



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jesse Hamilton

Surprise \$500,000 Commitment from Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams in Partnership with NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton to 'the Campus' At Press Conference Today Announcing First Technology and Wellness Center at a Public Housing Site in the U.S.

EAN FULLERTON March 18, 2016

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"The CAMPUS" to serve as resource center for technology, health, and career development.

NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton Unites with Colleagues, City and State Partners, and Community Groups to Launch "the Campus" a Partnership for Technology and Wellness in Brownsville, Brooklyn

Brooklyn, NY – At a press conference this afternoon, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams made a surprise \$500,000 commitment to “the Campus”, an initiative spearheaded by NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton aiming to build digital literacy and improve public health in Brownsville. Joined by colleagues including NYS Assembly Member Latrice Walker, NYC Council Member Darlene Mealy, and more than thirty community partners, Senator Jesse Hamilton announced plans to launch “the Campus” in Brownsville, Brooklyn, in the Fall of 2016 at a press conference at Howard Houses Community Center today.

The project envisions creating co-working space for local tech startups and entrepreneurs, hosting coding and app development workshops, providing e-workforce development skills building, and including a wellness focus to help confront local public health challenges, to include overcoming stress and anxiety. The Campus’ programs will be open to the community, with a particular focus on neighborhood youth ages 12-18.

In the works are plans for app development workshops at Howard Houses, technology and coding workshops at P.S. 298/Brownsville Collaborative Middle School, workforce readiness and wellness programming at the Brooklyn Public Library (Brownsville Branch), counseling at the Mount Ollie Baptist Church and the YWCA, regular visits by a mobile food pantry provided by the Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger, and fitness classes at Howard Playground.

The project’s lead partners include both government agencies and community based organizations, more than 30 partners altogether—Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, NYC Public Advocate Letitia James, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, NYS Assembly Member Nick Perry, NYS Assembly Member Latrice Walker, NYC Council Member Darlene Mealy, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development,

New York City Housing Authority, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York City Commission On Human Rights, Academy of Medical & Public Health Services, Howard Houses Community Center, Brooklyn Public Library, Police Athletic League NYC, Brooklyn Pitbulls, YWCA, CAMBA, Community Education Council District 23, Uncommon Schools, Brownsville Collaborative Middle School, P.S. 298, New York State Afterschool Network, Settlement Housing Fund, Advocates for Children of New York, Families on the Move, ICL, JCCA, Mount Ollie Baptist Church, Green Earth Poets Café, Brownsville Partnership, Brownsville Maker Lab, Brownsville Community Justice Center, Global Trauma Research's Trauma Center at Haitian-American Community Coalition, Center for Anti-Violence Education, Lay your Guns Down Foundation, Wheelchairs Against Guns, Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger, Hunger Free America, Good Shepherd Services, Made in Brownsville, Brownsville In Violence Out, South Brooklyn Legal Services, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, Brooklyn Workforce 1, Codesters, Blue1647, CodeBrooklyn, and the Dream Big Foundation.

NYS Senator Jesse Hamilton said, "I know firsthand some of the challenges these young people are facing because I grew up in public housing in New York and will always be a champion for the residents of NYCHA. Their experience is my experience. My mom's focus on education helped get me where I am today - the honor of representing more than 300,000 Central Brooklyn residents. It is incumbent upon me to pass that focus on education and wellness on to the children of all the neighborhoods I represent – give them the opportunities, resources, and support that every child in New York deserves. As a community we must take advantage of the remarkable talent our young people possess by investing in them and their future. We must send a clear message that we believe in you, your ideas, your contributions and the great perspective you will add to our city and our state. With the Campus, we are sending that message of community determination and perseverance to Brownsville. Thanks to colleagues, advocates, community based organizations, and small

businesses, all the remarkable partners committed to making the Campus a reality. We are bringing together contributions from both the state and the city, as well as insight and expertise, experience and institutional knowledge, neighborhood know-how and love of community. All those elements will make the Campus a success.”

Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, “Education is the great equalizer, especially for high-risk and low-income children who too often are left behind. All children deserve a quality education that will empower them and give them the skills to succeed in the modern job market. ‘The Campus’ is a forward-thinking initiative that will improve the local economy and public health while providing young people with the latest technology skills. I commend Senator Hamilton for his progressive leadership and the opportunities this program will deliver for his constituents.”

