

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Bank of America Gives Over Half a Million Dollars to Strengthen Austin's Talent Pipeline**

*BofA Announces Breakthrough, Capital IDEA as its 2024 Neighborhood Builders  
and Geronimo Rodriguez as a Neighborhood Builders Social Equality Honoree*

**AUSTIN, TX** – Bank of America today announced \$600,000 in grants to local nonprofits to strengthen Austin's workforce and help more people earn living-wage jobs in the city. This investment addresses a critical need by providing \$200,000 each to Breakthrough, Capital Idea and St. Edward's University to help families across Central Texas build generational wealth through higher education, skills development and job training.

BofA named Capital IDEA and Breakthrough as its 2024 Neighborhood Builders for their work to bridge the gap between education and workforce needs in Austin. Additionally, Geronimo Rodriguez is one of five recipients nationwide to receive the Neighborhood Builder Social Equality Award for his ability to break down barriers, his life-long accomplishments in education and ongoing dedication to creating opportunities for underserved communities. As part of his award, Rodriguez has selected St. Edward's University's CAMP program as the recipient of grant funding.

Bank of America's signature [Neighborhood Builders®](#) program and the Neighborhood Builders Social Equality award continues to be one of the nation's largest philanthropic investments into nonprofit leadership development, while providing unique multiyear flexible grant funding annually to high-impact nonprofits in nearly 100 communities nationwide. In addition to the grant, the three nonprofits will receive comprehensive leadership training, and access to a national network of nonprofit peers.

"Breakthrough, Capital IDEA and St. Edward's CAMP program are improving lives in catalytic ways through their unique and innovative education programs that support students and their families throughout their journeys, helping them be that much more successful in achieving their goals," said David Bader, Bank of America Austin president. "Our team at Bank of America is honored to recognize, celebrate and empower these three organizations for their work to break down barriers and uplift the importance of education."

A proud graduate of the St. Edward's CAMP program, Geronimo Rodriguez serves as Chief Advocacy Officer at Ascension Texas and credits the University for equipping him with the skills he needed to build a successful career. As the only school in Central Texas that provides tuition, room, and board for the children of migrant or seasonal farmworkers, St. Edward's University is a proven and effective pipeline for low-income, first-generation students into leadership opportunities in Central Texas. Funds awarded from the Neighborhood Builders grant will be used to provide general operating support to CAMP at St. Edward's.

"This grant from Bank of America strengthens our university's steadfast dedication to delivering personalized, high-quality education and transformative experiences for all students — preparing them with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive on the hilltop and beyond," said St. Edward's University President Montserrat Fuentes. "I am deeply grateful for the advocacy and friendship of our alumnus and valued University Trustee, Geronimo Rodriguez '90. His success and service exemplify the impact of intentional, transformative higher education for everyone."

Breakthrough creates a path to and through college for students who will become the first in their families to earn a college degree. The bank's funding will help sustain and grow the Schoolwide Postsecondary Advising Program, which provides junior and senior high school students with advising services to guide them in career plans beyond high school graduation to attain the relevant credentials, certificate or diploma to secure a livable job in the workforce.

"We are grateful for the grant and investment in leadership development both for myself and our Director of College Access, Christi Almeida. In 2011, we received the Neighborhood Builders grant and at that time I was the Emerging Leader from our team. Since then, we have grown from serving a little over 500 students to supporting more than 3,500 on their path to postsecondary success and have established new programs to address the growing needs in our community. Now as Executive Director, I am elated to continue my own professional journey and see this program fuel Christi's passionate service and leadership for first-generation students, education equity, and economic mobility in Central Texas," said Michael Griffith, Executive Director of Breakthrough.

Capital IDEA works with adults in poverty access the education they need to be placed into living-wage careers. The bank's funding will support administrative and program staff salaries, including childcare support for low-income students with children 0-4 who need care while the student is in school. Additionally, funding will go towards expanding services in the rapidly growing suburbs of Austin, including Georgetown and Kyle.

"Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders Program is instrumental in developing dynamic nonprofit leaders tackling our community's most complex social challenges. Capital IDEA is honored to be among the 100 high-impact nonprofits chosen nationwide as a 2024 Neighborhood Builders Program grant recipient," said Alyssia Palacios Woods, Executive Director of Capital IDEA. "For the past 26 years, Capital IDEA has been fueling economic progress in low-income communities by helping our diverse, low-income students persist in their education, graduate, and obtain living-wage employment in a high-demand career. We look forward to the innovative ways we will amplify our impact thanks to the immense support from Bank of America."

Neighborhood Builders is part of Bank of America's longstanding efforts to build thriving communities by addressing issues fundamental to economic opportunity. The invitation-only program is highly competitive, with awardees selected by a committee comprised of community leaders and past awardees. Since 2004, 29 nonprofits have been selected as Neighborhood Builders in Austin, with the bank investing more than \$5.8 million in philanthropic capital into these local nonprofits.

### **Bank of America**

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