



## **WHYY AWARDED AMERICAN GRADUATE COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANT TO HELP PHILADELPHIA IMPROVE YOUTH OUTCOMES**

*WHYY to Work with Community Partners to Reach Low Income Families and Share Stories of Community Leaders Who Are “American Graduate Champions”*

PHILADELPHIA, PA (September 2, 2014) — WHYY has been awarded a \$200,000 [American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen](#) community service grant from The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to help Philadelphia improve youth outcomes. The nation's graduation rate is at 80%, yet significant “graduation gaps” still exist for students of different races, ethnicities, family incomes, and disabilities, as well as those with limited English proficiency. In Philadelphia, graduation rates are 64% and on-time charter school graduation rate is 76%, with the biggest gaps existing in 9th grade, where students who had been getting by begin to fail and stop attending regularly.

Kicking off as students in Philadelphia head back to school, WHYY will work with the Philadelphia community over the next two years to increase understanding about the challenges for at-risk youth and work with a network of community partners to help develop and illuminate long term solutions emphasizing the importance of a strong foundation and the need for consistent caring adults. Stations will highlight local leaders who are helping communities increase graduation rates and the everyday heroes in a child's life who are committed to improving education outcomes as “American Graduate Champions.” The initiative will feature new locally produced content alongside national productions and classroom resources – including PBS NewsHour's new education desk, American Graduate Day, 180 Days: Hartsville, and the youth-driven spoken word contest RAISE UP!, along with PBS Learning Media and PBS Kids assets. WHYY is part of the national American Graduate initiative in partnership with 33 other public media stations around the country.

“Thanks to this generous support from CPB, WHYY is pleased to expand our education programming and reporting while providing much needed support to the public school community in Philadelphia,” said Bill Marrazzo, WHYY President and CEO. “This initiative enables our youth outreach and engagement activities to continue to grow and revolutionize. We're thrilled to contribute to our community in this way!”

“Education is at the core of public media's mission. Through American Graduate stations' partnerships with over 1000 local organizations, we are proud of public media's content and on the ground engagement that has raised awareness to achieve 80% graduation rates nationally and helped America see the potential in every student,” said Pat Harrison, CPB President and CEO. “By strengthening our focus on solutions, starting with our youngest learners, and highlighting local leaders who are creating sustainable change, together, we can set kids – and our country – on a path for long term success.”

As part of this initiative, WHYY will extend the reach of its in-depth, multimedia education reporting beyond the city of Philadelphia to suburban communities. WHYY's journalism will be supported by research and data analysis of partner Research for Action. Together with partner The Philadelphia Public School Notebook, the station will create a special Notebook edition of reporting stemming from research on the dropout rate of Philadelphia schools and the challenges even Philadelphia high school graduates

have finding work in the current marketplace. WHY Y-TV will broadcast national content produced as part of American Graduate. Additionally, the station's "Flash Media Lab" media literacy program will be implemented in select Philadelphia public high schools, directly serving students (and teachers) with hands-on media arts training.

### **About WHY Y**

For nearly sixty years, WHY Y has been Greater Philadelphia's leading public media provider, serving southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and all of Delaware. WHY Y takes pride in bringing audiences news when they need it, entertainment when they want it, and education when it counts- on television, radio, the Web and in the community. WHY Y-TV is the primary PBS station in the Delaware Valley, reaching and engaging 750,000 viewers a week. With 350,000 listeners a week, WHY Y-FM is the leading public radio station in the region. It is Greater Philadelphia's only NPR station that focuses on news and information. Launched in 2010, WHY Y's NewsWorks.org is the online home of WHY Y News and its network of journalism partners in Philadelphia, South Jersey and Delaware. For more information, visit WHY Y.org.

### **About CPB**

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,300 locally-owned and -operated public television and radio stations nationwide, and is the largest single source of funding for research, technology, and program development for public radio, television and related online services.

### **About American Graduate**

American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen was launched in 2011 with 25 public media stations in high need communities to spotlight the high school dropout crisis and focus on middle and high school student interventions. Today, more than 80 public radio and television stations in over 30 states have partnered with over 1000 community organizations and schools, as well as Alma and Colin Powell's America's Promise Alliance, Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Alliance for Excellent Education, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Newman's Own Foundation to help the nation achieve a 90% graduation by 2020.

With primetime and children's programming that educates, informs, and inspires public radio and television stations — locally owned and operated — are important resources in helping to address critical issues facing today's communities. According to a report from the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, American Graduate stations have told the story about the dropout crisis in a way that empowered citizens to get involved, and helped community organizations break down silos to work more effectively together.

In early 2014, CPB and PBS KIDS committed an additional \$20 million for the "American Graduate PBS KIDS Fund" to also help communities connect the importance of early learning as part of a student's long term success. In addition to station grants for local engagement, the Fund will support the creation of children's content and tools to help parents, particularly those from low income communities, better prepare their young children for long term success. Fourteen American Graduate station grantees have also been awarded CPB early education grants to reach children ages 2-8 with programming and services developed through the Ready to Learn Initiative, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

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