

My name's Kirk Mayes. I'm a father, a son, a husband and a man of my community. So I grew up here, like, this is my town, not the concrete, not the grass and not the pictures, the people here, I grew up in this place. The hospital I was born in is a bicycle ride from where I am right now, and the school that I went to and all the people that I actually seen come up, and some who are not doing so well in life, some who are doing great things in life, some who are not here anymore, this is my town and these people here are the people that helped make me who I am and I love them. These are my folks.

So in some respects, when everybody looks at us and puts their nose up or feels like they would never want to touch this place, it makes me love us more and say, you know what, if nobody is going to embrace us and love us enough so we can be everything we can be, here's my hands and my arms, I got a hug for us. If in my heart was already seeded to be a servant, and I was given a life to experience the things I was experiencing, to naturally have a passion for doing things for people. And there are seven billion people in the world with all kinds of lines separating you with nationality and all that kind of stuff. I'm just going to stay in a place I was born, because the reality is, I could have been born in New York, I could have been born in Jamaica, and for some reason, the creator that I believe in, and all of the things that happened, that I don't think any of it is a mistake, I was born here and I have an affinity for some people that are relatively indiscriminate and a lot of people don't care about. I do, I care about them, they're mine. They might not have a lot of value to everybody else, but these are my folks. I feel like if we could just figure it out together, we can do something really special that could be an example for the entire world.

Most importantly, honestly, to me, Detroit has a large population of people from the African American community, the African diaspora. I am not blind to the fact that the connection between the people that I feel an affinity for in Detroit, and the people that are my family in

Jamaica are connected very viscerally by Africa, through blood and through slavery. The challenges that are indicative of the communities that are in Detroit that I am a part of, I don't feel like running from that, I feel like running towards that and saying, what can I do? Because I'm a man of this community, I'm a man of this culture... and if I don't do something about it, who else will? And honestly, who else's responsibility is it? So there's a lot of work to do in my community and my greater community.

I'm in a place that's symbolic of where we are, and it's the place where I was born. So I'm rolling up my sleeves and I'm getting some work done with my lifetime, that's why I do what I do in Detroit. It's not to be a politician, it's not to get any credit, it's not to get any kind of career move, it's because I care, because I care about our people. I don't even care if anybody knows it. If I won the lottery tomorrow, I would still be out here trying to do community change work because that's what we need to do.