



## **HERE to HERE and The Bronx Community Relief Effort Donating 600 Laptop Computers and 750 Hotspots for Students in 30 NYC High Schools**

*HERE to HERE also coordinating virtual work-based learning opportunities for young people; technology will enable students' remote school and internship access*

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May 11, 2020 – Bronx, NY – To support New York City students through the COVID-19 pandemic, [HERE to HERE](#) and [The Bronx Community Relief Effort](#) (B.C.R.E.) have purchased and are currently distributing 600 Chromebook laptops and 750 Wi-Fi hotspots to students of 30 New York City high schools across HERE to HERE's network of partner schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan. This technology will enable students to participate in remote learning and take part in high-quality virtual work-based learning opportunities like internships and apprenticeships. Closing the gap in access to vital digital technology and learning opportunities is essential to ensuring that New York City's high school and college students continue to grow their skills and networks even as traditional in-person engagements are paused or cancelled, including the critical 2020 Summer Youth Employment Program.

In addition to providing technology, HERE to HERE is also designing and coordinating work-based learning opportunities with several of its network schools and partners in The Bronx. Cities like [Philadelphia](#) and Cleveland have shown that efficient adjustments can be made to the current youth internship and employment infrastructure to incorporate digital work-based learning. Philadelphia plans to continue its summer youth employment program digitally, and HERE to HERE is urgently working to demonstrate the effectiveness of this solution in New York City to continue its Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) through high-quality virtual internships and work-based learning opportunities.

With schools and businesses across the country pivoting to remote operations, young people face a starkly different future of education and work, making work-based learning opportunities more important even as they become scarcer. Additionally, New York City's recent decision to cancel SYEP, a vital work-based learning opportunity for the city's young people and communities, has left many searching for ways to develop their professional skills and connections, support their families, and stay meaningfully engaged, and if necessary, indoors this summer.

**Abby Jo Sigal, Founding CEO of HERE to HERE**, said: "We're thrilled to partner with The Bronx Community Relief Effort, DreamYard, and our partner high schools to make sure that more students have access to the technology they need for remote learning and to make sure their professional development continues during this period of so much disruption. This pandemic has exposed deep inequities across our city, which are only being magnified with school closures and the interruption of programs like the Summer Youth Employment Program. It's crucial to the long-term recovery of our city

that we work together to help all our city students continue their academic and professional development while contributing to the economy during this period.”

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on New York City has exposed steep gaps in access to digital learning. HERE to HERE worked with its network schools to identify the immediate technology needs of their students; schools reported access to laptops and reliable Wi-Fi as a key gap for many. A large pool of students across The Bronx and other boroughs, including college students, still lack laptops along with free or affordable, reliable high-speed internet access. The technology shortage addressed in this initial effort likely make up a small proportion of the full volume of need, since more disconnected community members are less able to communicate what they lack when schools are closed. HERE to HERE has also found in its surveys of local students that high schools with large immigrant populations may be more likely to face a scarcity of technology resources at this time. These students and families must be provided with the support they need to weather this period of widespread economic distress.

The purchase of the laptops and hotspots was funded by the James and Judith K. Dimon Foundation through The Bronx Community Relief Effort. HERE to HERE is coordinating technology distribution with [DreamYard](#) and will continue to work with DreamYard and The Bronx Community Relief Effort in creating a virtual help desk to support students and their families with at-home technology issues in real-time.

**Derrick H. Lewis, Founder and Chair of The Bronx Community Relief Effort**, said: “The Bronx is considered a digital desert with many in our community not having access to technology, or in some cases the internet, in order to learn from home and to participate in virtual work-based learning opportunities. We are grateful for our partnership with HERE to HERE and DreamYard to distribute Chromebook laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to our Bronx high school students. Their leadership is helping us close the digital divide in The Bronx.”

**Jason Duchin, Co-Founder & Co-Executive Director of the DreamYard Project**, said, "It is the responsibility of New York City to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education even as COVID-19 forces us to reimagine where learning takes place. Thanks to the work of HERE to HERE, Bronx students are able to access virtual learning environments that otherwise would have been impossibly remote. We are seeing firsthand in The Bronx how black and brown people are disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. HERE to HERE is leading the charge in ensuring that all of our children are learning on a level playing field."

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### **About HERE to HERE**

HERE to HERE enhances paths to rewarding careers for young people by uniting employers, educators, and community-based organizations beginning in The Bronx and New York City. Our vision is a thriving, inclusive economy, in The Bronx and elsewhere, driven by meaningful partnerships between young people and employers. As an intermediary, HERE to HERE supports partnerships, practices, and policies that enable employers to secure the talent needed to succeed and provide students with multiple pathways to family-sustaining careers and choice-filled lives. Visit us at [www.heretohere.org](http://www.heretohere.org)

### **About the Bronx Community Relief Effort**

The Bronx Community Relief Effort was born in the South Bronx immediately after the Coronavirus hit New York City. The Effort aims to raise \$10 million to support effective, on-the-ground operations that are focused on meeting the most essential needs of The Bronx community. This includes filling gaps in public financing and broader grant programs. Donations collected are distributed in real-time within the community to eight critical areas of need: Food Insecurity, Small Business Relief, Distributing Microgrants, Personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline responders, Nonprofit Economic Relief, Connectivity and Technology Gaps, Equity & Justice, Housing Stability. Learn more at [www.thebronx.org](http://www.thebronx.org).

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