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NEW COHORT OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE LEADERS SELECTED FOR 2019 REDF ACCELERATOR

Eighteen employment-focused social enterprise leaders will advance their learning and deepen their peer connections through the REDF Accelerator

SAN FRANCISCO (October 4, 2018) –Today REDF announced its 2019 REDF Accelerator cohort comprised of emerging leaders from employment-focused social enterprises from 12 states. The 18 fellows lead competitive, revenue-generating businesses with a social mission: they hire and provide training to people who are striving to overcome employment barriers including homelessness, incarceration, substance abuse, mental illness, and limited education. Over the next seven months, the REDF Accelerator will provide these entrepreneurial leaders with specialized curriculum that will deepen and expand their expertise, help them build powerful peer networks, strengthen their business models, and help them provide paying jobs and supportive services to men and women striving to create a better life.

This year's cohort represents employment social enterprises' ever-expanding reach across the United States, with leaders joining the Accelerator for the first time from Montana and New Jersey, and from new cities including Annapolis, New Haven, and Spokane. The industries represented in the Accelerator have also grown with this cohort to include technology and healthcare, reflecting the increasing importance of social enterprise as a valuable workforce training pipeline for high-demand businesses.

"The talented people who lead employment social enterprises combine their strong commitment to social justice with business acumen. REDF's Accelerator program is uniquely designed to develop the emerging leaders of this growing movement," says Carla Javits, REDF CEO and President. "Now in its third year, we're excited to see the program gain momentum as past and current Accelerator participants connect and collaborate to grow their businesses so more people who are overcoming barriers access jobs and the supports that help them thrive."

Despite a strong economy and historically low unemployment rates, thousands of Americans are shut out of the workforce. People with high employment barriers have a lot to offer employers, but need specialized support services that social enterprise jobs are tailor-made to provide. Accelerator fellows will delve into comprehensive content designed specifically to help them grow their businesses to meet this need.

"Being part of the REDF Accelerator means more to Hopeworks than just developing great tools or expanding our social enterprise," shares Dan Rhoton, Executive Director of Hopeworks, a social enterprise in New Jersey that provides training and job opportunities in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and interactive digital mapping for young adults. "For us, each new client, each new project, means dozens of youth employed in livable-wage jobs that they can use to transform their lives. That's why we are so excited to be part of this year's REDF Accelerator."

Meet the 2019 REDF Accelerator cohort:

East Coast

- Alden Woodcock, [EMERGE Connecticut, Inc.](#), New Haven, CT
- David Lidz, [Ladders To Leaders](#), Hagerstown, MD
- Beth Rocca, [Light House Bistro](#), Annapolis, MD
- Dan Rhoton, [Hopeworks GIS and Drone Services](#), Camden, NJ
- Jerelyn Rodriguez, [The Knowledge House](#), Bronx, NY
- Justin Green, [Big Reuse](#), Brooklyn, NY

Midwest

- Aina Gutierrez, [Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse](#), Evanston, IL
- Matthew Cuff, [Just Q'in BBQ](#), Cincinnati, OH

South

- Deidra Kirtley, [Take 2: A Resonance Cafe](#), Tulsa, OK

West

- Karen Caldwell, [Primavera Works](#), Tucson, AZ
- Mark Smesrud, [Purple Door Coffee](#), Denver, CO
- Kathleen Foley-Hughes, [Ada's Café](#), San Francisco, CA
- Paul Fordham, [Wagster Treats](#), Novato, CA
- Yana Simone, [New Earth Explore](#), Culver City, CA
- Laura Tancredi-Baese, [Home Start Thrift Boutique](#), San Diego, CA
- Maria Lemus, [Visión y Compromiso](#), El Cerrito, CA
- Paige Pavalone, [Missoula Works](#), Missoula, MT
- Brent Hendricks, [Global Neighborhood](#), Spokane, WA

For more information, visit <http://redf.org/redf-accelerator/>.

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ABOUT REDF

REDF (the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) is a pioneering venture philanthropy that creates jobs and transforms lives like no other organization in America. We are galvanizing a national movement of employment social enterprises – revenue-generating businesses that invest the money they make into helping people striving to overcome employment barriers get jobs, keep jobs, and build a better life. For more information, visit www.redf.org.