



Foundation Makes Big Commitment to Boosting Education in Miami

Knight Foundation invests \$5.7 million in four education initiatives

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation awarded \$5.7 million in grants to four education initiatives aiming to increase parental involvement, graduation rates, technology accessibility, and entrepreneurial thinking among high school students in Miami-Dade County. The Knight Foundation's President and CEO **Alberto Ibarguen** was joined by Miami-Dade County Public Schools Superintendent **Rudy Crew**, City of Miami Mayor **Manny Diaz**, and The Breakthrough Collaborative CEO **Mialisa Bonta** when the announcement was made on Wednesday, November 7, at Morningside Elementary School.



The principal of Morningside, **Kathleen John-Louissaint**, welcomed everyone, and following the Pledge of Allegiance, the students sang two beautiful songs to open the program. Students and parents were on hand to tell their stories of how they have benefited from the programs receiving the funding.

The **Parent Academy** will receive \$1.8 million over three years to increase the number and reach of its programs geared at increasing parental involvement in schools and in school work at home. In just over two years, more than 85,000 parents and families have participated in classes and family learning events offered by The Parent Academy. **Amanda Fisher** spoke about her invaluable experiences.



Breakthrough Miami (formerly Summerbridge Miami) will receive \$3.25 million over five years to expand its academic enrichment programs for sixth to eighth graders and its college preparatory program for ninth- and tenth-grade students. Over the past 15 years, Breakthrough students have demonstrated a high school graduation rate of 99 percent and a college acceptance rate of 78 percent. **Jaylon Ballard**, a student at Southwood Middle School, told the Morningside students that Breakthrough made learning fun.

The **National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship** (NFTE) will receive \$600,000 over three years to provide teachers with the tools and methodology for teaching high school students the principles of entrepreneurship. **Michael Perez**, a student at Ferguson Senior High shared his inspirational story about taking what he learned from NFTE and developing into a successful business.





Another \$250,000 will go to **Elevate Miami**, an initiative launched by Mayor Diaz and Superintendent Crew. This initiative infuses culture, life skills, technology and work experience into the lives of students at significant points in their schooling.

“Diversity defines Miami,” said Mr. Ibargüen. “Three quarters of us were born someplace else. So we have to look for opportunities where people of many different backgrounds can create their own, new shared experience of Miami. At Knight Foundation, we believe arts and public education are ideal for this. They have low barriers to entry and they embrace and value diversity. They are where the Miami of the future is already being experienced.”

“With the multi-pronged approach of these generous grants by the Knight Foundation, we are continuing to lay the foundation for transforming education in Miami,” said Superintendent Crew. “Studies show that parent involvement in education is at the heart of student achievement. The Parent Academy offers a variety of opportunities that integrate teaching and learning into the family culture. And programs such as Elevate Miami, Breakthrough Miami and NFTE help ensure that our graduates will be fully prepared for the real world that awaits them.”



The Parent Academy aims for a 15 percent annual increase in parent participation. Breakthrough Miami plans to expand its “students teaching students” model to several new school-based sites, as well as increase its enrollment from 380 to 1100 students by 2012. Elevate Miami aims to provide all students in grades six through twelve (approximately 18,000 students) with access to technology and experiences linking into technology from their schools and community by 2013. NFTE plans to enlist more than 100 teachers

over three years who will teach 13,500 students entrepreneurial thinking. In combination, the four initiatives aim to impact the educational experience of more than tens of tens of thousands of students in Miami-Dade.

“Education is the foundation for building a community, and the Knight Foundation is investing in programs that will truly elevate Miami,” said Mayor Diaz.

Alberto Carvalho, Associate Superintendent, spoke briefly about the importance of collaboration and invited **Aaron Wagner**, **Tannia Migueles**, and **Aliyah Daniels** on stage to each ask a question to Mayor Diaz, Superintendent Crew, and Mr. Ibargüen.



As the Superintendent was leaving Morningside Elementary, he stopped by Georgina Costas’ Kindergarten classroom. The students were actively engaged in their reading groups.

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