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**Houston Juvenile Justice Program Awarded Funds**

**from the Texas Bar Foundation to Expand Program**

*Program Seeks to End the School-to-Prison Pipeline*

**(Houston, TX)** – In an effort to end the school-to-prison pipeline in Houston’s Fifth Ward, the [**Center for Urban Transformation’s (CUT)**](https://www.fwtransformation.com/) **Juvenile Justice Diversion Program** not only offers comprehensive legal case management to middle and high school students who run into problems with the law, the program also offers, job opportunities, and more. This holistic approach is why [The Texas Bar Foundation](https://txbf.org/) (TBF) continues its support of the program with a $4,000 grant to [the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation](https://www.fifthwardcrc.org/) (Fifth Ward CRC), which is the administrator for and a collaborator with CUT.

“We’re grateful for the Texas Bar Foundation’s support in our efforts to create more equity in the law enforcement system for minority youth,” said Joel Androphy, CUT Board of Directors member. “Representing minority youth in criminal court is only half the battle; helping them avoid further problems in the future is our other goal. CUT provides counseling, job opportunities, housing, and health care assistance, all of which require community support.”

The CUT program serves youth who are deemed at-risk or are arrested on a Fifth Ward school campus. Instead of going through the juvenile justice system and potentially receiving a criminal record that adds barriers to accessing future opportunities, youth are diverted to CUT for case management, mentorship, and restorative justice services based in the community.

This is the third year TBF has awarded CUT with funds for the organization’s Juvenile Justice Diversion program. Since its inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than $22 million in grants to law-related programs. Supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nation's largest charitably funded bar foundation.

This program began with an assembly of committed community partners which includes Pleasant Hill Ministries, Fifth Ward CRC, Berg and Androphy, Legacy Community Health, and Houston Habitat for Humanity. CUT has the support of a public safety council that includes the Harris County District Attorney’s Office, Harris County Juvenile Probation, Houston Independent School District, and many other community leaders.

For more information about CUT, please contactLeah Wolfthal**,** at 832-405-7480 or email lwolfthal@fwtransformation.org. For interviews and all media inquiries, please contact Damali Hill at 281-947-2447 or email dhill@northcirclepr.com.

**About the Center for Urban Transformation:** The CUT is the result of a collaborative of leading Houston community organizations and institutions, including Pleasant Hill Ministries, Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation, Berg & Androphy, Legacy Community Health, and Houston Habitat for Humanity. They are seeking to create opportunities for Fifth Ward families to overcome the adverse effects of racism, poverty, and other inequities by implementing programs that encourage growing prospects for survival and success.

**About Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation:**  The non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization was created in 1989 to save one of Houston's most historic and culturally rich communities, the Fifth Ward area. Settled and developed during the mid-1800s, Fifth Ward was home to many of history's native sons and daughters: Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland, George Foreman, County Commissioner El Franco Lee, and others. As a steward of Houston's Historic 5th Ward and comprehensive community developer, FWCRC continues to enhance the quality of life for individuals and families, eliminate blight, attract investment and resources, encourage commercial and business development, coordinate government, and public service, and offer a sense of destination and creative place-making. The finished product is a healthy and vibrant community for residents and visitors alike - a great place to live, work, and play!

**About the Texas Bar Foundation**: Created in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation is a membership organization comprised of Texas attorneys with a mission of Advancing Justice in Texas by providing opportunities to support the rule of law in Texas. The Texas Bar Foundation funds projects throughout Texas that further legal services for the underserved, public education, ethics and professionalism in the legal profession, administration of justice, and victim services. Since its inception, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than $21 million in grants to law-related programs; supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nation's largest charitably funded bar foundation.

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