

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BRICK Education Network Outlines Blueprint for Successful COVID-19 Response and Recovery During Virtual Forum with Community Leaders and Funders**

***BEN model tackles disparities in underserved communities of color***



### **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES**

- Delivered over 1000 touchless food packages (SWCA)
- Assisted over 100 families with emergency cash relief
- Distributed over 2,500 meals to the community (BEN)
- Supported over 500 families through the hotline



### **MITIGATE THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

- SWCA licensed social works conducted over 100 virtual mental health sessions with community members



### **ZERO LEARNING LOSS**

- Distributed over 1,000 Chromebooks
- Performed over 4,680 virtual lessons to students
- Averaging 82% rate of daily attendance

\*Data as of June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020—services are ongoing



*BRICK Education Network provided much-needed services to Newark families during the COVID-19 pandemic. To view the presentation about their efforts to help families progress towards financial, health, educational, and emotional recovery during these challenging times, [click here](#) or on the image above.*

**NEWARK, NJ** – Joined by elected officials, grant funders, non-profit partners and community stakeholders, Newark-based charter management organization BRICK Education Network (BEN) hosted a Virtual Partners' Forum recently to discuss the organization's successful response to COVID-19 and future plans to serve residents in the "new normal" post COVID-19. During the forum, BEN discussed the organization's

work in Newark over the last decade, as well as how the organization quickly pivoted to provide much-needed services to impacted families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“BRICK Education Network and the South Ward Community Alliance quickly sprang into action during the COVID-19 crisis, reaching out to Newark families to understand what support was needed during this challenging time,” **Dominique Lee, Founder and CEO of BRICK Education Network (BEN).**

BEN believes in creating a supportive “ecosystem” for Newark residents by building partnerships and investing in technology. The ecosystem is anchored by high-quality education and supported by accessible quality healthcare, quality early childhood education, affordable housing, and family support and workforce development.

During the height of the pandemic, BEN provided over 5,000 individual touchpoints with families through food distribution, social services, healthcare referrals, academic supports, employment and housing assistance. In addition, BEN created a hotline to address community needs, and the South Ward Children’s Alliance (SWCA) partnered with ride share company LYFT to provide free rides to residents of the South Ward during the pandemic. The SWCA is a division of BEN that was established in 2014 and is a powerful collaborative effort of more than 25 local organizations working together to invest in South Ward families.

“We know there is still so much work ahead as Newark families adjust to the new normal,” **continued Lee.** “That is why we started the WEAR WITH FLAIR Campaign to help essential workers and families obtain masks and PPE, and it is why we are hosting a Virtual Summer School to mitigate learning loss in the summer months and help our amazing students on their path to success.”

BEN is committed to ensuring the community’s needs will continue to be met if there is a resurgence of the virus in the fall as New Jersey’s economy reopens and children return to school. This summer, BEN will offer Virtual Summer School to 640 students in grades K-7<sup>th</sup> working towards mastery of essential skills for the next grade level. BEN is particularly focused on supporting workforce development and rental assistance needs for families as they recover from the pandemic.

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#### **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/>.