

## **“I Have A Dream” Foundation Names Otis Hackney as New President and CEO**

*Hackney Most Recently Served as Chief Education Officer for the City of Philadelphia in the Mayor’s Office of Education and Has Been an “I Have A Dream” Board Member Since 2019*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA (October 19, 2022)** – Today, the “I Have A Dream” Foundation (IHDF) announced the appointment of Otis Hackney as President and CEO, effective November 7, 2022. Mr. Hackney will succeed Eugena Oh, who has served in these roles since October 2017 and will continue to serve the organization as a member of its Board following the leadership transition.

Mr. Hackney has served as a Board member at IHDF since 2019, helping to forge partnerships between local educators and policymakers. As Chief Education Officer for Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, Mr. Hackney facilitated crucial collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders to strengthen the local educational landscape and advance key educational policy. Guided by the belief that every child deserves access to great schools close to where they live, Mr. Hackney helped the School District of Philadelphia return to local control with a mayoral appointed board and secured free internet access for students to participate in virtual learning at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to MOE, Mr. Hackney was the principal of South Philadelphia High School, during which his transformative leadership was chronicled by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Mr. Hackney received his B.A. in Secondary Mathematics Education from Temple University and his M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Lehigh University.

“On behalf of the entire ‘I Have A Dream’ Foundation board, I want to welcome Otis as our new CEO,” said Chairman Richard B. Saltzman. “We are thrilled and feel extremely fortunate that Otis, who has been a terrific board member and valuable contributor to our organization these past several years, will lead IHDF going forward in a relatively seamless way. At the same time, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Eugena for her exemplary service to IHDF these past 11 years, including the last five as CEO. The organization is strong, poised for future growth, and benefiting from new and exciting partnerships, which include funding sources that are helping us achieve the next level of our goals. In fact, we are very pleased to announce that Eugena will be officially joining our board, allowing her to continue supporting our efforts.”

IHDF is well positioned to continue making equitable education a reality by engaging communities and children (“Dreamers”) through individualized programs and tuition support. Recent accomplishments include:

- the merger of the National “I Have A Dream” Foundation with the New York Metro affiliate;
- the welcoming of over 600 new Dreamers in Idaho, New York, New Jersey, Miami, Dallas, Milwaukee, and Boulder during the 2022-2023 school year;
- a 3-year, \$1.5M grant from the USDOJ to support mentoring programs nationwide, as well as an AmeriCorps VISTA grant to provide capacity building support to 8 affiliates; and
- significant program pivots during the COVID-19 pandemic to address food insecurity, virtual or socially distanced program service delivery, and financial emergencies.

“I am truly excited to embark upon this journey to lead the ‘I Have A Dream’ Foundation with a renewed passion to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty,” said Mr. Hackney. “I am grateful for Eugena’s dedication to this mission over the past five years and look forward to utilizing my experience as Chief Education Officer for Mayor Kenney to help Dreamers across the nation reach higher education.”

I Have A Dream (“IHDF”) is a movement that empowers young people to achieve their dreams through education and mentoring. IHDF provides students, their families and communities with academic,

financial, and emotional support to overcome social inequity. IHDF builds trust by partnering with young people from kindergarten to career, ensuring that they become compassionate adults and have the opportunity for meaningful choices, to create a more just society.

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### **About “I Have A Dream” Foundation**

IHDF is focused on breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty through a comprehensive program of support that follows the same group of young people (“Dreamers”) from elementary school all the way through college. Founded 41 years ago through the vision of Eugene Lang, IHDF operates in 9 cities and has served over 20,000 Dreamers.

The numbers: 51% of students in U.S. public schools—over 25 Million children—are low-income, and only 9% of low-income students earn a bachelor’s degree, compared to 77% of their high-income peers. 90% of Dreamers complete high school, compared to 70% of their low-income peers, representing an additional \$2.9 Billion in earnings over their lifetimes. Dreamers are nearly 3 times more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree than their low-income peers. Without this level of support, the cycle of poverty continues: 65% of children whose parents have no more than a high school diploma live in poverty. Now, over 35 years after Eugene M. Lang’s life changing promise, Dreamers have children who are attending college themselves.

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