



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jesse Hamilton

## Launch of First Technology and Wellness Hub at Public Housing Site in the United States in Brownsville

EAN FULLERTON October 21, 2016

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**Brooklyn, NY** – Alongside colleagues, community-based groups, and educators, NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton opened the Campus this afternoon in Brownsville at P.S. 298 Dr. Betty Shabazz School & Brownsville Collaborative Middle School. The ribbon-cutting ceremony included leaders from state and city government, community based organizations, and key Campus stakeholders before a tour of Campus facilities and inaugural Campus classes. Attendees included NYS Senate Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins,

NYS Assembly Member Latrice Walker, NYC Department of Probation Commissioner Ana M. Bermúdez, NYC Council Member Rafael L. Espinal, and representatives from the NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo's office, NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio's office, NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer's office, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams' office, and the Brooklyn District Attorney's office.

The Campus has been the beneficiary of countless hours and invaluable expertise volunteered by community based organizations. The Campus has also received critical support from Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, who committed \$500,000 to the Campus in March for educational tools and equipment to support science, technology, arts, engineering, and math education (e.g. STEAM carts, 3D printers, robotics kits). Assemblywoman Latrice Walker has committed \$125,000 to upgrade the Howard Houses Community Center, a key on-campus hub.

Modeled on a college campus, the Campus aims to empower youth and help meet an array of community needs. The offerings of the Campus are aligned along five tracks: Technology, Coding and App Development; Career Development & Entrepreneurship; Health and Wellness; Violence Prevention; Cultural, Media, and Performing Arts.

The Campus opens one month after the September 21st shooting death of Rysheen Ervin, just minutes before and steps away from a Campus stakeholders meeting at Howard Houses Community Center. Ervin's death only strengthened the resolve of the stakeholders to the mission of the Campus. In cooperation with the 73rd Precinct, under Inspector Miguel A.

Iglesias, and NYPD Police Service Area 2, under Deputy Inspector Rafael A. Mascol, the NYPD has undertaken further measures for Campus security.

**NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton** said, "Imagine being a teenager whose family lives in public housing. The school day has just come to a close and it is time to head home. What options are available to you? The answer to that question makes all the difference living in Brownsville. The Campus will serve as a pathway to success for our youth in Brownsville, where our children can be successful academically. The goal is to provide a safe haven for kids where they can thrive - learning about technology, career development, entrepreneurship, wellness, and culture. Thank you to all the leaders in government, across the community, and +50 community-based organizations who are making this bold initiative possible. It takes a village and the village begins with us."

**Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams** said, "I am proud to be a member of The Campus community. Brownsville is the place of my birth, and I am inspired by this collaborative effort to empower the next generation of this neighborhood through programming and resources that advance STEM education, career development, arts enrichment, as well as health and wellness. I thank State Senator Hamilton for spearheading this holistic and innovative initiative, one that I am so pleased to support with my capital budget, which will help the best of Brownsville to shine its brightest."

**New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer** said, "If we want to make sure everyone has a fair shot to compete in the 21st century, then we need to celebrate invaluable new programs like

The Campus. Improving digital literacy, expanding coding skills, providing afterschool programs, promoting wellness—all are melded together in this innovative initiative. We need to ensure our young people are active and safe, and we need to equip them with the skills they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond. That’s why I’m pleased to celebrate this launch. Building digital literacy in every neighborhood is critical to our future, and this new space will be an important step forward.”

**Council Member Rafael L Espinal, Jr.** said, “Students with access to technology are our future app developers. Students with access to libraries are our future authors and poets. And, students with access to cooking classes are our future healthy families. All of our children deserve the tools they need for success. Particularly the children of Brownsville-- and other low-income communities like the ones I represent in Brooklyn-- who have historically been under-resourced, have so much to gain from these investments. I applaud Senator Jesse Hamilton on his vision and leadership in creating this historic “Campus.” I am excited to see the benefits of this multifaceted and comprehensive approach to cultivating our youth and affording them the opportunities that will launch their achievement.”

