



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2019

Local nonprofit launches campaign to double the number of Central Texas students who are first in their families to graduate college

Breakthrough Challenge offers pathway to college for students in Austin's under-resourced communities

WHAT: Breakthrough Challenge Fundraising Campaign Kickoff with key announcements

WHEN: Thursday, September 12, 2019
10 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

WHERE: Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) Presidential Library Atrium
2313 Red River Street
Austin, TX 78712

WHO: Michael Griffith, Executive Director, Breakthrough Central Texas
Texas Senator Kirk Watson
Gary Farmer, Breakthrough Challenge Honorary Co-Chair
Joe Anthony Cruz, Breakthrough Graduate
Walt Penn, Breakthrough Challenge Co-Chair
Dr. Eva Garza-Nyer, Breakthrough Central Texas Chair-Elect

RSVP: Media may RSVP to (512) 968-0562 or ashley@liveoutloudpr.com or mary@liveoutloudpr.com

AUSTIN, TEXAS – Local education nonprofit Breakthrough Central Texas is proud to announce the public phase of its capacity-building campaign, the Breakthrough Challenge, with a kickoff event at the Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) Presidential Library located at 2313 Red River Street in Austin from 10 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, September, 12, 2019. With the support of Honorary Co-Chairs Sen. Kirk Watson and Gary Farmer, student graduates, staff, board of trustees, volunteers and organization supporters, Breakthrough Central Texas will unveil milestones and key announcements for the campaign, which is aimed at doubling the number of students who will become first-generation college graduates from under-resourced communities in Central Texas.

Currently, Central Texas has the lowest college graduation rate in the state of Texas for under-resourced students, with only eight percent of middle school students from these communities continuing on to

earn a college degree. Students served by Breakthrough Central Texas graduate college at seven times the rate of their peers.

Breakthrough Central Texas creates a path to and through college for students from under-resourced communities who will become the first in their family to earn a college degree. The organization has already produced 150 college graduates, with 1,900 more in the pipeline. Beginning in sixth grade, Breakthrough Central Texas offers out-of-school learning experiences, leadership skills, and comprehensive advising. The organization makes a 12-year commitment to students and their families to guide them through the process of preparing for, enrolling in and completing college.

“The Breakthrough model works,” says Executive Director Michael Griffith. “We see students transform over the years they are enrolled in our program, working tirelessly with their families and advisors to make college dreams a reality. We are fortunate to have the support of many wonderful individuals and organizations across Central Texas. Now, it’s time to take our vision for student success to the next level.”

During the Breakthrough Challenge, Breakthrough Central Texas hopes to raise \$10 million to double the number of under-resourced college graduates in Central Texas, by enrolling an additional 1,400 students. This growth will triple the number of Breakthrough college graduates, and allow the organization to build capacity to maximize the impact felt on the region. In addition, the Breakthrough Challenge allows for the creation of the Promise Fund, an endowment to ensure the organization can fulfill the 12-year commitment to all Breakthrough students and their families.

“In Central Texas, we have the lowest college graduation rate in the state among students from under-resourced communities,” says Texas Senator Kirk Watson. “We are not doing what we ought to be doing, not just for our employers or our communities, but for those people who need a little boost to be all that they can be. The Breakthrough Challenge is our opportunity to make a difference.”

Breakthrough Central Texas students, their families, staff, volunteers and organization supporters will gather at the LBJ Presidential Library at 10 a.m. on Thursday, September 12. Sen. Kirk Watson will share a mayoral proclamation, declaring September 12, 2019 “Breakthrough Day” on behalf of Austin Mayor Steve Adler, as the date serves to signify the 12-year commitment Breakthrough Central Texas makes to each of its students and their families. During the Campaign Kickoff event, supporters will have the opportunity to sign their names and commit to the Breakthrough Challenge, spreading awareness of the campaign vision.

To learn more about Breakthrough Central Texas and the Breakthrough Challenge, visit www.breakthroughctx.org and thebreakthroughchallenge.org.

ABOUT BREAKTHROUGH CENTRAL TEXAS

Breakthrough Central Texas is a student-centric education nonprofit that creates a path to and through college for students from low-income communities. From sixth grade through to college, the organization offers out-of-school learning experiences, leadership skills, and comprehensive advising to students. The organization makes a 12-year commitment to students and their families to guide them through the process of preparing for, enrolling in and completing college. The long-term model ensures the success of students and families from middle school to high school graduation to college diploma and beyond. Join the conversation on Twitter [@BreakthroughCTX](https://twitter.com/BreakthroughCTX), Instagram [@BreakthroughCTX](https://www.instagram.com/BreakthroughCTX) and at [Facebook.com/BreakthroughCTX](https://www.facebook.com/BreakthroughCTX). To learn more, visit www.breakthroughctx.org.

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Media Contacts:

Ashley Schlosser

(512) 968-0562

ashley@liveoutloudpr.com

Mary Green

(704) 576-5178

mary@liveoutloudpr.com