Ontay Johnson will be a one-year Education Entrepreneur Fellow who will lead EmpowerED Families, a parent organizing nonprofit

Indianapolis - (July 16, 2020) - The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit, has selected Ontay Johnson as its newest Education Entrepreneur Fellow. At the conclusion of the one-year fellowship, Johnson will serve as Executive Director of EmpowerED Families, an independent nonprofit organization The Mind Trust is supporting the launch of to provide opportunities for parents and families to organize around education issues.

EmpowerED Families' mission is to engage, develop and activate Indianapolis families to build a city-wide movement for choice, access to high-quality education, and activate parents and families from all school types to advocate for the changes they believe are necessary for education.

“The Mind Trust believes in the necessity of supporting the growth of powerful local organizations that are grounded in the needs of Black and Brown families. We cannot get there without building power in marginalized communities, and we are incredibly proud of the work Ashley Virden has done as founder and will continue to do as lead organizer,” said Brandon Brown, CEO of The Mind Trust. “Moving forward, Ontay Johnson is the perfect leader to ensure EmpowerED Families achieves its promise for children and families in Indianapolis. Ontay’s proven track record, demonstrated ability to build and mobilize diverse coalitions, and passion for ensuring that all Indianapolis families have access to a great school makes him the ideal choice for this important role.”

As an Education Entrepreneur Fellow (EEF), Johnson will receive a year of planning time and resources to launch EmpowerED Families with Virden, who is entering her second year as a Fellow. Johnson will receive salary, benefits, and customized training for the duration of the fellowship. Former EEF’s have launched local education-focused nonprofits like Enroll Indy, Teach Plus, and Center for Innovative Education Solutions.

As Executive Director of 100 Black Men of Indianapolis, Inc. for seven years, Johnson developed various new programs that expanded opportunities for youth participants, fostered collaborative relationships with community and business leaders, and diversified the organization’s revenue streams. Johnson earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration and Management from Northwood University and a Master of Public Administration Degree from the Bernard M. Baruch College, School of Public Affairs, City University of New York. He is also a proud alumna of the prestigious National Urban Fellows program, which develops people of color and women into leaders and change
agents in the public and non-profit sectors, with a strong commitment to social justice and equity.

“I’ve thoroughly enjoyed serving children and families in this community through my work at 100 Black Men of Indianapolis. Leading The 100 has been a highlight in my life, however, I am equally as excited about my next assignment at The Mind Trust. Empowering others to advocate for transformative education is so important to the success of all children,” said Johnson.

The mission of 100 Black Men of Indianapolis is to improve the quality of life within communities and enhance educational and economic opportunities for all African Americans. The local organization empowers more than 500 youth, pre-k through college, through mentoring, education and leadership.

“The 100 Black Men of Indianapolis, Inc. wishes Ontay all the best as he transitions to his new role as the Education Entrepreneur Fellow with The Mind Trust. As a leader with very strong family values, Ontay has a passion for education, youth, community and social justice. This new role aligns with all of those areas and we look forward to seeing great things happen for Ontay, The Mind Trust and EmpowerEd Families,” said James Duke, President of The 100’s Board of Directors.

Johnson and Virden will launch EmpowerED Families as an independent nonprofit organization during summer 2021. Virden, Founder and Lead Organizer of EmpowerED Families is an authentic and self-trained community builder whose entrepreneurial spirit has positioned her as a rising local leader. As part of her Fellowship, Virden receives extensive training in organizing from national experts and top grassroots organizers across the country.

“Ontay is a great leader who truly cares for the Indianapolis community,” said Virden. “I am very excited to work with him to build upon the foundation of EmpowerED Families and continue this necessary work for parents and families who deserve a voice and power in our city’s education system,” said Ashley Virden, Founder and Lead Organizer of EmpowerED Families.

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**About The Mind Trust**
The Mind Trust is an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit that works to build a system of schools that gives every student in Indianapolis, no exceptions, access to a high-quality education. The Mind Trust does this by building a supportive environment for schools through policy and community engagement, empowering talented, diverse educators to launch new schools, and providing existing schools with the support they need to hire world-class talent and achieve excellence. Since 2006, The Mind Trust has supported the launch of 37 schools, 13 education nonprofit organizations, and has helped place more than 1,500 teachers and school leaders in Indianapolis classrooms. More information can be found at themindtrust.org.

**About EmpowerED Families**
EmpowerED Families build Indianapolis parent and family power through relationships and rallying behind the strengths of parents to weave together the home, school, and community, in order to fight for high-quality education. EmpowerED Families listens, organizes, and educates parents to bring the change they want to see in the Indianapolis education system. To learn more, visit empoweredfamiliesindy.org.

**About 100 Black Men**
The 100 Black Men of Indianapolis, Inc. (The 100) is a 501(c)(3) youth development organization that was founded in 1984 and serves several hundred Central Indiana youth each year through mentoring-based programs. The 100 is comprised of members and volunteers of diverse backgrounds and experiences with a common commitment to help students. Members exemplify the motto, “What They See is What They’ll Be,” by volunteering as role models and mentors. While serving youth in grades K-12 as well as post-secondary levels, The 100 focuses on mentoring, education, health and wellness and economic empowerment. This impacts the personal development and academic achievement of participants. Students involved in the programs display increased self-esteem, personal responsibility and motivation to succeed in school. For more information about The 100, visit 100blackmenindy.org.