“At the Department of Probation, we believe that strengthening communities is key to public safety and are proud to partner with State Senator Jesse Hamilton on the opening of *The Campus*,” said **New York City Probation Commissioner Ana Bermudez**. “We have embedded our work within communities through our Neighborhood Opportunity Networks (NeONs), and the people on probation and other community residents served at our Brownsville NeON will greatly benefit from *The Campus*. Focusing on technology and wellness, *The Campus* will provide exciting opportunities aimed at preventing justice-system

involvement through its community-focused, highly engaging approach.”

“It is great to see this level of investment in the youth of Brownsville, and we look forward to collaborating with The Campus to reach the goal of improving the health of all residents in the neighborhood,” said **Dr. Torian Easterling, Assistant Commissioner, Health Department's Brooklyn Neighborhood Health Action Center**. “The Campus’ goal of bringing a health focus to the neighborhood complements the City’s future Brownsville Neighborhood Health Action Center, which will provide space for community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, health care institutions and other city agencies to work together to advance neighborhood health.”

“NYCHA is proud to be part of the ‘Campus,’ a powerful example of how collaboration can improve quality of life for residents,” said **NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly**. “The holistic approach of this innovative partnership – increasing access to technology while addressing public health challenges – will strengthen pathways to opportunity for all and create healthier, more connected NYCHA communities.”

**Matt Curinga, Associate Professor and Director of the graduate program in Educational Technology at Adelphi University** said, “We are so enthusiastic about the Campus project because it inverts the usual narrative surrounding underserved communities like Brownsville. With the Campus, we will implement the latest research and practices in STEM and Computer Science Education in Brownsville first, making it a model for New York City and the country. This fits well with our vision of technology education at Adelphi, and we

look forward to working with and learning from the Campus community."

**Jay Corcoran, Documentary Filmmaker, Senior Digital Content Producer, Columbia Business School, Brownsville Media Lab**, said, "We are thrilled to partner with The Campus to develop our young talent to become the next generation of innovative digital storytellers."

"The Campus will play a vital role in Brownsville and throughout Brooklyn, providing needed resources and expertise to those who can't otherwise access them," said **Brooklyn Chamber President and CEO Carlo A. Scissura**. "Its array of different offerings, spanning technology, the arts and violence prevention, will allow it to educate a lot of people in a diverse environment. Many thanks to Borough President Adams and Assemblywoman Walker for providing the resources this project needed to move forward."

"Uncommon Schools is honored to be a part of The Campus, blazing the trail by being the first to offer technology and wellness services at a public housing site in the US. We are excited to work alongside all of the community partners led by NYS Senator Hamilton to meet the needs of children and families in the Brownsville community. " said **Tara Marlovits, Chief Operating Officer of Uncommon Schools NYC** which runs 22 high-performing charter schools in Brooklyn.

**Mon Yuck Yu, Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff at Academy of Medical & Public Health Services**, said, "Many youth in our communities lack resources for quality education and

career development, which in the end, affects not only their career prospects, but their physical and mental well-being. Young adults are one of the most at-risk populations for suicide and self-harm, much of it due to environmental pressures such as poverty, bullying and drugs. The Campus will enable young innovators to channel their creative energies into positive drivers for social change. The incubator environment will also provide essential professional development opportunities that encourage our youth to advance professionally, while also holistically addressing other socioeconomic factors that influence their social determinants of health.

"It is time to change the status quo. The Academy of Medical and Public Health Services is proud to partner with Senator Hamilton to take this important first step. We will be working with the Campus to offer pop-up health screening clinics, health programming, and mental health first aid workshops for youth and their families. These on-site activities will provide our community members with a one-stop-shop that helps them engage in healthier lifestyle behaviors and assist others in their community experiencing physical and mental health challenges. Our goal is to normalize health as a part of their everyday lives, that is accessible to everyone, regardless of age, income, or education."

