



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CBC FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH K.L.E.O. COMMUNITY FAMILY LIFE CENTER
TO ADDRESS YOUTH VIOLENCE, SCHOOL SAFETY AND BLACK MALE ACHIEVEMENT**

Chicago, IL – The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF), K.L.E.O. Community Family Life Center, and the Open Society Institute’s Campaign for Black Male Achievement will present “Breaking Barriers: Ending School Violence and Improving Academic Success among Black Males,” from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. on October 23 at the K.L.E.O. Community Family Life Center, 119 E. Garfield Boulevard Chicago, Illinois. The forum is in response to the recent number of violent youth deaths in the city.

Black students are nearly 500% more likely to pass through a metal detector when entering school. “Yet black males are significantly more likely to feel unsafe at school,” said Ivory B. Toldson, senior research analyst for CBCF and author of the groundbreaking report *Breaking Barriers: Plotting the Path to Academic Success for School-age African American Males*. The report looks at several factors in relationship to increasing the success of African- American male students. “Black males who report feeling safe at school have significantly higher levels of academic functioning,” said Toldson, but “we cannot provide realistic solutions to improve academic success among black males, without first addressing the deplorable acts of violence plaguing youth in cities like Chicago,” he said.

Rev. Torrey Barrett, executive director of K.L.E.O. Community Family Life Center enthusiastically accepted the role of local liaison for the Chicago Breaking Barriers event. “The forum will help impart culturally-appropriate policy solutions to reform education in high-need areas like ours, with a specific focus on improving school safety and ending school violence,” said Barrett.

Joining the discussion will be Robert Woodson, president of the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise which has been instrumental in implementing the Violence Free Zone – a grassroots initiative being implemented in 32 schools at five sites. Using young adults who are from the same neighborhoods as students in the schools they serve, the youth are able to command trust and respect from their younger peers.

Funded by the Open Society Institute’s Campaign for Black Male Achievement, this is the fourth forum in CBCF’s Breaking Barriers series to elevate the national discourse on black male achievement. The first three forums in Washington, DC, Clayton County, GA, and Memphis, TN have attracted scores of educators, law enforcement officials and activists.

CBCF was established in 1976, as a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research and educational institute. Our mission is to serve as the catalyst that educates future leaders, minority-focused organizational leaders, and organized labor to effect positive and sustainable change in the African American community.

The K.L.E.O. Community Family Life Center is a non-profit organization and facility dedicated to strengthening families and providing a safe haven, through education, training, support and fun for people of all ages in the Washington Park Community.