

March 8th, 2022

Renee Jadusingh Esq.
Community Redevelopment Agency
20 N. Swinton Ave
Delray Beach, FL 33444

RE: Lease Proposal

Dear Madam Chair and Board Members:

I took occupancy at this location four years ago when the Delray Beach Redevelopment Agency (CRA) accepted my proposal for office space. This allowed me to leave my job with Achievement Centers for children and families to focus on providing free quality programming to teens in the heart of Delray Beach. Under the terms of the original agreement, I gave my word that we will work to improve the odds and outcomes of the children and families living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. At the time, we also saw a juvenile crime rate of 39% higher than the state average, and only 36% of the adults in this area had their GED/H.S diplomas.

Since moving into this space in 2018, we have grown our staff, network of donors, volunteers and increased the number of people served. During this time, we provided high touch high impact mentoring to 250+ enrolled students, served over 14,000 meals to 110+ households, provided \$30,000 to respond directly to residents' needs during and following the pandemic, and have hosted dozens of events with thousands of attendees. We have done all of this right here in a community that is and has been historically underserved. If the EJS Project weren't here, a lot of the kids and their families wouldn't know where to turn. I know this because I am one of those families, and I started the EJS Project to fill a very critical gap that I knew our city or other organizations weren't. Creating a safe space for teens isn't an easy task, but we have managed to do this while keeping our teens off the streets, out of trouble, on track for graduation, and better prepared for their future. We have partnered with over 20 local businesses over the past three years to provide paid internships to our students while giving them a head start in the workforce. This program enables our students to work up to 20 hours per week for eight weeks. Additionally, this is a paid internship opportunity for our students. When they complete the internship, they will have earned \$1,200 after the eight weeks. We want to continue building on the strengths of the participants and incorporate personal development principles into the program. These

principles include exploring the career interests of youth and developing their work readiness skills and competencies in a structured environment.

Aside from this program, we have been committed to growing our capacity to serve our students and their families. During the pandemic, our youth began collecting stories through the SenseMaker app as we partnered with Palm Health to respond to the needs of Delray residents in real-time. We paid house mortgages, car notes, utility bills, medical expenses, helped with the move-in costs, and so on. To this date, we have responded with more than \$35,000 directly to residents in need. On top of that, we provided thousands of free hot meals to hundreds of families within The Set and Delray Beach.

We have provided these services and numerous more at no cost to our constituents. This has helped us expand our impact and reach while gaining the trust and support of our community. After reviewing our budget, we have concluded that any amount spent towards rent will take away from the free programming that we provide. However, we can't continue to provide these services at this level without a place to call home. So we had to make some difficult decisions and ultimately decided to cut back on the number of internships we provide this summer. We are proposing to pay a dollar amount of \$250 per month as well as continue to be responsible for all of the building services and maintenance.

We thank the CRA for their support over the past four years. I have attached numerous letters of support from some of the county's largest and most well-recognized funders, organizations, and elected officials. They all believe in the work that we are doing through EJS Project's mission and have invested in us. We humbly ask that you respond favorably to our request so that we can continue to build and empower tomorrow's leaders in Delray Beach now and into the future.

Emanuel Dupree Jackson Jr

Emanuel Jackson Jr.

Executive Director