"At Brooklyn Legal Services, we are thankful to Senator Hamilton for bringing together this partnership of numerous multiservice organizations to empower young residents of Brownsville and their families," **Luis A. Henriquez Carrero, Director of BLS' Tenant Rights Coalition.**

**Euphemia S. Adams, Co-founder and CEO of Families On The Move of NYC, Inc.** said, "It has been said that "where there is no vision, the people perish". "The Campus", spearheaded by Senator Jesse Hamilton, is a vision that has materialized to bring resources such as: technology, health, violence prevention, career development, and entrepreneurship to some of the most vulnerable youth in Brownsville. Incorporating cultural, media, and Performing Arts, "The Campus" offers supervised resources in a safe environment that helps to combat many of the challenges confronting this community. "The Campus" will provide youth with access to the tools that enables them to be competitive, fosters hope, and prepares them for a brighter future. Under the leadership of Senator Jesse Hamilton, "The Campus" pulls together the services provided by community-based programs to empower youth that can facilitate healing a community that has seen more than its share of violence. Thank you Senator Jesse Hamilton for investing in the youth who are our future!"

**Joel Berg, CEO Hunger Free America**, said, "Hunger Free America supports the Technology and Wellness Hub in Brownsville, NY as an invaluable resource in the community, where students and adults can gain access to information on SNAP (the program formerly known as food stamps), free meals for students, as well as Hunger Free America's Guides to Food and Assistance of local soup kitchens and food pantries in the area. We look forward to seeing all of the many benefits this hub will have for the community."

**Dr. Danielle Moss Lee, President & CEO, YWCA of the City of New York** said, "The YWCA of the City of New York is extremely excited to stand alongside Senator Jesse Hamilton and the other key stakeholders to kickoff Brownsville's first technology and wellness hub. The YWCA of the City of New York has provided programs for youth in the Brownsville community for



more than 35 years and this is an amazing opportunity to collaborate with other leaders from the public, social, and private sector in addressing the economic and public health challenges of the residents of Brownsville. This Campus project will provide a platform that will expand the reach of programs and services and has the potential to transform the lives of the families that reside there."

**Angela M. Williams, President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., East Kings County Alumnae Chapter**, said, "The East Kings County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is proud to be included in this innovative endeavor to enrich and enhance the Brownsville community. It is an honor to support the vision of Senator Hamilton, and his efforts to advance and edify community members of all ages. We are all called to serve, we are excited by the opportunity to arm our people with knowledge."

**Curtis Harris, Founder and Executive Director of Green Earth Poets Cafe**, said, " I applaud this effort for the community of Brownsville Brooklyn by NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton. Being born in Brownsville I am aware of the unique needs of this community. The campus is so desperately needed to give our youth a greater sense of hope and purpose. We are honored to be a part of this endeavor."

**Anthony Newerls of Camba Cure Violence**, said, "The Future of our youth has become much brighter with the Campus in this community."

**Michael Tucker of The Lay The Guns Down Foundation** said, "It is a privilege and honor to be a part of the outstanding platform of generosity, support, and change in the community and I look forward to putting in the groundwork in the future."

**Kareem Nelson, Founder and Director of Wheelchairs Against Guns**, said "Wheelchairs Against Guns are excited to host conflict resolution and critical thinking classes with The Campus initiative. This groundbreaking project is part of Senator Hamilton's broader effort to expand opportunities for young people in our communities"

**Levell Franklin, Creative Director, Chosen 1 E.N.T. LLC**, said, "Creativity is life.....this program promotes mental and physical health, focus, body awareness and discipline. All attributes our young generations need more than ever."

Background

Tracks & Community Partners

- Technology, Coding and App Development - Greg "Jocko" Jackson Track
  - Adelphi University
  - Advocates for Children of NY

- Blue1647
- Brownsville Media Lab
- CAMBA
- Digital Girl
- Made in Brownsville
- The Knowledge House
- United Federation of Teachers
- Wix.com
  
- Career Development & Entrepreneurship - Kenneth Thompson Track
  - Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
  - Brooklyn Public Library
  - Brooklyn Workforce 1
  - Brownsville Community Justice Center
  - Brownsville JobsPlus
  - Brownsville Partnership
  - DreamBig Foundation
  - New York City Department of Probation
  - NY State Afterschool Network
  - Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
  - Pitkin Ave BID
  - Uncommon Schools

