



# 2025 Woman of Distinction

## Nonprofit



### **AJ Jefferson**

Chief Executive Officer

*Homeless Children's Education Fund*

AJ Jefferson spearheaded the impactful YOU CAN campaign, marking its third year, during Homeless Children's Awareness Month. In collaboration with elected officials and community partners, this initiative has increased awareness of youth facing homelessness and has been instrumental in expanding Homeless Children's Education Fund's (HCEF) programming.

AJ's commitment to youth development shines through the Teen CEO (Career Exploration Opportunity) program, launched in 2022. This workforce development initiative offers high school juniors and seniors hands-on experience, career exploration, and confidence-building opportunities. Under AJ's leadership, the program grew from 3 to 14 students in just one year, supported by partnerships with local organizations.

AJ also led a partnership with the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh to create Winnie's Wagon, a mobile classroom delivering tutoring, school supplies, and wrap-around services anywhere students experience homelessness. As a key accomplishment, AJ secured the largest grant in HCEF's 25-year history—the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency VIP grant—enabling the launch of a second mobile classroom and the expansion of Teen CEO, which will benefit thousands of students.

Recognized for her advocacy, AJ has been featured in national media and earned the *Pittsburgh Business Times* C-Suite Award. Her leadership continues to provide hope and pathways to success for youth experiencing homelessness.