

Social Entrepreneur Makes Social Capital Literacy His Mission During National Mentoring Month

Black Owned Start-Up Works to Fight Economic Divide and Bring Opportunities to Millions

LAUREL, MD, UNITED STATES, January 11, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Edward DeJesus knows the power of [social capital](#). As a young father in his teens growing up in the Bronx, N.Y., he had to make the decision to go to college or get a full-time rotating shift, fast food job. The problem - he would not be able to attend college because of the shift work the job required. When telling a good friend about his predicament, he was advised, "Stop, I know someone who can help. You have another move."

Thanks to his best friend, and the social capital assets that DeJesus didn't know he had, he was able to dodge the fast-food job and get a full-time evening job working with unemployed homeless men in New York City.

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Edward DeJesus, like millions of present-day young adults, was not taught about the importance of social capital nor supported in developing it. In fact, according to DeJesus, most of the youth who he works with don't regularly speak with gainfully employed family members about their occupations. He knows the importance of labor market connections and wants to see more young people,

especially those from underserved communities, make the most out of every possible interaction with those who can share helpful career information, resources and support.

DeJesus not only went on to graduate from college, but he also became a leading expert on youth workforce development and now he and his company Social Capital Builders is on a



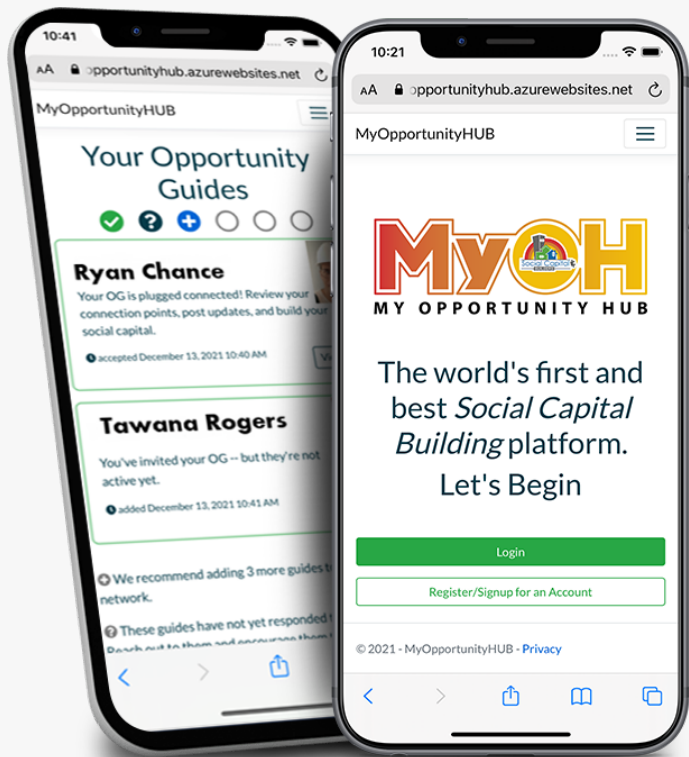
Edward DeJesus, President of Social Capital Builders

mission to reach one million youth with the message that his best friend told him long ago: "Wait, I know someone who can help. You have another move."

The move Dejesus is referring to is social capital building. Sixty-five percent of Americans get jobs through their social capital connections yet social capital building is not formally taught in any school in the U.S.

Dejesus acknowledges that schools seem more concerned about what students know than with who they know, and he also recognizes that this is a big error. According to research, 70% of jobs are posted improperly or never posted at all. "Young people can't apply for jobs that they don't know exist nor can they dream about careers that they can't see," implores Dejesus.

Dejesus created Social Capital Builders in 2019 to address this issue with the release of their Foundations in Social Capital Literacy Curriculum (FISCL) and their social capital building platform - [My Opportunity Hub](#) (MyOH). MyOH is the first web-app platform specifically designed to help youth build social capital with familial, developmental and gateway assets - key workforce stakeholders who care about youth and are willing to spend 15 minutes a month sharing labor market information and some essential career support. And through these platforms, Dejesus is expanding the world of [mentoring](#) as we know it.



My Opportunity Hub



Social Capital Builders - Using the Power of Social Capital literacy, Analysis and Development to Improve Economic Opportunities

To date, Social Capital Builders has brought their social capital building solutions to schools and organizations throughout the United States.

DeJesus and his team of social capital builders are actively seeking a SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) investment of 1.5 million to build out MyOH into a virtual, powerful learning tool for families. Currently, MYOH is only offered to organizations where youth are required to satisfactorily complete FISCL training before they can begin the social capital building process. "We don't want youth unprepared to engage in the social capital building process," states DeJesus. "It's as easy to lose social capital as it is to develop it. "

Data science undermines the work at Social Capital Builders. They know that companies use algorithms to weed out many workers and they are hard at work using techniques such as agent-based modeling to help youth weed out employers and schools.

"Not all companies and educational institutions that shine diversity, equity and inclusion are really about that life," stated DeJesus in the urban colloquial style for which he is nationally known. "The data proves it, and it is time to help young people learn social network analysis techniques to determine their position in and out of opportunity networks and identify patterns of relationships with people, institutions and companies that can dramatically improve their present and future economic opportunities."

DeJesus hopes that in this age of growing societal malaise, policymakers, investors and corporations will recognize that it is time for a social capital approach to education and training. "Youth will clearly invest in skills, education, and training when they know someone is on the other side of the labor market waiting and willing to help them put their achievements to work."

It has been years since those days in the Bronx and the birth of DeJesus's baby girl. Now she is all grown up and DeJesus is still helping young people connect to opportunities that many never thought possible. DeJesus knows how they feel, because at one time when he faced the same obstacles, and it was his social capital that has always pulled him through.

DeJesus is a W.K. Kellogg Foundation National Fellow. He holds an M.S. degree in management and urban policy analysis from the New School for Social Research and a B.S. from Fordham University in the Bronx. He is the author of Making Connections Work and the best-selling youth book, MAKiN' iT. His work has been featured on NPR, in The Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun, and The Miami Herald.

DeJesus served as a youth policy expert for the Sar Levitan Center for Youth Policy at Johns Hopkins University and served on the Task Force on Employment Opportunities for young offenders for the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Social Capital Builders is a resident company at the Maryland Innovation Center. Founded in

2019, Social Capital Builders is a Black founded and operated tech startup dedicated to improving economic opportunities of all through the power of social capital literacy, analysis and development.

Learn more at www.socialcapitalbuilders.com

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