



Bank of America Connects New Jersey Youth to Workforce Success Through Paid Virtual Summer Leadership Experience

Student Leaders underlines bank's ongoing commitment to connect young people to jobs, skills-building and opportunities to strengthen our community

July 21, 2020 (New Jersey) – Bank of America today announced that the five New Jersey high school juniors and seniors selected as [Student Leaders](#) (#BofAStudentLeaders) have started their paid summer internship experience of leadership, civic engagement, and workforce skills-building. In light of the health concerns that remain in local communities, the program has been adapted to a virtual format, through which students will have the opportunity to participate in sessions that will expose them to the vital role that nonprofits play in advancing community health, the importance of public private partnerships to advance social change, and a focus on building financial acumen.

The Class of 2020 New Jersey-based Bank of America Student Leaders are:

- **Ayden Artis-James** of Clifton, a rising senior at Paramus Catholic High School
- **Emily Bowen** of Jersey City, a recent graduate of County Prep High School and rising freshman at The College of New Jersey
- **Asma Choudhary** of Newark, a rising senior at Saint Vincent High School
- **Amy Fernandez** of Keansburg, a recent graduate of Colonia High School and rising freshman at University of Pennsylvania
- **Ahmad Khalil** of Jersey City, a rising senior at Dr. Ronald McNair Academic High School

New Jersey Student Leaders will participate in programming that leverages Bank of America's national partnerships and expertise and will work closely with the bank's New Jersey leadership and nonprofit partners. They will participate in a collaborative, mentoring-focused project working closely with the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey to generate awareness of the life-changing programs the organization offers throughout the state. The Student Leaders will also create a social media calendar covering September 2020 to August 2021 that will include weekly posts and images crafted by the Student Leaders, to educate and engage potential advocates, donors, club attendees and parents.

In addition, Student Leaders will engage in conversations focused on social justice, civil rights and how to build a more diverse and inclusive society and have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of their personal finances through Better Money Habits®, Bank of America's financial wellness and education platform.

"We are grateful for our partnership with Bank of America and their commitment to strengthen and grow the mission of Boys & Girls Clubs, enabling young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens," said Susan Haspel, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. "We are confident the Student Leaders will have a great virtual experience, and we know our organization will benefit from their hard work and dedication on our project."

Bringing students from across the country together in order to discuss the role of citizenship and how cross sector collaboration creates community impact is a core component of the Student Leaders program. This year, 300 students will gather virtually for the Young America Together at Home program, delivered by the Close Up Foundation, which will include discussion of finding one's voice in order to effect change and pressing policy issues such as the economy, healthcare, the environment and immigration.

"Now more than ever, as we collectively navigate the challenges we face in our communities, we remain committed to supporting youth and young adults of all backgrounds by connecting them to jobs, skills-building and leadership development," said Alberto Garofalo, New Jersey market president for Bank of America. "Creating opportunities for our youth to gain skills and build a network is a powerful investment in the future of our community."

Now in particular, in the wake of significant job losses nationwide, the ability to earn a paycheck will be essential to many young people whether they are helping to support their families or planning for the future. As part of their Student Leader experience, each student will receive a \$5,000 stipend to recognize them for their community achievements.

Recent estimates suggest that the number of disconnected youth – those who aren't in school and don't have a job – has likely tripled since last year and could be as high as 18 million. Without access to opportunities that build career skills, many young people may be left behind, leading to high rates of youth unemployment and hindering overall economic progress. In addition to Student Leaders, the bank invests in summer jobs for young people through its partnership with the Millhill Child and Development Center to support the Summer Youth Employment program in Trenton and the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment program in Newark, through which young adults gain valuable workforce skills. This summer, Bank of America is connecting approximately 3,000 young adults to summer jobs through partnerships with nonprofits and local mayors and its own Student Leaders® program.

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