



## Distance Learning Program

### BRIDGE BUILDERS FOUNDATION (BBF) EXPANDS SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING

**(Los Angeles, CA – May 18, 2020)** – In response to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, BBF has expanded its existing school and community-based program engagement to provide a new distance learning platform. The expanded program will target socially vulnerable racial and ethnic minority youth and communities and serve students who would otherwise be unable to access these resources.

The initial expansion of BBF's school-based "Thriving Under The Influence" mentor program began via Zoom in April 2020 and will expand to a fully operational program component in fall 2020. Led by Dr. Charles Bray, the Bridge Builders program combines both mentoring and behavioral elements under a structured curriculum calendar designed to augment and enhance distance and in-class learning provided by traditional k-12 schools.

The mentor program seeks to empower youth with values, attitudes, and strategies required to thrive in school, at home, and in the community. The program focuses on strengthening self-awareness, expanding understandings of environmental influences, and developing skills to work constructively and collectively with others, by combining curriculum with outcomes measures to ensure participants receive optimal value from participation. Students participate in weekly mentor sessions (60-90 minutes), and bi-monthly, incentive-based community enrichment field trips. Program staffing is from a robust pool of African American and minority men, from varied professions, who teach success roles, serve as role models, and provide mentoring.

During the pandemic's stay at home mandates, BBF's Saturday Science Academy (which usually provides classroom instruction, supplemented by community field trips) launched Bi-weekly BBF STEM@Home classroom sessions on Google Classroom and Google Hangouts. BBF plans to augment its existing in-person sessions with monthly virtual sessions beginning in Spring 2021. As noted by Dr. Bray, *"Our programs blend character-related content with academic elements to generate behavioral outcomes, using an approach incorporating both pedagogical and adult learning theories."*

All BBF programs are provided **FREE OF CHARGE** through strong corporate and foundation support, committed volunteers, and generous donations from many individuals.

#### ABOUT DR. CHARLES E. BRAY, JR.



Dr. Charles E. Bray, Jr. is the Manager for the Small Business Program Office at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, CA. Charles has over 20 years of experience as a manager and leader and over ten years of experience as a small business owner. He designed, implemented, and managed Southern CA Edison's Supplier Develop Program (SCE Supplier University) and worked closely with SCE Sr. Procurement Managers and Business Units (\$4B annual spend) to identify opportunities for diverse firms. Charles is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and has a Balanced Scorecard certification from Kaplan & Norton. Charles received his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Purdue University and his MBA in Finance from Harvard Business School. He received his Doctorate in Education in Organizational Leadership (EDOL) from Pepperdine University in July 2019, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change from Pepperdine.

To learn more about this program, or other Bridge Builders Foundation programs, visit

[www.BridgeBuildersLA.org](http://www.BridgeBuildersLA.org)