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**Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) Receives 2019 National Partnership for Educational Access and Jack Kent Cooke Foundation *Award for Excellence in Educational Access***

BOSTON, MA – May 1, 2019 – On April 4, Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) received the 2019 National Partnership for Educational Access (NPEA) and Jack Kent Cooke Foundation *Award for Excellence in Educational Access* at the NPEA annual conference in Chicago, IL.

The Award, sponsored by the Cooke Foundation, recognizes excellence in supporting underserved students on the path to and through college and for demonstrating: effective practices in supporting underserved students; commitment to using data to inform and improve programming and practices; support for students' personal growth and success; a commitment to sustainability and long-term success; leadership in the community; and creative problem-solving and innovation in meeting the needs of their constituents.

LEDA was recognized with this award for its demonstrated strength across all of the Award criteria. LEDA's mission is to empower a community of exceptional young leaders from under-resourced backgrounds by supporting their higher education and professional success in order to create a more inclusive and equitable country. Ultimately, their goal is to diversify the national leadership pipeline. LEDA is distinguished in the college access and success space by employing a "high-touch" model, working specifically with high-achieving, low-income students, and offering a full continuum of services from recruitment through college graduation. With an approach rooted in research, external evaluation, and 15 years of institutional experience addressing the specific challenges that confront talented low-income students, for the past two years, 70% of LEDA Scholars gained admission to an Ivy League school, Stanford, or MIT.

“NPEA and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation have partnered for four years on the Award for Excellence in Educational Access and we are grateful for their support and commitment to NPEA and to the field. This Award recognizes and celebrates excellence and hard work in supporting underserved students on the path to college and shines a light on best practices

from which we can all learn,” said NPEA’s Executive Director, Karin Elliott. “NPEA is thrilled that LEDA is this year’s Award recipient. In their nomination, LEDA demonstrated strength across all of the Award criteria in helping students access and succeed in college and careers, in an effort to change the leadership landscape of their city and revitalize their communities.”

“LEDA is truly a leader in educational equity, and it should come as no surprise that its successful model prioritizes building a community of scholars,” stated Seppy Basili, Executive Director of the Cooke Foundation. “The Foundation has been fortunate enough to collaborate with LEDA many times over the years and, although not involved in the selection process, we are delighted to celebrate their achievements with fellow NPEA members.”

When asked to comment, LEDA’s Executive Director Beth Breger said, “LEDA is so honored to be the recipient of NPEA's Award for Excellence. Being recognized among this network of exemplary organizations is a testimony to the tremendous accomplishments of our LEDA Scholars, and the vital importance of building an inclusive and equitable America where leadership reflects, celebrates, and supports diverse perspectives.”

The Award winner was announced at the national NPEA Conference, *Raising Our Voices: Bold Innovations that Empower Students*, on April 4, 2019 at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza in Chicago, IL. For more information about the conference and the Award nominations process, please visit: [www.educational-access.org/conference.php](http://www.educational-access.org/conference.php).

#### **ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCESS**

The National Partnership for Educational Access (NPEA) is a membership organization that connects the people, practices, and innovations essential for eliminating barriers to educational access and college and career success for underserved students. Working together, our members make it possible for all students to access high-quality learning opportunities and to thrive at every phase of their unique educational journeys. For more information, please visit: <http://www.educational-access.org/>.

#### **ABOUT THE JACK KENT COOKE FOUNDATION**

The Cooke Foundation is dedicated to advancing the education of exceptionally promising students who have financial need. Since 2000, the foundation has awarded \$190 million in scholarships to nearly 2,500 students from 8th grade through graduate school, along with comprehensive counseling and other support services. The foundation has also provided \$100 million in grants to organizations that serve such students. [www.jkcf.org](http://www.jkcf.org)

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