

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **BRICK Education Network Selected by Harlem Children's Zone to Share in \$26 Million Grant Through The Audacious Project Earmarked for Covid-19 Relief and Recovery**

NEWARK, NJ, July 21, 2020 -- BRICK Education Network (BEN) is among a short and impactful list of non-profit organizations based in major cities across the country chosen by global advocate against poverty and racial inequities, the [Harlem Children's Zone](#) (HCZ), to join forces in the on-going Covid-19 response in hard hit communities of color. The nationwide initiative is part of a \$50 million Covid relief and recovery effort, of which \$26 million has been committed through The Audacious Project at TED.

One of six cities across the nation selected, [BEN](#) is the only partner organization in the tri-state area and Northeast region. It will receive an initial \$2 million as one of HCZ's partnering institutions with the goal of securing an additional \$2 million to further provide COVID-19 related aid.

As the only African-American led charter management organization in New Jersey, serving students and families in Newark, BEN's model, like HCZ is rooted in a holistic approach providing families with financial, food, housing, employment, medical and mental health resources and services -- through its two-generation support division, the South Ward Promise Neighborhood (SWPN).

"BEN is humbled and honored to be selected by the Harlem's Children's Zone," said Dominique Lee, Founder and CEO of BEN. "We directly serve over 1,800 students and their families in our schools and indirectly serve over 2,000 kids and families through neighborhood-based programming. The support from HCZ and The Audacious Project will allow us to continue doing the critical Covid relief work Newark's South Ward residents desperately need now more than ever."

"BRICK Education Network's clear vision of unlocking the limitless potential of our young people by removing barriers to success resonates with me given the work we do in Harlem. COVID-19 poses one of the greatest threats to communities of color all across the nation, so we are excited to partner with BEN Founder and CEO, Dominique Lee, and the BEN team to ensure that communities in Newark are equipped with vital resources and information to tackle COVID head on," said Harlem Children's Zone CEO Kwame Owusu-Kesse.

Also assisting BEN in scaling its efforts are a distinguished group of national partners including the [NAACP](#), [StriveTogether](#), and [PolicyLink](#). Together, they will leverage their collective reputations as community advocates and organizers to raise awareness and identify solutions to the racial disparities magnified during this unprecedented time.

### **About BRICK Education Network**

BRICK (Building Resilient, Intelligent Creative Kids) Education Network (BEN) is a charter management organization based in Newark, New Jersey. BEN is powered by visionary, diverse leaders committed to fighting the status quo. BEN's mission is to relentlessly knock down all barriers to students' academic success so they can have an unimpeded path to unlocking his or her limitless potential and ending the cycle of lost dreams. To learn more about BEN, visit <http://brickeducation.org/>.

### **About Harlem Children's Zone**

Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) is breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty with on-the-ground, all-around programming that builds up opportunities for children and families to thrive in school, work and life. From early childhood, education and career programs to community outreach and wellness initiatives, HCZ opens possibilities for more people, in more places. Guided by a generation of evidence, HCZ is rooting out poverty on every front across the nation and around the world. In Central Harlem, HCZ's reach spans 100 blocks, with high-quality programs at more than 30 sites throughout the neighborhood. Through the HCZ Practitioners Institute, more than 500 United States-based community delegations and 186 international delegations — including public officials, educators and nonprofit leaders — have visited to learn about HCZ's comprehensive cradle-to-career solutions. And now, together with national partners and local collaborators, the William Julius Wilson Institute at HCZ will serve as the leading authority on and resource for place-based, people-focused strategies, support services and tools that open pathways to social and economic mobility in communities across America.

Learn more at [HCZ.org](http://HCZ.org).

### **About The Audacious Project**

Launched in April 2018, The Audacious Project is a collaborative funding initiative that's catalyzing social impact on a grand scale. Housed at TED, the nonprofit devoted to ideas worth spreading, and with support from leading social impact advisor The Bridgespan Group, The Audacious Project convenes funders and social entrepreneurs with the goal of supporting bold solutions to the world's most urgent challenges. The Audacious Project's funding collective is made up of respected organizations and individuals in philanthropy, including the Skoll Foundation, Virgin Unite, The Valhalla Charitable Foundation, ELMA Philanthropies, and more.

The Audacious model was created to be a catalyst for social impact at a grand scale. Key to the mission is being able to pivot rapidly to support where the need is greatest in the moment. In line with that purpose, Audacious is directing funds towards several COVID-19 related solutions

tailored to immediate response and recovery. The Audacious Project is proud to support Fast Grants, GiftDirectly, Harlem Children's Zone, Partners in Health, Project Echo, and World Central Kitchen.

Learn more at [AudaciousProject.org](https://audaciousproject.org).

**Additional Links: [Kwame Owusu-Kesse's TED Talk](#)**