“Every child deserves access to equal educational opportunities and in today’s economy that also means technological education and digital literacy,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. “The Campus will provide the first of its kind facility in Brownsville with programming that will empower our youth through coding, career development and public health workshops. I want to thank Senator Hamilton for his leadership on this project and for ensuring our children are equipped with the skills for success.”

Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams said, “Technology defines the economy of the 21st century, an economy where our students are competing with people from around the world and must develop the skills to succeed. Brooklynites who learn at ‘the Campus’ will have the opportunity to become the developers of the next generation, building our borough’s reputation as a destination for innovation. I share State Senator Hamilton’s commitment to unlocking the potential of Brownsville, harnessing the energy from public and private partnerships to make this community a safer and more prosperous place to raise healthy

children and families.”

Assembly Member N. Nick Perry said, “There remains a drastic and alarming under representation of African-American males in STEM careers, and unfortunately the resources for discovering and nurturing the next Jerry Lawson, Garrett Morgan, or Otis Boykin are near non-existent in our community. This is why I so fervently support, and anticipate with such great excitement the opening of ‘The Campus.’ The Campus, which will serve as the first such facility of its kind in the nation located within a public housing complex, will help close the disparity gap within STEM fields, while providing many of our young people with a high-tech, modern playground to keep their idle hands and minds active.”

Assembly Member Latrice Walker said, “As we look towards the future of our country with an understanding that technology is moving at lightning speed, we need to make sure the youth of tomorrow are prepared to lead us forward. I am proud to partner with Senator Hamilton in his vision for a Brownsville technology hub called “The Campus” and look forward to my office serving as one of its resources.”

NYC Council Member Darlene Mealy said, "I am thrilled to be part of this vital initiative collaborating together with my colleagues in government, stake holders, as well community based organizations. Our youth need all of our input in order to overcome educational and technological hurdles they may face both during their school years and beyond. We must provide them the proper educational and technological tools they will need to enable them to compete with their peers and the global workforce going forward."

NYC Council Member David Greenfield said, “This is a wonderful project that will be of immeasurable benefit to the youth of Brooklyn. As a member of the City Council’s committee on technology, I know that it has never been more important to promote digital literacy in our children, and the CAMPUS will do exactly that. I thank Senator Jesse

Hamilton for his leadership in making this happen.”

“DYCD strives to empower our city’s young people to become future innovators and community game changers,” said **Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong**. “Creating communities of entrepreneurs that reflect the diversity of our City is essential to strengthening our neighborhoods into places where great ideas are born and thrive. This new technology and wellness center will help youth and families in Brownsville receive technology and business skills that are important building blocks for academic and professional growth.”

“Senator Hamilton’s ‘Campus’ is a fantastic example of what we can get done together, working collaboratively, to improve quality of life for NYCHA residents – and we’re so proud to be a part of it,” said **NYCHA General Manager Michael Kelly**. “The multifaceted approach of this innovative partnership – increasing access to technology while addressing public health challenges – will expand opportunity for all and create healthier, more connected NYCHA communities.”

“Increasing access to technology and health resources can contribute to making a neighborhood healthier,” said **NYC Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “The CAMPUS will help connect adolescents and young adults to much needed health information and resources that they might not otherwise have access to. This effort will complement the everyday community work of the Health Department’s Brooklyn District Public Health Office.”

“As one of the borough’s largest providers of free technology access and training, Brooklyn Public Library applauds Senator Hamilton’s effort to increase digital literacy in his district,” said **Brooklyn Public Library President & CEO Linda Johnson**. “We look forward to partnering with the Campus at Brownsville Library, where our drop-in computer labs and popular Teen

Tech programs help patrons of all ages develop the skills they need to achieve their personal and professional goals.”

Naomi Johnson, Tenant Association President at Howard Houses, said , “I applaud Senator Hamilton for starting this program, Howard Houses and the Brownsville community can only thrive with the entire community working together to save our children”

Dr. Danielle Moss Lee, President & CEO, YWCA of the City of New York, said, “I am extremely honored to be a part of Senator Jesse Hamilton’s launch of “the Campus” Partnership for Technology and Wellness in Brownsville, Brooklyn. 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 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.”

