

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **YouthBuild USA, Inc. Names New CEO**

*John Valverde to Become Only the Second Leader, Bringing Personal, Professional Experience to Nonprofit Committed to Rebuilding Lives*

**SOMERVILLE, MA, October 24, 2016**— YouthBuild USA, Inc. today announced the appointment of [John B. Valverde](#) as its Chief Executive Officer effective January 3, 2017. As CEO, Valverde will lead an international nonprofit organization that has grown a global network of YouthBuild programs enabling out-of-school, unemployed young people to reclaim their educations, gain the skills they need for employment, and become leaders in their communities.

In his current role as executive vice president for program operations at the Osborne Association in New York, he oversees the operations for a complex, multi-service nonprofit organization with 30 distinct programs supported by more than 50 different fund sources. Valverde has created and implemented numerous initiatives at the Osborne Association to address issues of social and economic justice, including programs that support children, youth and families; substance abuse prevention and treatment; workforce development; financial literacy; housing; court advocacy; alternatives to incarceration; and mentoring and leadership development.

“For decades, YouthBuild has shown that access to opportunity, caring people around you, and commitment to self-development can help young adults overcome the barriers of poverty to rebuild lives,” said Valverde. “I am honored to join an organization and team devoted to creating pathways for young people to a more positive future.”

At more than 250 in-community YouthBuild programs in the U.S. and over 80 programs in 21 countries outside of the U.S., unemployed and out-of-school young people work toward their High School Equivalency (HSE) or high school diploma, while learning career skills by building affordable housing and other community assets in their neighborhoods and engaging in community service and leadership training. Graduates leave prepared for success in postsecondary education, careers, and registered apprenticeships— and as a part of a strong and supportive global community.

The YouthBuild constituency is predominantly young people between 16- and 24-years-old who live in low-income neighborhoods. They have recently been referred to as Opportunity Youth, because they are both seeking opportunity and offer an opportunity to our nation if we would invest in them. The organization has decades of success reconnecting Opportunity Youth to education, jobs, and leadership in their communities.

Valverde brings a powerful story of personal transformation that embodies YouthBuild’s mission and a proven track record of service working with vulnerable and underserved populations reflective of the young people engaged in YouthBuild.

While serving 16 years in prison, he earned his college degrees, including a Masters Degree in Urban Ministry from New York Theological Seminary; helped teach fellow inmates to read and write; worked as an HIV/AIDS counselor; and spoke out against violence. He co-founded Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, the first privately-funded accredited college program in New York State's prison system.

With about one-third of its students having been convicted of an offense prior to enrolling in YouthBuild, Valverde intimately understands their struggles.

The selection of Valverde by the organization's Board of Directors followed a national search to find a successor to YouthBuild founder and CEO Dorothy Stoneman. Stoneman built YouthBuild from the ground up, starting as a single experimental program in East Harlem in 1978. In 1984, she orchestrated its expansion citywide in New York, in 1988 took it national, in 1992 succeeded in the creation of a federally funded YouthBuild program, and in 2000 began its international expansion, starting in South Africa.

"I have been lucky and happy to spend the last 38 years, in partnership with so many wonderful people, building this organization and guiding this movement through the many stages of its development," said Stoneman. "From affordable houses built, to students transcending endless obstacles with grace and pride, directors and staff producing marvelous local programs, and political allies fighting for YouthBuild through thick and thin, I have been blessed to witness inspiring results—and I am confident in John's ability to continue to move this organization and team forward."

**About YouthBuild USA, Inc.:**

YouthBuild USA, Inc., based in Somerville, MA, is the non-profit support center for over 250 local YouthBuild programs operating in 45 states and the District of Columbia. In YouthBuild programs, unemployed, low-income, and out-of-school young people ages 16 to 24 work toward their high school diploma or equivalency, while learning job skills by building affordable housing and other community assets in their neighborhoods, engaging in community service and leadership training. YouthBuild USA also sponsors the YouthBuild International effort that has generated over 80 local YouthBuild programs in 21 countries worldwide. There are two ways a local program can be authorized to use the YouthBuild brand in the U.S.: either they can directly win a US Department of Labor YouthBuild grant, or they can be licensed by YouthBuild USA to use the name when they demonstrate commitment to the basic philosophy and design. For more information, visit [www.youthbuild.org](http://www.youthbuild.org).

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