



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Young Austinites head to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame for summer internship

AUSTIN – As graduation season commences, two students from Breakthrough, an Austin nonprofit dedicated to creating first-generation college graduates, will embark on an opportunity of a lifetime through a new summer internship program at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. This new program will provide a unique professional experience like no other in the music industry every summer for deserving young Austinites who otherwise would never be afforded this opportunity.

“Our students grow up in the Live Music Capital of the World, often dreaming of a career in music,” said Michael Griffith, Executive Director of Breakthrough Austin. “The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is recognized around the world as a cultural center that celebrates one of the most important art forms in history. This program gives our students an opportunity to work with the highest-level of museum, music and business professionals in the world in a dynamic, fast-moving and multi-faceted environment.”

Through the Austin-area nonprofit Breakthrough, two students from low income communities in Central Texas will be selected each summer by the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The program will immerse the students in all aspects of the Rock Hall during its peak summer season. Students will work directly with curatorial, programming, marketing, fundraising and finance professionals as they welcome visitors, create new experiences, program live music and otherwise manage educational and business aspects of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The internship program will take students toward the end of their time in the Breakthrough program and give them a springboard to launch their careers. Moreover, all potential obstacles for the students’ success in their roles have been removed. Transportation, housing and a generous stipend are being provided by the Rock Hall.

“I see this internship as an opportunity to step outside my comfort zone and learn from seasoned professionals who value the music industry as much as I do,” said Joe Cruz, one of two Breakthrough students chosen for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame internship program this coming summer. “I am excited about getting to experience the energy of Cleveland in a summer full of events ranging from political conventions to cultural festivals. I hope this experience will teach me how to balance managing clients and bands, as well as how to market to new audiences.”

The internship program will allow students to grow in their field of interest and allow them to become independent young adults and innovative communicators. “I’m hoping that this internship will teach me how to be a professional in an environment held in such high esteem,” said Sheldon Jackson, one of two Breakthrough students chosen for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame internship program this coming summer. “I am excited about being in a completely new city and being part of an organization whose product is something so widely enjoyable and entertaining.”

Breakthrough builds a path to college for low-income students who will be the first in their families to earn a degree. Beginning in middle school, Breakthrough makes a 12-year commitment to each of its students, combining rigorous academic programming with personalized guidance and a “do whatever it takes” philosophy to help students overcome obstacles – academic, financial, or personal – and stay on



Breakthrough Austin

CREATING FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE GRADUATES

track through their entire educational career. Breakthrough's long-term comprehensive approach prepares students to become first-generation college graduates.

In the last three years, 100 percent of students enrolled in the program graduated from high school on time compared to 83 percent of all students from low-income households in Central Texas. In 2015, nearly 92 percent of Breakthrough Austin's students enrolled directly in college compared to 44 percent of low-income students. And unlike similar programs in Central Texas, Breakthrough Austin continues to support students through college, resulting in a college graduation rate five times higher than the general graduation rate for low-income students.

"Our mission statement is to engage, teach and inspire through the power of Rock and Roll and our programs here have proven that music has a unique ability to engage students," said Greg Harris, president and CEO of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. "Breakthrough Austin has demonstrated that education is the best way to break the cycle of poverty and bridge the growing economic divide in our community. This combination is powerful and will have a real impact on families from Austin."

About Breakthrough Austin

Founded in 2001, Breakthrough Austin builds a path to college for low-income students who will be the first in their families to earn a degree. Breakthrough combines rigorous academic programming with personalized guidance and a "do whatever it takes" philosophy to make students nearly five times more likely to graduate from college than other low-income students in Central Texas. Breakthrough is growing rapidly; it currently serves 1,090 students, which will increase to more than 2,000 by 2020. Learn more at www.BreakthroughAustin.org.

About the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame:

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum's mission is to engage, teach and inspire through the power of rock and roll. The institution carries out its mission by giving voice to the stories of the people, artifacts and events that shaped rock and roll — through Museum exhibits, materials in the Museum's Library and Archives, traveling exhibitions, and a wide array of innovative educational programs and activities. The Museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. On Wednesdays (and Saturdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day), the Rock Hall is open until 9 p.m. For more information, please call 216.781.ROCK (7625), visit rockhall.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) (@rock_hall) and [Instagram](#) (@rockhall).

###

PRESS ASSETS:

For photos, interview opportunities and more information, please contact:

Breakthrough Austin Media Contact:

Grace Washington, 512.484.1581, grace@breakthroughaustin.org

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Media Contacts:

Todd Mesek, 216.515.1289, tmesek@rockhall.org

Shauna Wilson, 216.515.1215, swilson@rockhall.org