“Uncommon Schools is proud to participate in this important community program that provides technology and wellness services” said **Tara Marlovits, Chief Operating Officer of Uncommon Schools NYC**, which runs 21 high-performing charter schools in Brooklyn, including 6 schools in Brownsville. “Programs like these bring the community together to ensure we are all benefitting from each other’s resources.”

Stacey Walsh, Founding Principal of the Brownsville Collaborative Middle School, said, “Brownsville Collaborative Middle School is excited to be part of Senator Hamilton’s innovative program that aims to support the youth of Brownsville with STEM education, health and wellness, and career development. Senator Hamilton’s vision for the Brownsville community is a great match for our school’s mission – to advocate for and empower the students of Brownsville by providing them with opportunities and experiences that build

21st Century skills and give them the competitive edge needed for high school, college, and careers. “The CAMPUS”, and the inherent commitment of all constituents and stakeholders, will positively impact the youth and community of Brownsville and we look forward to this partnership.”

“CAMBA commends Senator Hamilton for his leadership on The Campus,” said **Joanne M. Oplustil, Presidents & CEO of CAMBA/CAMBA Housing Ventures**. “With 15 programs providing housing, parenting support, after-school enrichment and violence prevention in Brownsville, CAMBA takes a holistic approach to reducing crime, stabilizing families and helping young people achieve their potential. We are proud to partner with Senator Hamilton on this effort.”

“AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network knows the difference that high-quality afterschool experiences can make for youth, families, and communities. They not only keep kids safe and support academic learning, but these programs, especially those that incorporate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), can spark interests that lead to future careers. We commend Senator Hamilton for his efforts to bring these experiences to Brownsville,” said **Kelly Malone Sturgis, Executive Director of AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network**.

Paige Bellenbaum, Director of Community Programs, Settlement Housing Fund, said, “Ultimate gratitude is extended to Senator Hamilton and all of the other supporters that came together to make The Campus possible. For my students at the DREAMS YouthBuild program in Crown Heights - a program for opportunity youth – the majority of them live in and around Brownsville. There has been a dearth of opportunities for this population to become skilled in the field of digital literacy, and The Campus will provide them with the ability to be competitive in the tech sector. The commitment of this project to also integrate health and wellness initiatives speaks to comprehensive and holistic solutions to issues that

impact the Brownsville community.”

Katie Gordon, Director of the Brownsville Partnership’s 5,000 Jobs Campaign, said, “Bringing tech training resources directly to Brownsville is a big win for the community. Residents have been asking to have these kinds of opportunities right here in their own neighborhood for a long time. It’s great to see Senator Hamilton hearing them and taking action.”

James Brodick, Project Director of the Brownsville Community Justice Center, said, “For far too long, the community of Brownsville lacked opportunities for the young people—the Campus will serve as a pathway to success, and the Brownsville Community Justice Center is proud to be supporting this initiative.”

Jay Corcoran, Filmmaker and Co-Founder, Brownsville Maker Lab, said, “The Campus is so critical for the Brownsville Community. It’s criminal these technologies and skill sets have eluded this population for so long. Now because of programs like The Campus, Brownsville Community Justice Center, Brownsville Maker Lab and many other neighborhood grass roots programs, our young people can add value in the innovation economy they so richly deserve to thrive but has so often eluded them.”

Quardean Lewis-Allen, Founder and Director at Made in Brownsville, said, “Made in Brownsville is bringing a much needed STEM professions design lab for youth to 40 Belmont Ave this summer. As a member of this community, I’m happy we’re able to partner with our elected officials who understand the need for lowering the barriers to STEAM professions for our young people to take part in the innovation economy.”

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”

Tracy Hobson, Executive Director of the Center for Anti-Violence Education, said, “The Center for Anti-Violence Education is pleased to be partnering with local community groups, Senator Hamilton and other city and state officials to provide critical violence prevention programming to Brooklyn’s youth. We know that violent behavior typically begins between the ages of 12 and 18, and young women between the ages of 16-24 experience intimate partner violence and sexual violence at higher rates than any other age category - a rate nearly triple the national average. It’s imperative that we reach Brooklyn’s youth early, and provide them with skills and resources to heal from, interrupt and prevent violence in their lives and communities.”

