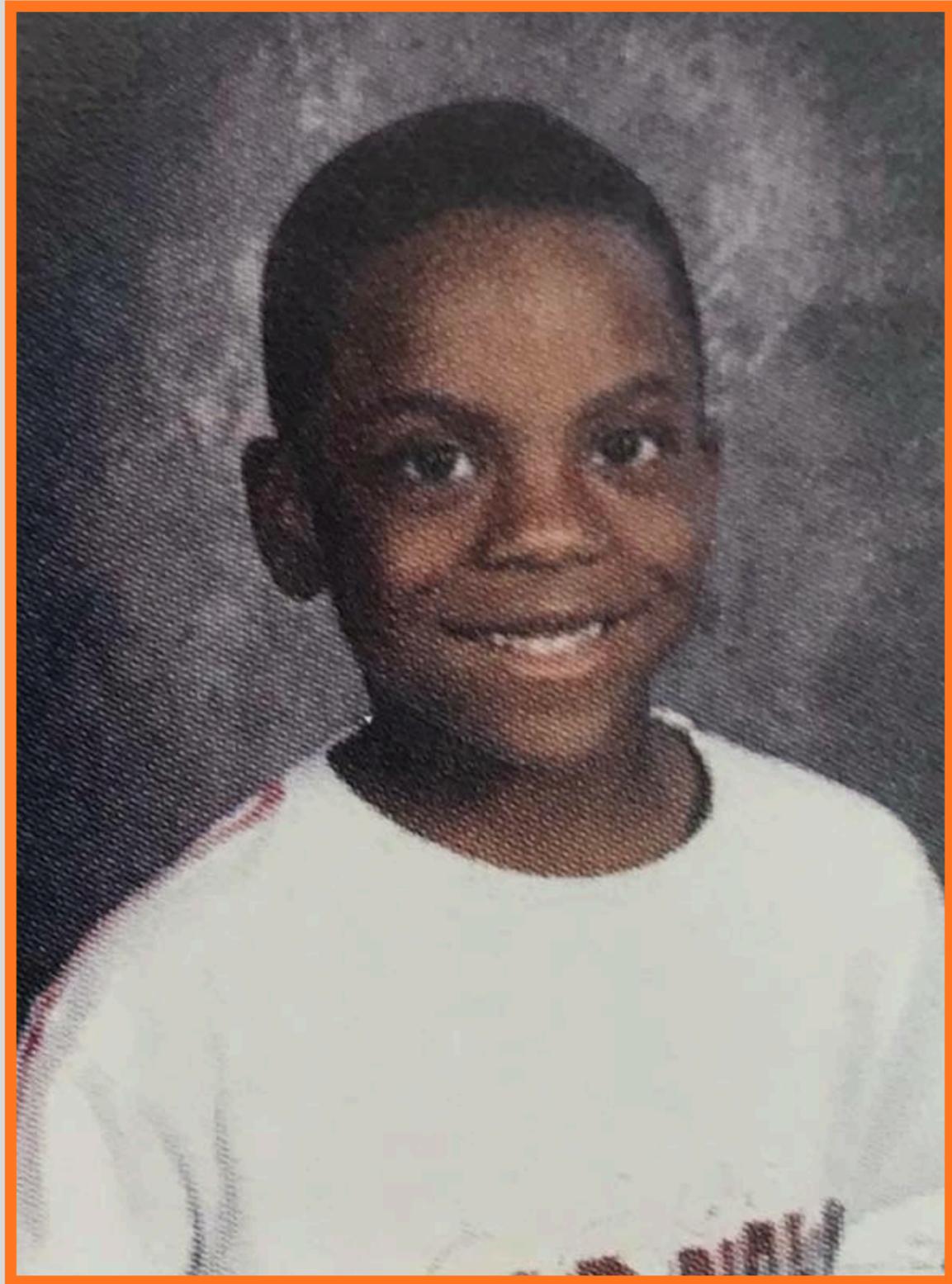


THE POWER OF BEING HEARD

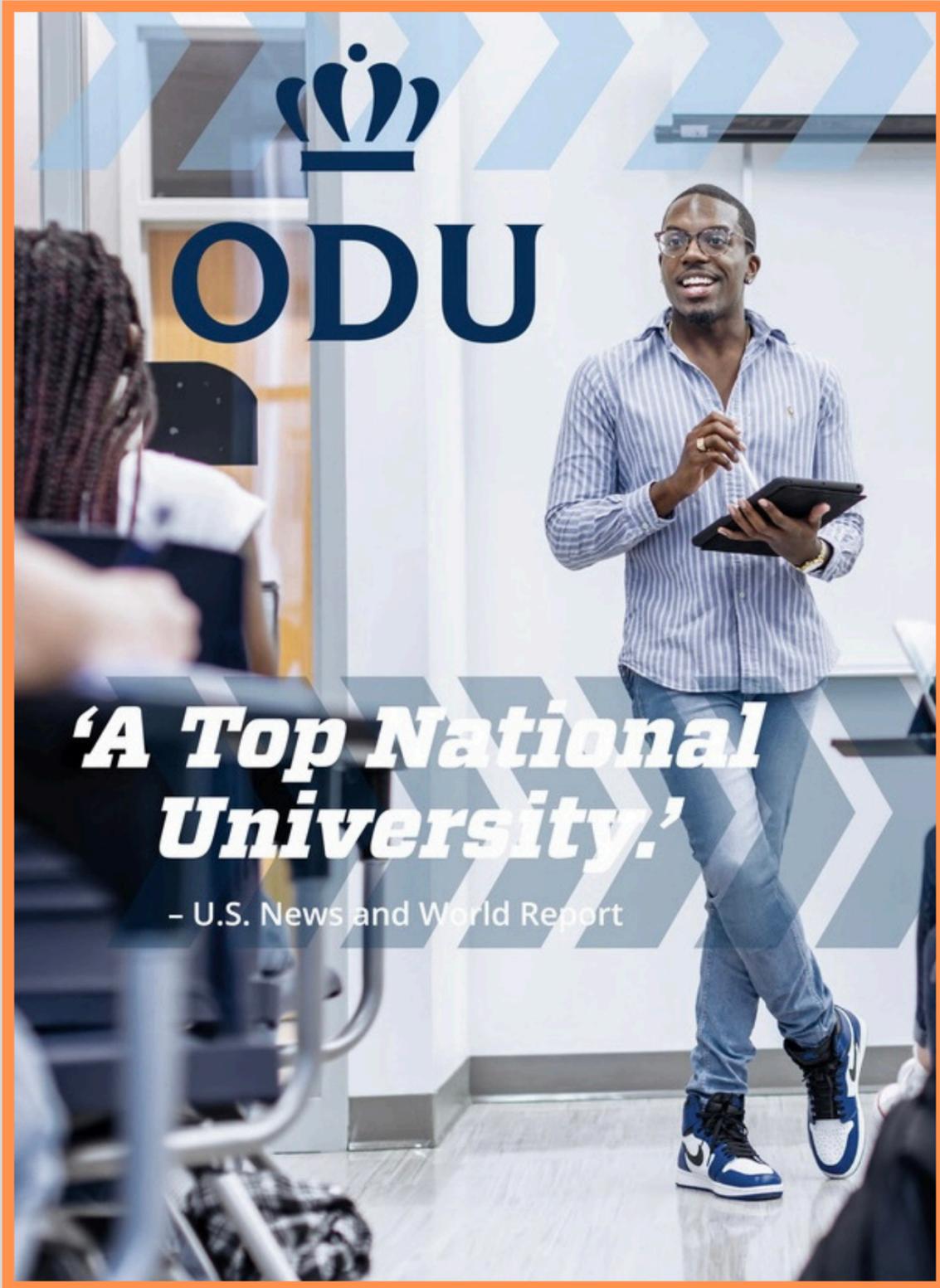


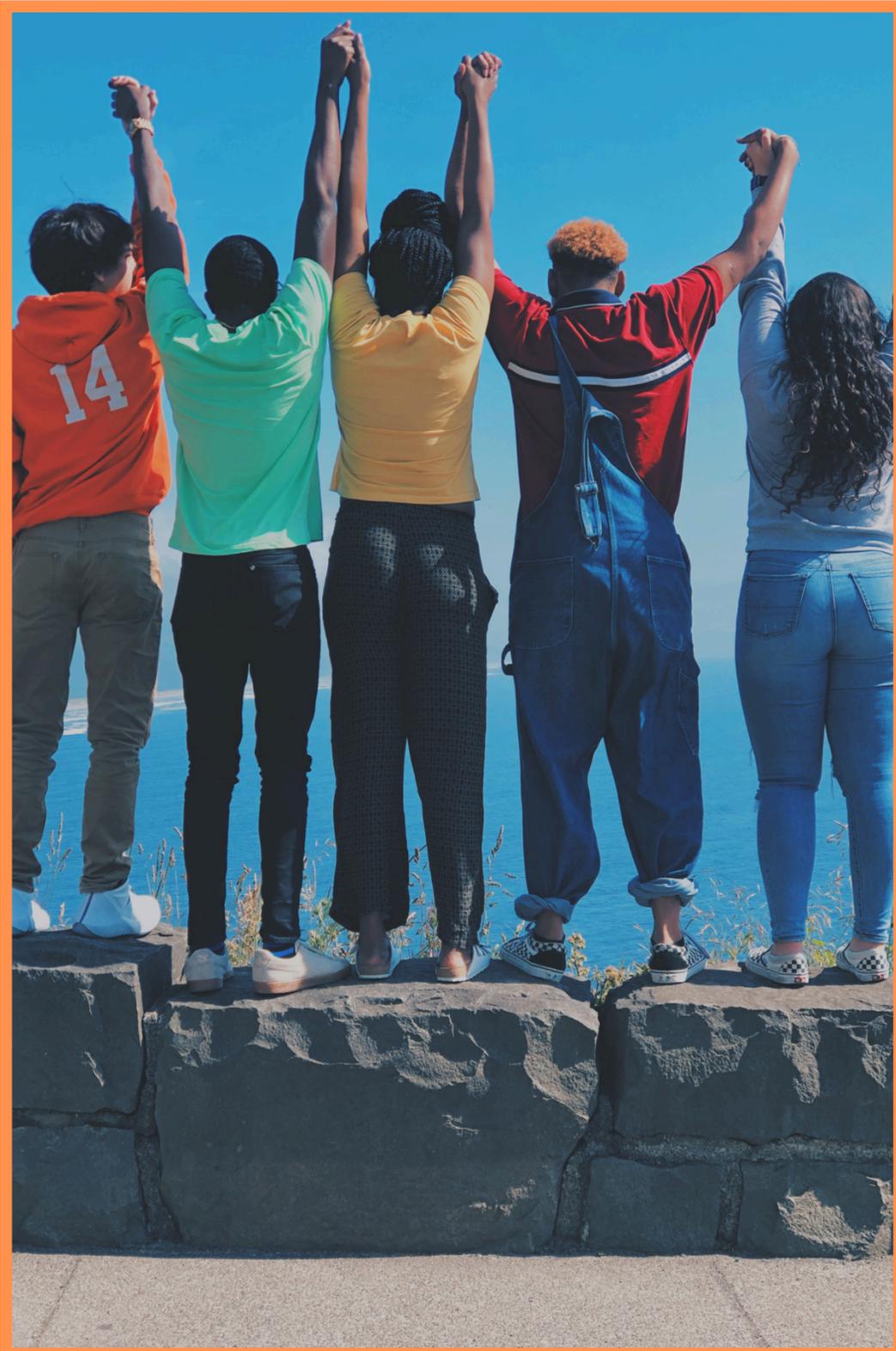
Melvin

Roy







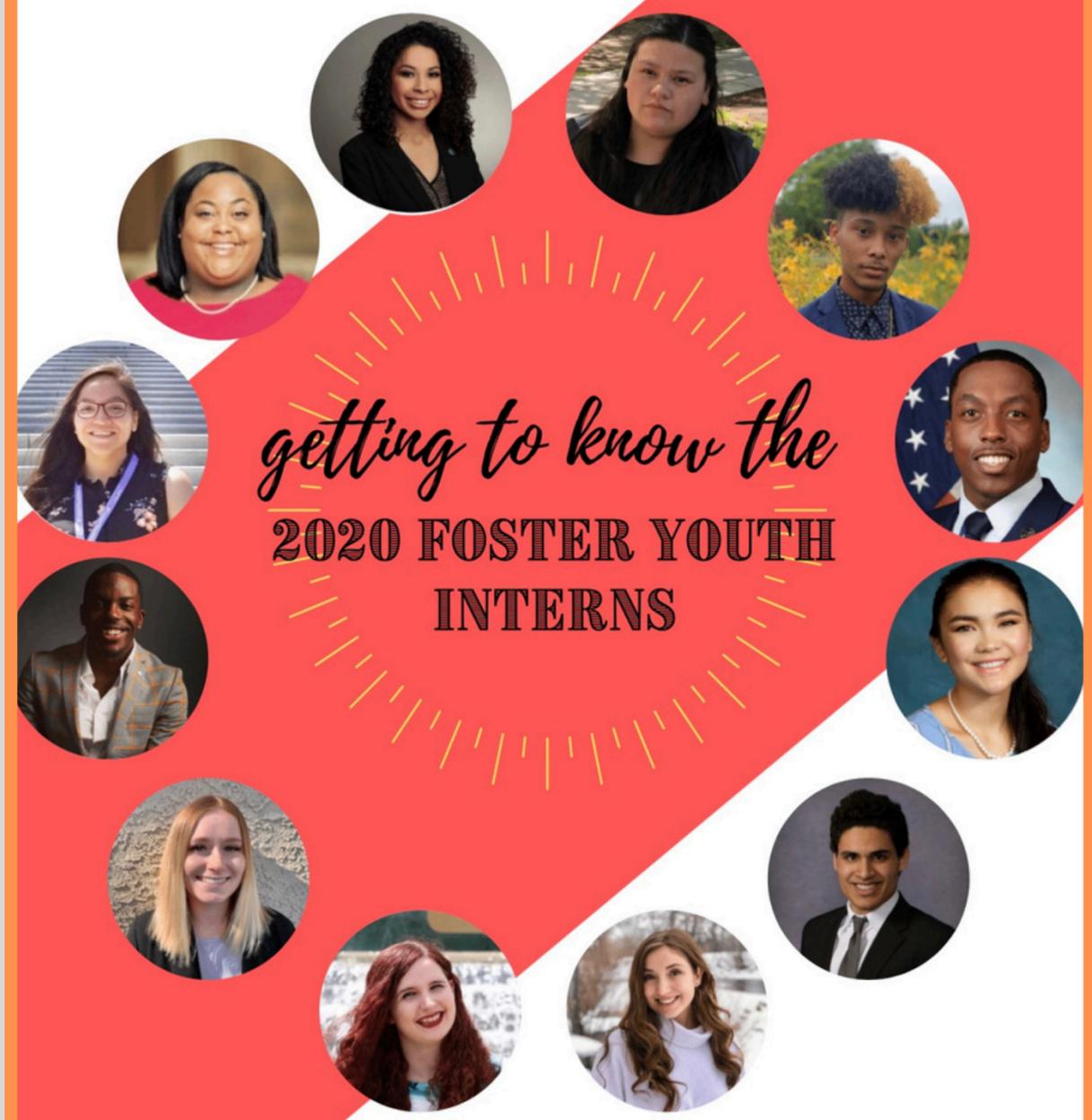




**SEEING BEYOND
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
CREATING CHANGE FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's
Foster Youth Internship Program®**

JULY 2020 | EDITION 13



getting to know the
**2020 FOSTER YOUTH
INTERNS**



