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GOAL ACHIEVED!! Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce reached fundraising goal; \$1 million raised for COVID-19 Resiliency Relief Program, first phase of grant awards has begun

For Immediate Release:

August 10, 2020, Oakland, CA – The quest to raise \$1 million dollars to save and sustain local, small, Black-owned businesses in Oakland, California has come to fruition, according to Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce (OAACC) President and CEO, Cathy D. Adams. What began as a clarion call to stave off business closures and keep them afloat due to an enormous crush of the COVID-19 health pandemic--has now become an astounding accomplishment, resulting from an outpouring of support from corporations, charitable funds, private businesses and individuals throughout the greater Bay Area.

Established and achieved within 90 days, to date, commitments in excess of the \$1 million goal have been made (www.oaacc.org). Adams states, "We could not have done this alone but for the benevolence and goodwill of others...they have truly become a lifeline for our businesses."

The Resiliency Relief grants are being awarded based on eligibility requirements and will be disbursed as funds are received and cleared. The need continues--given the prolonged circumstances of a weakened economy, a protracted recourse to extend government assistance, unclear directives on re-opening schools, and adherence to stringent safety measures--as the world awaits viable options.

OAACC's Board Chairwoman Shonda Scott has always maintained, "We are aware that these grants will in no way make up for all of the financial losses experienced by many of our members, their families and employees; the intent is to provide relevant short term relief."

Adams continues, "While we cannot predict what the future holds for any of us, this tremendous accomplishment has been a collective win for all involved, grant recipients, as well as those who gave to the Resiliency Relief effort. We asked our benefactors to express what it means to be a part of this shared success."

Below are a few of those responses—

“As a health care company, it is important for us to address systemic bias within health care, as well as the economic disparities which contribute to health inequities,” said Antoinette Mayer, senior director of corporate citizenship with **Blue Shield**. “That’s why we are looking to Black-led and Black-supporting organizations to create a ripple effect in the community. Oakland is the home of Blue Shield’s headquarters, and we want to be good neighbors. Our goal in investing locally is to create a healthy and inclusive community. We have a responsibility to use our company’s voice and resources for positive change, especially in communities of color.”

“We are proud to contribute to OAACC reaching its important goal of raising \$1 million for local Black-owned businesses. OAACC’s efforts are critical to the Black community and Oakland is better off for having them. **Clorox** is humbled to be associated with OAACC and the great work it does,” said Pat Hayes, Vice President of Government Affairs.

“**Kaiser Permanente** is very pleased to join with other businesses and community leaders to support the OAACC Foundation’s Resiliency Relief Funds. This program aligns with our mission to improve health and racial equity in the communities we serve,” says Yvette Radford, vice president, Kaiser Permanente Northern California External and Community Affairs. “We strongly support local Black-owned businesses, as they are key to the rich fabric of our communities. Many have lost substantial revenue during the shelter-in-place period and incurred subsequent damage and business loss as a result of community protests.”

“Advocating for our Oakland Black business community with baseline support was not enough. We wanted to ensure that more emphasis on our commitment to investing in Black businesses was felt with a major impact.” Taj Tashombe, **Oakland A’s** Vice President of Government Affairs.

Okta, Inc., granted \$100,000 in philanthropic funding and partnership initiative through its Racial Justice and Equity Employee Advisory Board to the Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce Covid-19 Resiliency Relief Program. “We are extremely excited to build a relationship with OAACC and support their very important mission to provide economic relief and administrative support to local African American and minority owned small businesses,” Nola Turner, Co-Leader and Senior Contracts Manager, Legal Operations.

“We’re proud to help African American businesses in the Oakland Bay Area recover, grow and succeed. We’ve been part of the Oakland community for decades and know that it is a place where neighbors help neighbors and businesses help businesses. Such outreach and partnerships help communities thrive,” said Brad Street, President of **Safeway Northern California Division**.”

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