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Forward Promise Announces Raymond A. Jetson as Recipient of The Forward

Promise Fellowship for Leaders

(Baton Rouge, La - October 4) - Forward Promise, a national program office of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation committed to empowering boys and young men of color, has announced MetroMorphosis Chief Catalyst **Raymond A. Jetson**, as a 2018 recipient of its Forward Promise Fellowship For Leaders.

The Fellowship brings together an intergenerational cohort of both emerging and experienced leaders who have a vision for the healing of boys and young men of color and their communities. Each distinguished Fellow will be awarded \$10,000 and will participate in an 18-month leadership development learning experience that includes retreats, peer learning strategy sessions, and skill-building webinars.

"The health of a community depends on leaders bold enough to ask tough questions, build coalitions, and take action on behalf of marginalized people," said Dr. Howard Stevenson, Director of Forward Promise. "I'm delighted that we have identified 20 visionaries across generations who are changing the way health services are provided to boys and young men of color in this country."

The Forward Promise Fellowship aligns with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Culture of Health as it recognizes the accomplished work of a cohort of 20 leaders across the country that helps boys and young men of color have the access and opportunity to live a healthier life. The Fellowship provides opportunities for Fellows to build relationships and a community of support as they advance health strategies for boys and young men of color; to share and be exposed to emerging and best practices to support young men in their communities to heal, grow and thrive; and to elevate the lessons of transformational healing work from the work of all the Fellows.

"We are excited to uplift the culturally responsive healing work of each of this year's Fellows and build upon the Foundation's philosophy of leadership," said Maisha Simmons, senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Leaders will nurture and empower new, bold voices dedicated to the health and well-being of boys and young men of color."

Raymond A. Jetson has been serving the Baton Rouge community and the state of Louisiana for decades. His work has always proved to transform communities in a myriad of capacities. In the past he has served as the Pastor of Star Hill Church for 23 years, LA State Representative for over 15 years as well as in various leadership positions in state agencies. Currently, Raymond Jetson has been the catalytic force that has powered the evolution of the innovative social enterprise MetroMorphosis. After completing a two year fellowship on advanced leadership towards social impact at Harvard University, he set out to create a different approach to community change. That is where Jetson formed MetroMorphosis in Baton Rouge.

He said about the organization, “We create movements that matter enough to people that they become engaged in bringing change to their own communities.”

The following Fellows have been selected and awarded:

Tashel Bordere, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Human Development and Family Science and State Extension Specialist at the University of Missouri in St. Louis, MO

Marc Chavez, Director and Founder of InterTribal Youth in San Diego, CA

Bryan Echols, Community Restorative Justice Hubs Coordinator for the Community Justice for Youth Institute in Chicago, IL

Robert Jackson, Founder and Executive Director of Beats Rhymes & Life in Oakland, CA

Raymond A. Jetson, Chief Executive Catalyst for MetroMorphosis in Baton Rouge, LA

Karla McCullough, Co-Founder and Co-Project Director of the Ambassadors of the Evers Academy for African-American Males (A-TEAAM) and Executive Director for the Juanita Sims Doty Foundation in Jackson, MS

Andres Pacificar, Outreach Worker for Seattle YMCA, Accelerator in Seattle, WA

Teli Shabu, Executive Director of The Magic of African Rhythm (TMOAR) in Durham, NC

Richard Smith, National Director for HealingWorks at Common Justice in Brooklyn, NY

Ron Walker, Founder and Executive Director of the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC) in Boston, MA

Azza Altiraifi, Organizer for the Justice for Muslims Collective and The Bridge Initiative in Alexandria, VA

Ariel Jimenez Bustos, Coordinator for the National Compadres Network's Joven Noble Youth Academy in San Jose, CA

Rabiatu Barrie, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at Adler University in Chicago, IL

Daniel Chhum, Community Defense Project (CDP) Coordinator for Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM) in Providence, RI

Ricky Hurtado, Co-Executive Director of LatinxED in Chapel Hill, NC

William Jackson, Founder and “Chief Dreamer” of Village of Wisdom in Durham, NC

Depelsha McGruder, Founder of Moms of Black Boys United, Inc. in Brooklyn, NY

Keith Miller, Program Director of Block by Block for Deep Center in Savannah, GA

Tavae Samuelu, Executive Director for Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC) in Los Angeles, CA

Clifton Uckerman, Therapist with Valley Behavioral Health in Salt Lake City, UT

About Forward Promise

Forward Promise is a national program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to support culturally-responsive practices that buffer the effects of historical and systemic trauma on boys and young men of color. RWJF has funded the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education to manage the Forward Promise National Program Office (NPO). The NPO has two strategic locations, one in Philadelphia, PA and one in Huntsville, AL.

About Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated solely to supported research and programs targeting some of America's most pressing health issues—from substance abuse to improving access to quality healthcare.

For more information on the Fellows, visit www.forwardpromise.org

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