

BE NOLA Monumental Celebrates Success of 4th Annual Black Is Brilliant Summit

Record Attendance and Economic Impact Bolster Black Community

NEW ORLEANS, LA , UNITED STATES , August 31, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [BE NOLA \(Black Education For New Orleans\)](#) hosted its highly anticipated 4th Annual Black Is Brilliant Summit on Saturday, August 19, on Bayou Road's storied "Black Wall Street." This milestone significantly advanced BE NOLA's mission, born out of the crucial need to support Black educators following the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when 4,300 mostly Black educators were unjustly fired.



Adrinda Kelly and Stevona Elem-Rogers of BE NOLA speak to the Black Is Brilliant Summit audience.

The idea for BE NOLA's annual education Summit grew from community conversations with Black teachers, parents, artists, social workers, and activists across New Orleans. The Black Is Brilliant Summit was conceptualized and curated by BE NOLA's Chief of Community Programs and Partnerships, Stevona Elem-Rogers, in 2020 and launched as a fully virtual experience produced by Saint Josephine Consultants. In 2021, Elem-Rogers expanded the Summit program to include an in-person programming experience for educators and viewing hubs at Black-owned businesses across the city.

This year's Black Is Brilliant Summit, which also included virtual programming to extend its impact beyond Louisiana, drew record numbers. 570 gathered in person, worldwide through live stream, the BE NOLA APP, and at local Black owned businesses. BE NOLA's guiding mantra, "Black education is a lifestyle," permeated every aspect of the day's rich and Black-centered programming. Attendees enjoyed everything from enlightening conversations with celebrated activists and icons like David Dennis Sr. to a block party orchestrated by DJ ANTWIGADEE.

"BE NOLA's work is a direct result of the mass firing of Black educators post-Hurricane Katrina. Spaces like the Black Is Brilliant Summit work to ensure that we develop current Black educators

who by force have lost those connections to generations of educators in and out the classroom who came before them,” says Stevona Elem-Rogers, BE NOLA's Chief of Community Programs & Partnerships. “It's often said it takes a village to raise a child but it takes the same effort to pour into our educators. We cannot ask them to create joyful and culturally relevant learning spaces and then starve them of those same experiences. Summit is about tracing back what was lost & forging a brighter future. It's a love letter and celebration of the courage it takes to rebuild our community almost twenty years post the storm. It is an unapologetically Black space that says we're still here and always it takes to rebuild our community almost twenty years post the storm. It is an unapologetically Black space that it takes to rebuild our community almost twenty years post the storm. It is an unapologetically Black space that says we're still here and always will be.”

The Summit wasn't just for educators; it attracted a diverse audience including community educators, parents, students, artists, political figures, and a host of community organizations – all united by a love for Black educators and Black education. With options for in-person, virtual, and hybrid participation, BE NOLA's Black Is Brilliant Summit was accessible to all. The event's robust lineup also extended into viewing hubs located at Black-owned businesses across the city, further emphasizing the critical need for spaces that uplift Black education and history, especially at a time when state legislations are banning and censoring educational content.

Among the event's many achievements was the marked economic uplift it brought to local Black-owned and women-owned businesses. With the support of Entergy and support from Pepsico, Cox and Acceleraise, BE NOLA is proud to have poured over \$200,000 into the local economy for this year's event. New Orleans and its cultural legacy cannot be discussed without mentioning the local culture bearers, artists, and Black-owned businesses, which is why their support and inclusion at the Black Is Brilliant Summit is both a priority and a privilege. By featuring and supporting them during the Black Is Brilliant Summit, BE NOLA is not only enriching the event experience, but also investing directly into the local Black community.

The Black Is Brilliant Summit achieved the goal of pushing the boundaries of what education and dialogue can achieve by utilizing our collective history not just as a lens to scrutinize the past, but as a tool for envisioning a brighter future for Black children. The Summit continues to be reflective of BE NOLA's effort to focus on radically reimagining what Black education means and should look like.

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