Michael Tucker, founder of Lay The Guns Down Foundation, said, “Based on the information received and knowledge of the district in which the change will be occurring we would like to applaud Senator Hamilton, his colleagues and community partners for launching these programs that will allow better resources to be implemented into the community among the youth and young adults. We do believe it will give youth the opportunity to prepare for the world which is constantly changing around them and learn to adjust positively to their surroundings as our neighborhoods are changing rapidly. It’s a great opportunity for the intended purpose to be exposed to things that would normally be out of reach. Having the programs right in the community is a step towards a more positive outlook in many different aspects of life for the youth. We are excited and look forward to see the progress of the programs set forth.”

Mon Yuck Yu, Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff of Academy of Medical & Public Health Services, said, “Many of the youth in our communities lack resources to pursue quality education and job opportunities, which in the end, affects not only their careers, 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 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. “

Dr. Florence Saint Jean, Executive Director, Global Trauma Research Inc., said, “Global Trauma Research’s Trauma Center at Haitian-American Community Coalition is delighted to join Senator Hamilton’s ‘the Campus’ initiative in supporting the emotional well-being of community members in Brownsville. GTR is committed to increasing access to culturally competent trauma counseling to the neighborhood and believes that this partnership will help create, secure and maintain healthy lifestyles.”

Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York, said, “The Campus will provide Brownsville students with the opportunity to develop key technological skills that will help them as they embark on their careers. We commend Senator Hamilton for giving students access to an enriching environment after the school bell rings.”

Euphemia S. Adams, CMHFAI, CYMHFAI, CRPA, CPSP, MSW, FDC, CEO Families On The Move of New York City, Inc., said, “Senator Jesse Hamilton’s platform and vision to create and launch the “First Technology and Wellness Hub at a Public Housing Site in the United States” ‘ to promote and provide digital literacy and improve public health will make a tremendous impact within the inner city public housing communities as this will empower the youth served with viable and marketable assets to compete globally within the workforce open markets. In addition, this project will also promote efficacy in learning as it

will provide the necessary tools needed to create a sense of purpose, possible career preparedness, confidence and the mental wellness needed to gain vision for forward thinking outside of one's present environment. The Premise of this project appears to be didactic in terms of building, improving, and strengthening the educational value and wellness of the multi-ethnic families that will benefit from this program." Adams continued, "In closing, we strongly believe these efforts to promote literacy and improve public health will drastically reduce family and youth involvement within the various systems (Juvenile Justice, ACS, etc.) as well as decrease the recidivism rate of systems involvement, and instill a hopefulness toward a brighter and promising future."

David Woodlock, President & CEO of ICL, said, "Today's young people are faced with so many challenges. Senator Hamilton's 'Campus' in Brownsville, Brooklyn, will help create a safe space for our children to explore their options and opportunities. This is a genuine gift to our young people. The focus on wellness helps mitigate the stigma surrounding mental health among our youth, giving them the opportunity to discover a path to personal and professional growth that works for them."

Cherise Littlejohn, Founding Program Director Brooklyn Democracy Academy High School, ARCHES Transformative Mentoring and YMI's Work Progress Program (all in Brownsville, Brooklyn), said, "The students of Brooklyn Democracy Academy High School and families of JCCA support and welcome Senator Hamilton's STEM Technology and Wellness Hub. As a graduate of Brownsville's PS 327 and a leader of mentoring and education services in the community for over 10 years, I look forward to the opportunities this program will bring to our young scholars. Our children are our future leaders and they need the technological education and tools that will allow them to compete with the very best. Brownsville deserves and looks forward to 'The Campus'."

