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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**JUNE 29, 2017**

**Domus Kids awarded \$150,000 grant by Barr Foundation  
to advance greater success for New England students**

June 29, 2017 (Stamford, CT)—Domus Kids has been awarded a \$150,000 planning grant from the Barr Foundation Education Program’s Engage New England: Doing high school differently initiative. Domus joins a new cohort of nine education innovators from Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut that will participate in a multi - year school reform initiative. This project seeks to connect all students to success in high school and beyond by assuring they have access to high - quality high schools that meet their interests and empower them to reach their full potential. The grant will fund a refinement of the school model at Stamford Academy alternative charter high school, which serves 148 students who have struggled with attendance, behavior, and academics in their previous schools.

The Barr Foundation’s Engage New England: Doing high school differently initiative is a \$30 million investment over five years to help New England innovators improve existing high schools and bring new school models to life in their communities. These first nine grantees were chosen from 49 applicants and will receive one - year planning grants to support technical assistance with planning and capacity building, with the potential to be invited to apply for implementation grants of up to \$750,000 over two years. Participants also become partners in a learning community, to share and learn from like - minded innovators across the region. Together, they are doing high school differently by building a diverse set of school models that expand student success.

“We are thrilled to embark on this school reinvention project and to work with peer organizations throughout New England that are engaged in similar efforts,” said Domus Executive Director Michael Duggan. “Make no mistake, this type of investment doesn’t happen every day for this group of kids. Barr has changed the life trajectory of thousands of youth.”

The planning grant will fund the creation of a new school model for Stamford Academy. Among the options that will be explored are flexible school hours for students who are working or providing childcare; internships with local businesses where high school graduates can earn family - sustaining wages; and multiple pathways to graduation. “We will be creating numerous alternatives that draw disengaged young people into school and that provide them with employment skills and experience along with a meaningful high - school diploma,” said Domus Chief Education Officer Craig Baker.

Schools supported under this initiative are intentionally designed around the principles of positive youth development theory. And they will be as rigorous as they are flexible in developing content knowledge, successful habits, creative know - how, and navigation abilities—the integrated knowledge and skills that are essential for today’s students to connect to success in high school, college, career, and community.

“This partnership brings together a diverse group of educators who share the belief that all students can meet high expectations when their schools engage their interests, empower their potential and fully prepare them for success in life,” said Leah Hamilton, the Barr Foundation’s Director of Education. “We are thrilled to include Domus in our first cohort of Engage New England: Doing high school differently grantees, and to support them in a planning process to refine their vision for cohesive school models that address the unique needs of their students and communities.”

## **About Domus Kids**

Domus Kids is a multiservice nonprofit serving nearly 1,100 youth each year in Stamford, CT with educational, community, and residential programs. Stamford Academy alternative charter high school students have not found success elsewhere and arrive with reading and math proficiency levels that are years behind grade level. Many have been suspended from their previous schools; have had juvenile justice involvement; and are overage, undercredit, and at risk of disconnecting from school. Stamford Academy’s staff of family advocates addresses the social and emotional issues that make it hard for the kids to attend school and pay attention in class. And its teachers provide a welcoming, nurturing, dynamic, full-day academic program to help them learn the skills they need to successfully transition to college, vocational training, or the skilled workforce. For more information, visit [domuskids.org](http://domuskids.org).

## **About the Barr Foundation**

The Barr Foundation’s mission is to invest in human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. Based in Boston, Barr focuses regionally, and selectively engages nationally, working in partnership with nonprofits, foundations, the public sector, and civic and business leaders to elevate the arts, advance solutions for climate change, and connect all students to success in high school and beyond. With assets of \$1.7 billion, Barr is among the largest private foundations in New England and has contributed more than \$834 million to charitable causes since 1999. For more information, visit [barrfoundation.org](http://barrfoundation.org).

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