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SUMMER SEARCH AND YOUTH MENTORING ACTION NETWORK MAKE JOINT 'COMMITMENT TO ACTION' AT CGI AMERICA TO SUPPORT COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Critical Mentoring Key to Preparing Students of Color for Success in College and Beyond

SAN FRANCISCO, June 16, 2016—Summer Search and Youth Mentoring Action Network (YMAN) joined forces to make a Commitment to Action in support of college and career readiness at the sixth annual Clinton Global Initiative America (CGI America) meeting in Atlanta, GA. The commitment will become part of a portfolio of innovative projects that has already touched the lives of more than 430 million people in over 180 countries with the CGI community and the public.

In early 2016, Summer Search and YMAN partnered to develop and support the concept of *critical mentoring*, a culturally-conscious model of mentoring adolescent youth of color that creates a space for students and mentors to talk about race, culture and other systemic barriers to success. At CGI America, Summer Search and YMAN announced their Commitment to Action and opened the opportunity for other organizations to join their current list of partners which include Amped Strategies and MENTOR (National Mentoring Partnership). Together, these partners will convene other key mentoring and youth development practitioners and researchers to establish guidelines and develop resources for the practical implementation of *critical mentoring* in preparing young people to succeed in college and eventually a career field. Ultimately, these resources and tools will be made available to the youth development and mentoring fields.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, between 1990 and 2014, the percentage of White students who attained a high school diploma or its equivalent remained higher than that of Black and Hispanic students. During those same years, the gap in rate between White and Black students attaining a bachelor's degree (or higher) widened from 13 to 18 percentage points, and the gap between White and Hispanic students in attaining this education level widened from 18 to 26 percentage points.

Mentoring has been highlighted as an effective strategy for youth development and boasts many evidence-based practices that ensure that students with mentors also perform well in school. However, mentors often focus on academic preparedness and exposure to college and career without having open discussions about racism in higher education or career fields; or about the differences between attending predominately White institutions versus historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions; or the economic challenges to pursuing and earning a degree. This results in traditional mentoring missing the mark in effectively preparing students of color for a successful future. *Critical mentoring* means integrating societal context so that mentoring adolescents is culturally-relevant and creates a space for honesty, critical consciousness and ultimately, transformation.

Summer Search and YMAN are just two of nearly 1,000 participants from across sectors at CGI America with a goal to develop and implement new, specific and measurable plans and projects to encourage continued economic growth, support long-term competitiveness and increase social mobility in the United States. Since 2005, CGI members have made more than 3,500 Commitments to Action to make a positive impact in our communities and around the world.

About Summer Search

Summer Search is a national youth development nonprofit organization dedicated to helping low-income youth to develop the skills and character traits they need to become college-educated leaders who give back to their families and communities. To learn more, visit www.summersearch.org

About Youth Mentoring Action Network

The Youth Mentoring Action Network is dedicated to leveraging the power of mentoring relationships to increase access to opportunities for all youth. They believe that developing strong relationships not only provides basic youth development benefits, but addresses a significant number of issues related to their academic and professional success. To learn more, visit <http://www.mentoringactionnetwork.org/>

About Clinton Global Initiative America

Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America brings together leaders from the business, philanthropic, nonprofit, and government sectors to develop solutions that encourage economic growth, support long-term competitiveness, and increase social mobility in the United States. CGI America's annual convening is designed to be a working meeting that promotes collaboration. Each CGI America participant makes a Commitment to Action: a new, specific, and measurable plan that supports increased economic growth and opportunity. To date, CGI America participants have made nearly 600 commitments, which have improved the lives of more than 4.9 million people. For more information, visit cgiamerica.org.