Lloyd Rodriguez of the Brooklyn Pitbulls said, “I am excited to join Senator Hamilton in his efforts to teach our children skills to deal with their emotions, it truly takes a village”

Stephanie Marquesano, Founder of the Harris Project, said, “Senator Hamilton continues to recognize the value of engaging our young people in positive activities. “The Campus” promotes technology, career development, and entrepreneurship, but what really sets it apart is the inclusion of a mental health and wellness component. Many of our young people turn to substances as a way to cope with mental health challenges, programs like this will provide them with safe outlets and healthy alternatives. To support this initiative, the harris project would be honored to train all staff in Youth Mental Health First Aid.”

Dr. Melony Samuels, Executive Director of the Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger, said “We are excited to partner with Senator Hamilton and Borough President Adams in the fight against poverty in Brownsville.”

Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America, said, “We support any effort to promote wellness in Brooklyn and throughout the nation. We appreciate Senator Hamilton for taking the initiative on this important issue, and look forward to seeing the innumerable benefits.”

Randy Peers, CEO of Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT), said “With over 4500 young adults who are not in school or working, Brownsville has one the largest disengaged young adult populations within New York City. The various partners in the Campus initiative will provide a comprehensive set of opportunities for these youth. OBT is proud to be contributing specifically to the job training and employment prospects for these young people.”

Daniel Nisbett, Veterans Specialist at NYC Business Solutions/Workforce 1, said, “Having ‘the Campus’ here in Brownsville will assist residents of all ages. The requirements for job

readiness increase over time, given that employers are constantly seeking candidates with up-to-date skills. Whether serving an adult looking to enhance their skill set or a young person who is looking to get ahead of the game in their career development, 'the Campus' will help prepare the residents of Brownsville for the careers of the future. Technology, health, and overall career development are critical aims and we are happy to contribute to this initiative."

Meghan Faux, Legal Services NYC Brooklyn Project Director, said, "Coordinated, community-based services are critical to ensuring that people have access to the resources and support they need to achieve safety and stability. We are grateful to Senator Hamilton and his colleagues for leading this effort."

Scott Krivitsky, P.S. 188 Educator and community education advocate, said, "As an educator and community education advocate in Coney Island, I applaud Senator Hamilton and his team for Thinking Outside of the Box and developing the 1st Technology and Wellness Center at Public Housing Site. The Brownsville Campus Project will be the Model for Success in our neighboring communities. It all about Engaging and Empowering our Youth to Greatness."

Gordon Smith, Founder and CEO Codesters, said "Coding can create community. Empowering our youth with computational literacy can transform them into digital citizens and give them access to the economic opportunities of the future. The Brownsville Campus takes the vision of digital citizenship a step further by integrating computer programming with wellness and job readiness to create a virtuous circle. We have seen with our own eyes the exciting potential that exists in Brownsville. We are thrilled to promote a project that can turn that potential into reality."

"It is imperative that we keep mindful always of the 'ALL' in the national, state, and local CSForAll efforts", said **Rob Underwood, Executive Director of TeachCS and lead organizer with**

Borough President Eric L. Adams for the CodeBrooklyn campaign. “The students of Brownsville deserve access to an excellent education and that means access to world-class technology and especially computer science instruction. Brownsville is the type of community we need we need to put at the top of the list for technology programs. With the creation of The Brownsville Campus the Brownsville community will now have a wonderful new place at which both kids and adults can learn leading edge technology”

Emile Cambry, Founder of BLUE1647, said “BLUE1647 is excited to continue the work to help bring innovation centers to the communities that need it the most. We’ve begun this work with the first federally funded center in St Louis with SLATE and the St Louis Housing Authority at the Clinton Peabody development as part of the Jobs PLUS program, and we couldn’t be more thrilled to work with Senator Hamilton’s office and other non-profits and community organizations to ensure transferable, 21st century technical skill development and exposure is accessible to help bridge the opportunity and digital divide.”

Pernell Brice, Executive Director of the DreamBig Foundation, said, “The DreamBig Foundation looks forward to partnering with Sen Hamilton in creating a Tech pipeline in Brownsville, BK. Through this initiative, Brownsville residents will be afforded opportunities to improve their skill sets for entrepreneurial or career goals”

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)

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)

The suicide rate among young African-American children between the ages of 5 and 11 has nearly doubled over the last two decades. (Source: Suicide Trends Among Elementary School-Aged Children in the United States, <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2293169>)

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%

(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)

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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