CONGRESSIONAL COALITION ON ADOPTION INSTITUTE'S



FOSTER YOUTH INTERN
COVID-19 PANDEMIC
WORKING GROUP

2020 FOSTER YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM®

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING WEBINAR

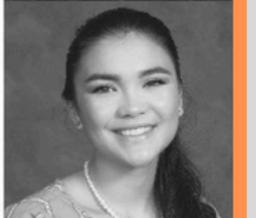
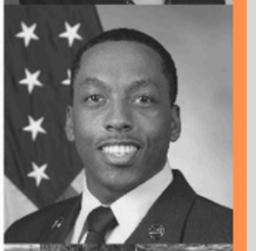
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Eastern

Twelve current and former foster youth have spent their summer in a COVID-19 Pandemic Working Group and will use their legislative knowledge combined with their personal experience to educate federal policymakers on opportunities to improve U.S. foster care given the impact of COVID-19. Each intern has researched and will present a creative policy solution on a topic to address (1) aging out and well-being, (2) safety and stability, (3) child welfare workforce, or (4) permanency. The briefing will cover pertinent COVID-19 pandemic child welfare issues such as:

- Ensuring safety and stability for vulnerable children and families
- Technology improvements in the child welfare system
- Supports for foster, adoptive, and kinship families
- Child welfare workforce strengthening
- Educational and housing supports for foster youth
- Tribal colleges/universities higher education supports

RSVP at
<https://bit.ly/fyiRSVP>



AMEX OFFERS

Melvin Roy

Membership Value Team

August 2021



Strategic Approach

Phase 1

Understand Current State

Look into AMEX Offers Platform to build an understanding.

