



PRESS RELEASE

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FIVE KEYS LAUNCHES FIRST MOBILE SCHOOL IN THE NATION FOR ADULTS

City bus converted into state-of-the-art classroom will target at-risk youth and adults, many of whom can't cross gang lines to get to school

San Francisco, Calif. – Five Keys Schools and Programs (Five Keys)—a nationally recognized social justice organization that serves at-risk individuals with academic, job training and recovery programs—today unveiled the first mobile school in the nation for adults who have fallen through the cracks of the public education system. **The Five Keys Mobile School: The Self-Determination Project** will go directly into some of San Francisco's most neglected communities to increase residents' immediate access to programs that will allow them to earn a high school diploma. The bus, donated by SF Muni, has been transformed into a state-of-the-art classroom with significant contribution from Google.

“The zip code you're born into shouldn't determine your future, so we came up with the solution of taking education directly into the housing projects to eliminate the main barriers to receiving a high school diploma. We want to give those, many of whom have been let down by the system a second chance at an education,” Five Keys Executive Director Steve Good said. “Our proven programs and our community partnerships are coming together to bring education, as well as counseling and social services, to the people. We want to continue to break the cycle of violence and incarceration through this efficient and potentially scalable solution.”

Classes in the mobile school—which will be free of charge—will begin next month, and if successful, will expand to Oakland and Los Angeles. Five Keys' vision is to impact some of the most neglected neighborhoods in this country by supporting those who want to replicate the mobile schools.

Five Keys has long operated campuses in tough neighborhoods to minimize the distance a student must travel to get an education. Currently, Five Keys serves 5,000 students each day—3,000 of them in the county jails and 2,000 in their 70 community learning centers in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. That targeted approach is making a real difference. While the state's recidivism rate is 68 percent, only 28 percent of Five Keys students return to jail.

However, numerous campuses in different locations did not eliminate key barriers faced by individuals in certain communities: having to cross gang lines to get to a school or an inability to pay for public

transportation to get there. This challenge forced the Five Keys team to redefine how education could be delivered.

“The mobile school targets those who are slipping through the cracks because they aren’t able to get to class due to fear or lack of access to transportation,” said Five Keys Co-Founder Sunny Schwartz. “It’s about bringing dignity, service and responsiveness to those who have been forgotten. Education is a key factor to people’s self-determination and livelihood. But, we also want to bring comprehensive services that will help those trapped in a cycle of crime and incarceration the opportunity to determine their own futures.”

The bus will follow a regular route and set schedule each week to high-need communities where most of Five Keys’ students come from: Bayview-Hunter’s Point, Potrero Hill, Sunnydale and the Tenderloin. In San Francisco alone, there are 86,000 people that have not completed their high school education. In the Bayview-Hunter's Point, for example, more than 8,000 of its 36,000 residents don’t have a high school diploma.

The school, which would be able to serve more than 60 students each week, will be open to everyone in the neighborhood over the age of 18. Registration will take place on-site. Students will have a regular teacher during their scheduled class time on the bus and will work toward graduation through independent study on other days. The teachers on the bus will be equipped to provide referrals for additional services, but in time, the mobile school itself will become a one-stop-shop with counselors and case managers on-site.

The \$250,000 mobile learning center comes equipped with traditional classroom equipment including desks, chairs and a whiteboard—all of which have sliding components to allow for different configurations depending on the needs of the class—as well as a library and study area in the back. The bus has Wi-Fi, Chromebooks, a television and runs on a 10 kw-generator that will allow it to operate without having the engine running.

Hope SF, a partnership between the Office of the Mayor and The S.F. Housing Authority, is working with Five Keys to transform some of the city’s most distressed public housing sites into thriving mixed-income communities.

“Education is the cornerstone of personal change, and that’s why Five Keys is a critical partner in this work of revitalizing distressed communities,” said Theo Miller, director of Hope SF. “If we want to be successful in our work together and have collective impact, we must reimagine how we provide key services to those who need them. That’s what Five Keys has done with the mobile school, by bringing education directly into those neighborhoods and to the people, eliminating barriers to a high school diploma.”

Google contributed \$100,000 to the mobile school through the Google Impact Challenge, which aimed to support strong, innovative, social-impact ideas with reach and scalability.

“Google is thrilled to contribute to the Five Keys Mobile School, because it’s programs like these that transform communities,” said Rebecca Prozan, Google’s Bay Area chief of public policy and government affairs. “This mobile school targets the problem with a real solution, benefitting reengaged students, families and entire communities. We’re proud to be part of this innovative and exciting project.”

Architect Deanna Van Buren designed the bus, with funding support by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, bringing to life Five Keys' vision of the mobile school.

[About Five Keys Schools and Programs](#)

Founded in 2003 as the first charter high school in the nation to operate inside of a county jail, Five Keys has grown into a nationally recognized social justice organization that operates accredited charter schools and programs at the cross-section of education innovation and criminal justice. Each day, its schools and programs in 70 locations across California provide more than 5,000 at-risk adults and transitional-aged youth with crucial learning opportunities that restore communities, transform lives and break the cycle of re-incarceration. For at-risk individuals outside the system, Five Keys provides comprehensive case management incorporating academic, job training and recovery programs. In 2017 Five Keys launched its first mobile learning center, a city bus converted into a state-of-the-art classroom (that will be) stationed in some of San Francisco's most neglected communities.

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