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## NEWS RELEASE

### City Forward Collective Is Putting Milwaukee's Diverse Teacher Shortage in the Spotlight

*The Why They Teach Campaign Aims to Reimagine the Teaching Profession and Recruit Teachers of Color*

MILWAUKEE, WI — October 6, 2020 — [City Forward Collective](#) — a Milwaukee nonprofit focused on eliminating educational inequities — and Serve Marketing today launched a new teacher recruitment campaign aimed to reimagine the teacher pipeline and the teaching profession. The campaign is called [Why They Teach](#) and highlights the stories of seven diverse Milwaukee teachers. To inspire more people to consider the profession, each story offers a unique perspective on why being a teacher is rewarding and crucial to the success of Milwaukee's K-12 students.

"The Why They Teach campaign is meant to change the conversation about the true value of teaching and to inspire more people to go into the profession," said Gary Mueller, volunteer creative director at Serve. "You don't become a teacher to get rich monetarily. You do it because you have a gift to offer kids and sharing that gift gives teachers a sense of satisfaction and joy that money just can't buy."

The Why They Teach campaign exposes the racial inequities that still exist in Milwaukee and across Wisconsin. According to the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress results, Wisconsin has the widest achievement gap between black and white students of any state. Meaning, black students are performing lower academically than their white counterparts. This disparity reflects an opportunity gap in which minority students and students from low-income households are denied access to experienced teachers who share their racial/ethnic backgrounds. In fact, these students are often taught by inexperienced, out of license or substitute teachers. One of the proposed strategies to address this problem is recruiting more teachers of color to better reflect the diverse students they are mentoring.

Research shows that teachers of color enhance the academic performance of students of color, including improved reading and math test scores, higher graduation rates and increased aspirations to attend college. However, while the proportion of Milwaukee's students of color has continued to rise over the past decade, the teacher workforce remains mostly white. According to the Department of Public Instruction, only 30 percent of Milwaukee's district and public charter school teachers are of color — 17 percent Black and 9 percent Hispanic/Latinx — while approximately 90 percent of students are of color, creating a wide racial gap.

"City Forward Collective hopes to encourage more high school and college students to choose a teaching path and to inspire adults who started careers in other fields to consider a change. We are especially focused on increasing the number of Black and Hispanic/Latinx teachers in Milwaukee's schools," said Patricia Hoben, president/executive director at City Forward Collective. "Having more teachers that look like and share lived experiences with our city's young people will ensure that students leave their K-12 education empowered to make a choice in the direction of their lives."

Why They Teach is a multi-media campaign that can be seen through billboards and transit shelters in and around Milwaukee, as well as social and digital channels. There also is a Why They Teach website — [whytheyteach.org](http://whytheyteach.org) — that shares the stories of current teachers, helps people from a variety of backgrounds determine how to get into teaching and links them to job openings in Milwaukee. The Why They Teach campaign is the latest initiative City Forward Collective has launched in pursuit of increasing the number of teachers of color in Milwaukee and filling persistent teacher vacancies in specialty areas such as math, science, special education and bi-lingual education. Other initiatives City Forward Collective has activated include:

- **Department of Workforce Development Fast Forward Grant to City Forward Collective:** Through this \$500,000 grant, 140 paraprofessionals from Milwaukee Public Schools, public charter schools and private schools receive a \$3,000 scholarship and mentoring while they take classes to complete a four-year degree and a teaching license, and work as a teaching assistant during the day.
- **Teacher Recruitment and Retention Pilot Innovation Grants:** City Forward Collective awarded \$250,000 to six schools and networks undertaking new strategies to recruit and retain teachers of color.
- **Professional Development Working Group:** School leaders and hiring managers committed to increasing the representation of teachers of color to 40% or higher over the next five years are participating in a year-long workshop series on best practices and strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers of color.
- **Black, Indigenous and People of Color Teacher Employee Resource Group:** This group works to build a more inclusive and engaged community of teachers in Milwaukee and serves as a resource for hiring managers committed to increasing representation of teachers of color.

To learn more about the Why They Teach campaign, visit [whytheyteach.org](http://whytheyteach.org). To learn more about City Forward Collective, visit [cityforwardcollective.org](http://cityforwardcollective.org). Click [here](#) download the media kit.

### About City Forward Collective

City Forward Collective is a new effort to move Milwaukee forward by eliminating educational inequities and ensuring every child has access to a great school. Our four-part strategy includes talent development, policy and advocacy, parent and community organizing, and strategic investments in high-quality schools.

### About Serve Marketing

Serve is the country's only all-volunteer, nonprofit advertising agency, whose mission is to give underserved charitable causes a stronger voice in the community. Started and run by the employees of Milwaukee ad agency - BVK, since 2002, Serve volunteers have created behavior-changing public service campaigns for over 75 local and national nonprofit causes from Infant Mortality, STD prevention and teen homelessness to foster care, human trafficking and teen pregnancy. Serve's work was honored by the White House for its role in helping reduce teen pregnancy in Milwaukee by over 65%. For more information, go to [servemarketing.org](http://servemarketing.org).

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