Look into CLO Platforms/Loyalty Platforms in respective regions to develop a perspective.

Conduct Research.



Phase 2

Analyze Tactics & Performance

Develop understanding of the competitors in this space.

Identify key hurdles & opportunities for growth/improvement.

Align perspective with AMEX'S goals.



Phase 3

Recommendation

Collect all research and key findings.

Form final perspective on how AMEX could lead given the findings.

Form solid recommendation.





BY MELVIN ROY

MY TAKE

Fostering Hope

Beating the odds and helping others along the way

On March 26, 2015, I was sitting in Spanish class when I received a call that would change my life. I hesitantly made my way to the front office of Richmond Community High School, where I was greeted by social workers and my school principal. They delivered news that most 13-year-olds never receive: "After a three-month investigation, we have decided to place you and your sisters in foster care."

Shortly thereafter, I was referred to Richmond-based United Methodist Family Services' Treatment Foster Care program, which specializes in helping older children find foster families. My sisters and I were placed with a family headed by older foster parents, and when I saw our "new family," I had some reservations. It was all so new, so different and so foreign. After eight months, my sisters returned to our mother, but I stayed in care. At that point, something in me realized that with adversity comes opportunity. I wouldn't let my circumstances stop me from reaching my potential. I wanted to seek out every opportunity and support available.

Fast-forward six years and four placements later, and I'm no longer the same teenager who sat in a chair, facing my principal and social worker, in shock at that life-altering news. I am now a senior at Old Dominion University, where I am the vice president of the student body and a founder of Foster-U, a nonprofit for youth in the foster system.

It hasn't been easy, and the odds are stacked against me.

A study by the University of Chicago found that fewer than 4% of youth formerly in foster care earn their bachelor's

degree by age 24. I am working to be part of that 4%, and I am trying to put additional supports in place for others so that number grows.

When I was in high school, I participated in a UMFS program called Project LIFE (Living Independently, Focusing on Empowerment), a partnership with the Virginia Department of Social Services aimed at helping older youth successfully transition out of foster care, equipped for the demands of adulthood and, in my case, college. I began slowly — by attending support groups, eventually participating in them and ultimately leading them. I went to conferences all over Virginia where I served as a panelist and facilitated workshops.

It was there I heard the stories of kids

who were worried about getting into college and what life looked like after high school. I spent the latter half of my own years in high school buckling down and doing my best to get the grades I needed to make my college dreams come true.

When I was accepted at ODU, for the first time I felt like my future was in my own hands, and it seemed like opportunities were endless — not only opportunities for me, but opportunities to give back to others.

Many colleges and high school campuses have resources and communities for almost anything you can think of, including study help, mental health counselors, physical health, career services, foreign language clubs, and sexuality and gender alliances. But what about >



VICTORIA BRIDGES



Melvin Roy

Virginia

Recommended by U.S. Senator Mark Warner

Melvin Roy, is a force to be reckoned with in the foster care and adoption arena. In 2015, at age 15, Melvin entered foster care in Richmond, Virginia. Melvin was introduced to advocacy and other issues that directly impacted him as a youth in foster care through his involvement with Project Life. As a result, he has been able to find his voice and see the importance of encouraging others do to the same to elicit change. In 2017, Melvin became involved in SPEAKOUT, Virginia's Youth Advisory board and through his commitment and leadership capabilities he was elected President. As a freshman at Old Dominion University, Melvin started an organization, Foster-U, which connects college-aged students who have experience in the foster care system with supportive peers. He hopes to expand Foster-U to other four-year institutions as that support for foster youth is critical to their overall success while attending larger universities. In 2019, Melvin was accepted in the Foster Club, All-Star program, which provides leadership and service opportunities to young people who have spent their formative years in foster care. In 2020, he was accepted into the CCAI Foster Youth Internship Program. Through this opportunity Melvin was able to research, provide federal policy recommendations, and ultimately influence policymakers on ways to support foster youth and strengthen the child welfare system during and after the pandemic. With his foresight and passion, Melvin is looking beyond his own needs and is motivated to be an agent of change not just for foster youth in Virginia but across the nation.



