



The Downtown Boxing Gym was awarded the 2017 Impact100 Metro Detroit \$100,000 grant for their literacy program Books Before Boxing.

Founder Khali Sweeney went to school in Detroit before dropping out in the 11th grade without ever learning to read. After spending some time on the streets, Khali realized that the only way to stay alive and out of jail was to get educated. He started the Downtown Boxing Gym to help get other kids off the street and keep them in school. Its mission: through education, athletics, mentorship, and intervention, the Downtown Boxing Gym empowers Detroit students to be positive and productive members of society. The Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program currently serves more than 130 students between the ages of 7 and 18, with an ever-growing waiting list. More than 75% of the enrolled students live within a 3-mile radius of the gym. Many are residents of the nearby public housing units. Their families benefit by witnessing and participating in the hands-on coaching methodology.