- Health and Wellness - Rosetta "Mother" Gaston Track
  - Academy of Medical & Public Health Services
  - Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger
  - Brooklyn Legal Services
  - Brooklyn Pitbulls
  - Delta Sigma Theta, East Kings County Alumnae Chapter
  - Families On The Move
  - Global Trauma Research's Trauma Center at Haitian-American Community Coalition
  - Good Shepherd Services
  - Green Earth Poets Cafe
  - Hunger Free America
  - Mo Better Football Team
  - Mt. Ollie Baptist Church
  - New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
  - NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health
  - Social Work Diva
  - The Harris Project
  - YWCA Early Learning Center
  
- Violence Prevention - Rysheen Ervin Track
  - Brownsville In Violence Out
  - Central Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation

- Lay The Guns Down Foundation
- The Center for Anti-Violence Education
- Wheelchairs Against Guns
  
- Cultural, Media, and Performing Arts - Michelle Obama Track
  - Crossfire Steel Orchestra (Music)
  - Culinary Arts by Wendy Regisford
  - JoshuaPaige.com (Visual Arts)
  - Kick The Can Entertainment (Film)
  - School Grooves - Levell Franklin (Dance)
  - Urban Asanas Yoga

One survey of Brownsville community residents found “nothing to do after school” as one of the top ten youth problems in Brownville, with 72% of respondents ages 25 and older saying lack of afterschool programs was a big problem and 58% of respondents ages 16-24 saying it was a big problem. Other top ten problems identified in the survey included, unemployment, few adult role models, and a lack of other educational/training opportunities. (Source: Center for Court Innovation "Community Perceptions of Brownsville" 2011 <http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/Brownsville%20Op%20Data%20FINAL.pdf> )

In District 23 during the 2012-2013 school year: 39.9% of K-5 grade students had chronic or severe absence, 29.7% of 6-8 grade students had chronic or severe absence, and 58.6% of high school students had chronic or severe absence (chronic absence defined as 18-35 absences, severe absence defined as 36 or more absences). (Source: "A Better Picture of Poverty, What Chronic Absenteeism and Risk Load Reveal About NYC's Lowest-Income Elementary Schools", 2014, [http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/BetterPictureofPoverty\\_PA\\_FINAL\\_001.pdf](http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/BetterPictureofPoverty_PA_FINAL_001.pdf) )

NYC School District 23, covering Brownsville, ranks as among the school districts whose students face homelessness at the highest rates - ranking number two of Brooklyn's twelve school districts, and number four of New York City's thirty-two districts. (Source: Atlas of Student Homelessness in New York City 2015, [http://www.icphusa.org/PDF/reports/OnTheMap\\_TheAtlasofStudentHomelessnessinNewYorkCity2015.pdf](http://www.icphusa.org/PDF/reports/OnTheMap_TheAtlasofStudentHomelessnessinNewYorkCity2015.pdf) )

Percent of NYC youth ages 16 – 24 out of school and out of work		
by age group and race/ethnic group, 2014		
Race	Ages 16 - 19	Ages 20 - 24
Black, non-Hispanic	9.0%	27.3%
Hispanic or Latino	10.9%	24.8%
White, non-Hispanic	4.5%	10.3%

Total	8.5%	21.1%
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(Source: University of Illinois at Chicago, Great Cities Institute "Lost: The Crisis Of Jobless and Out Of School Teens and Young Adults In Chicago, Illinois and the U.S." January 2016 [http://www.asnchicago.org/docs/Youth\\_Employment\\_Hearing\\_Report\\_01252016.pdf](http://www.asnchicago.org/docs/Youth_Employment_Hearing_Report_01252016.pdf) )

About Senator Hamilton:

Senator Jesse Hamilton has spent his entire career helping people, including over 15 years as President of the School Board and District Leader. He is a husband, father, and public servant delivering and fighting for one of the most diverse Senate districts in New York State.

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