Class of 2022: Melvin Roy's Experiences Inform His Advocacy

April 22, 2022

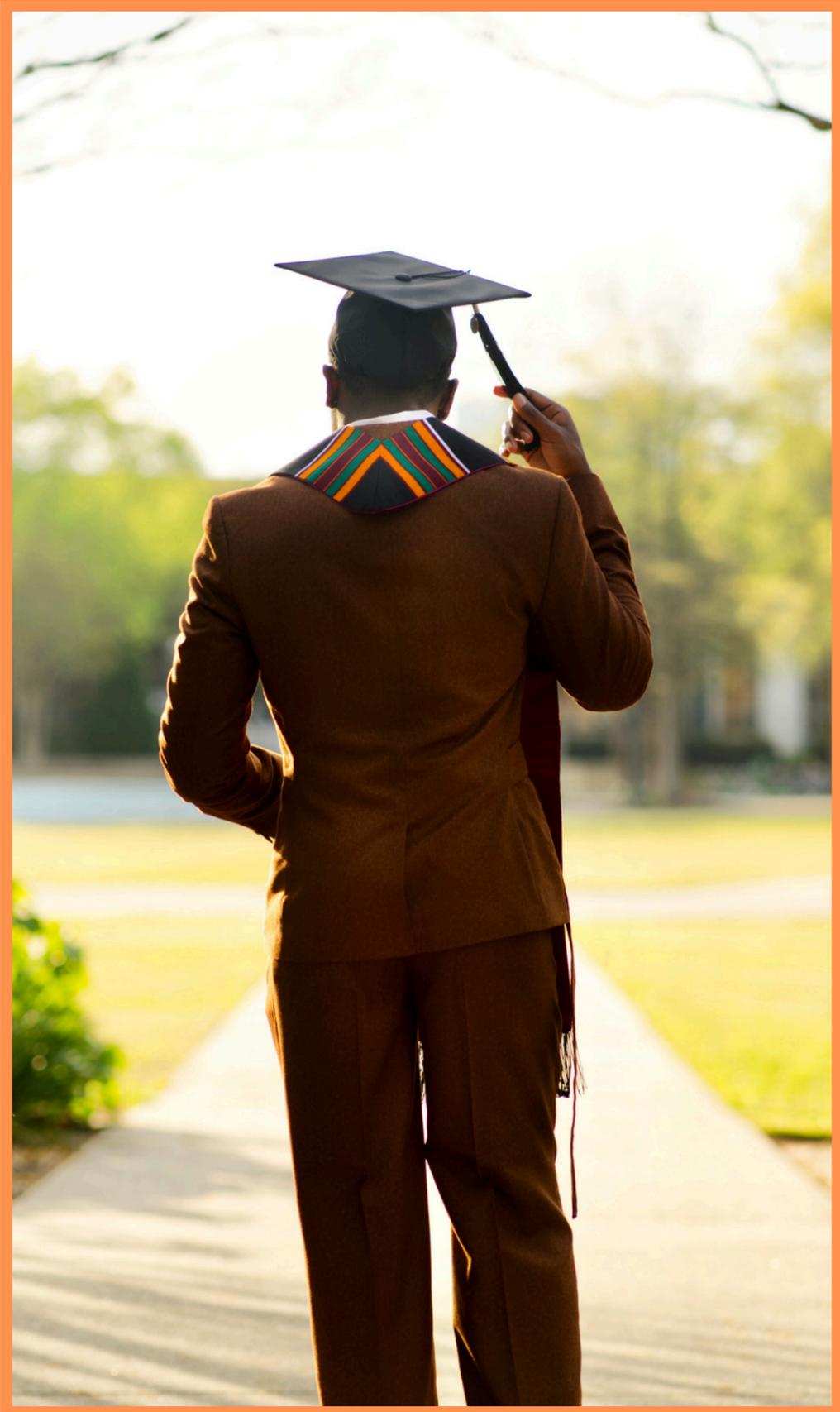
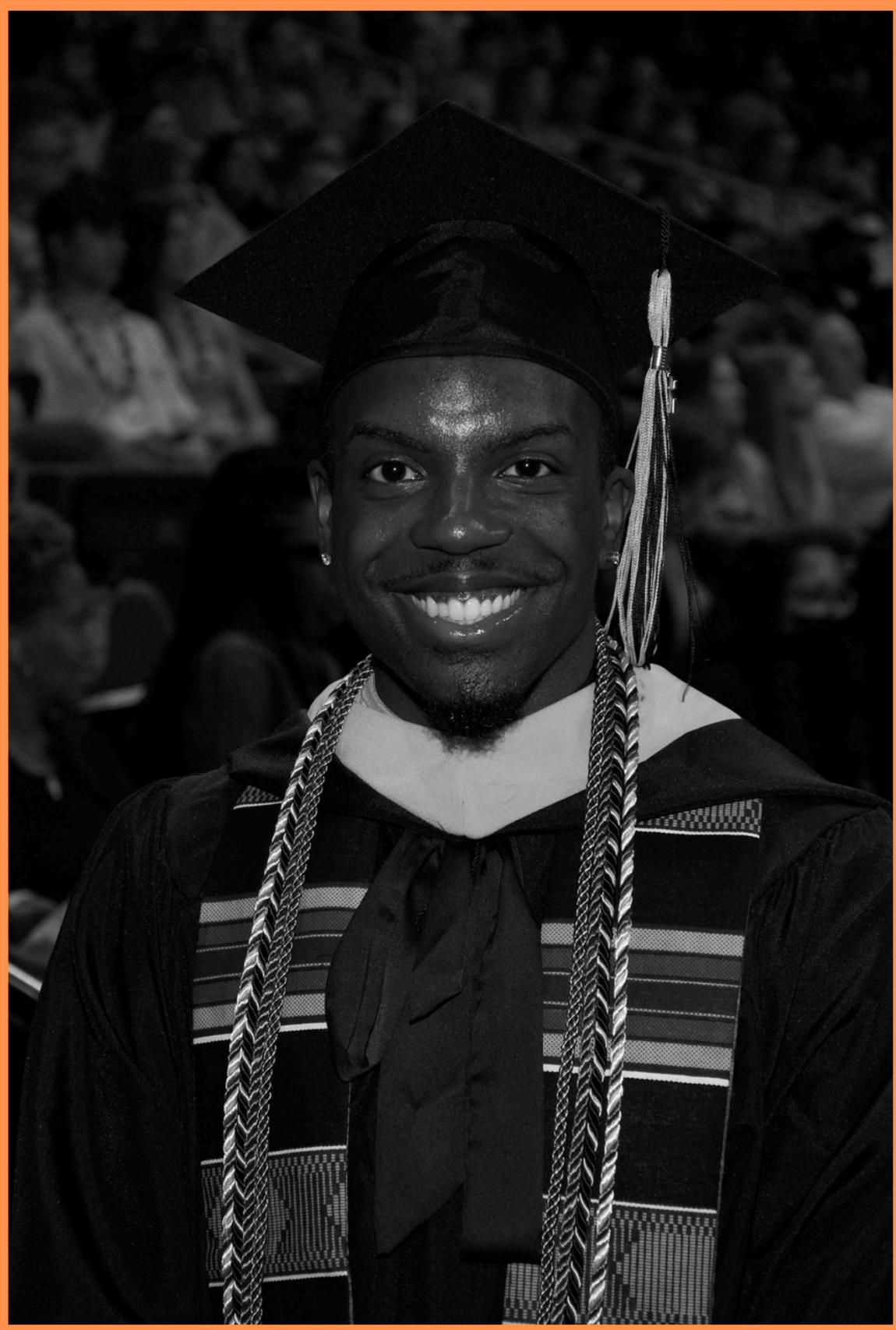


Next month, Melvin Roy will graduate with a bachelor's degree in human services.

By Phil Walzer

Melvin Roy sticks to his dreams.

He overcame the turmoil of living in four foster homes during high school to enroll at Old Dominion University in 2018.











**The Friends of
Foster Care**



THANK
YOU.

