

KIPP New Jersey Hosts Annual “Be the Change” Event in Celebration of Student Accomplishments and Community Leaders

Newark, NJ (June 2, 2016) – KIPP New Jersey hosted the Ninth Annual “Be the Change” Celebration at the New Jersey Performance Arts Center on June 1, 2016. At the event, KIPP New Jersey highlighted the accomplishments of its students throughout the school year and honored the service of Councilwoman Gayle Chaneyfield Jenkins; volunteer Dan Cohen; Dun & Bradstreet, and a group of dedicated parents; all of whom have made substantial contributions to ensuring a quality education for KIPP New Jersey students.

Inspired by the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world,” the annual event was established in 2007 to celebrate and honor community leaders and parents that have embodied those words and helped facilitate positive changes in Newark and Camden’s schools and communities.

Two KIPP New Jersey 2012 alumni, A’dorian Murray-Thomas and Chris Eley, served as the event’s keynote speakers. Murray-Thomas, a recent graduate of Swarthmore College, has been honored by *Glamour* as one of the magazine’s “College Women of the Year” for 2016. After receiving a \$10,000 grant Murray-Thomas founded SHE Wins!, a non-profit organization that provides a safe space for girls affected by violence. She has worked with over 50 mentees to help them achieve their passions and have their voices heard.

Eley is founder of K Heart, an organization dedicated to enhancing lives by inspiring individuals to positively affect their world around them. Since the non-profit’s creation only a few years ago, K Heart has sponsored 150 families in Newark through an annual Holiday Feast. He also recently launched the AFC Scholarship, which is awarded to a KIPP Newark Collegiate Academy high school student demonstrating positive change in their community.

Other speakers at this year’s Celebration included KIPP New Jersey Founder and CEO, Ryan Hill; KIPP Lanning Square Middle School Leader, Bridgit Cusato-Rosa; and various KIPP New Jersey students. The Newark Collegiate Academy Drumline and music ensembles from KIPP New Jersey’s Seek, SPARK, Life and THRIVE Academy schools also performed.

“This year’s ‘Be the Change’ celebration was a huge success,” said Ryan Hill, KIPP New Jersey Founder and CEO. “It’s always incredible to have so many different people all in one room including elected officials, teachers, students, families, board members, and supporters. We have a great deal to celebrate this year and we are extremely proud of what our leaders, parents, teachers, faculty and supporters have done to make both a quality education and the achievement of their dreams attainable for our students.”

The event was sponsored by Dun & Bradstreet, Patricia and Robert O’Brien, and the Pike and Susan Sullivan Foundation. This year’s KIPP New Jersey “Be the Change” Award honorees included:

Councilwoman Gayle Chaneyfield Jenkins

Central Ward Councilwoman Gayle Chaneyfield Jenkins has over 20 years’ experience in public policy. As Councilwoman-At-Large for the City of Newark from 1995-2006, she is often credited as one of the city’s most prominent leaders responsible for a period of unprecedented economic growth. During her time in office, Jenkins authored major legislative initiatives and had a large role in facilitating major development projects such as NJPAC and the Newark Prudential Center.

After an eight-year hiatus from public office, she was elected to serve as Councilwoman for the Central Ward. Jenkins has been a strong advocate for protecting the legacy of communities by developing economic opportunities, and creating a sound infrastructure for the Newark community.

Dan Cohen

After developing and managing a college mentorship program at ReServe, Inc. from 2009 to 2012, Dan Cohen was accepted into Teach For America, where he founded KIPP SPARK Academy, which helps mentor young people in both reading and math.

Cohen has been engaged in bringing opportunity to high school students for 25 years. He created a program that helps bring professionals into the classroom to better interact with students and promote potential career opportunities.

Prior to his work in volunteerism, Cohen has had an expansive media career that includes The New York Times Company and his own award-winning television production company, Cohen & Sons. He has experience as an independent filmmaker, a television journalist and a cable

television programmer. He also owns DeepSee, LLC, a submarine leasing company that benefits both for-profit and not-for profit organizations dedicated to ocean exploration.

Dun & Bradstreet

Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) is a relationship-driven data company that connects consumers with prospects, suppliers, clients and partners. Nearly ninety percent for Fortune 500 companies worldwide rely on D&B's data, insight and analytics. D&B drives social and economic development that contributes to the sustainability of the communities that it serves.

D&B encourages its employees to consider social responsibility and bring corporate citizenship to every aspect of the organization, which has helped the company find consistent recognition as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies.

KIPP New Jersey Parents

KIPP New Jersey has a dedicated parent and family network that spends countless hours working and volunteering in KIPP New Jersey schools and the surrounding community, all in the name of ensuring quality education for students. This year, KIPP launched a network-wide nomination process for parents and teachers to nominate parents from their campus for the "Be the Change" Award.

About KIPP New Jersey

In 2002, KIPP New Jersey first opened its door in Newark as a single class of 80 fifth graders and has since created a network of school in Newark that serves over 2,700 students in grades K-12 and 100 students in Camden. By the year 2020, KIPP New Jersey will have 10 schools in Newark and five schools in Camden, providing needed world-class college preparatory education to over 4,500 students in Newark and 2,800 in Camden – representing 10% of the children in Newark's public schools and over 20% of those in Camden.

By offering students effective teachers, leaders and administrators, and dedicated to closing the achievement gap, college readiness, and college completion, over 700 alumni are currently attending or have graduated from college. Visit <http://kippnj.org/> to learn more.