



GREENWOOD PROJECT

ON A MISSION TO BUILD A TRUE DIVERSITY PIPELINE FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES.

For decades, financial institutions have pledged to diversify their employees. Many have committed huge resources to this effort, but with limited success. Now, a nonprofit founded by former hedge fund staffers is stepping in to help out.

This summer approximately 30 minority students from Chicago completed internships with financial institutions in the city. The students, from Chicago's South and West sides, had little idea of the kind of jobs they would be doing at the start of the program. By the end of the summer, many of them had job offers.

Greenwood Project was started three years ago by Bevon and Elois Joseph. Since its launch, Greenwood has grown exponentially. Greenwood's mission is to give a minority population exposure to financial-sector jobs. Bevon himself worked in IT at a hedge fund in Chicago. He was tired of hearing that financial institutions just couldn't find enough minority applicants for jobs. So he set up Greenwood to help introduce minority youth in Chicago to careers and opportunities within the financial industry.



Greenwood Project strategically selects many of Chicago's top performing students who attend prestigious Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) across the nation. HBCUs are often outside of the typical recruitment tour for financial companies. Greenwood's college program matches student talent with available internship opportunities at a participating firm. The organization also conducts a rigorous financial literacy program for high school students from under-resourced communities.

Joseph says, "Once you expose a bright student, they latch onto it, and many have never heard of jobs such as financial engineer or portfolio manager and that prevents them from considering such roles for themselves. They're smart, they just need that exposure – the internships have been key."

Bridging The Gap

Hayes Bynum, a University of Iowa senior, was a Greenwood Project Scholar this past summer (2018) and started applying to trading and investment firms after his internship. Hayes received an offer in January (2019) from Sandler O'Neill + Partners

[Read More on Page 4](#)



BOARD MEMBERS

Sara Mikuta, CPA,
Chair
Oak Brook, IL

Simon Petravick, CPA,
Vice Chair
Peoria, IL

S. Bradley Danton, CPA, JD
Naperville, IL

Jeannie Folk, CPA
Glenview, IL

Thomas Homer, JD
Naperville, IL

James Kelley, CPA,
Glen Ellyn, IL

Rhonda Kodjayan, CPA
Chicago, IL

Annette O'Connor, CPA
LaGrange, IL

Kent Reeves, CPA, JD
Fairfield, IL

Brian Whitlock, CPA, JD
Chicago, IL

Lawrence Wojcik, CPA, JD
Chicago, IL

