



# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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**STRIVE**<sup>®</sup>  
PREPARED  
TO WORK  
DETERMINED  
TO SUCCEED

# WELCOME LETTER

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*Dear Friends,*

We are thrilled to bring you STRIVE's 2015 Annual Report. As you'll read in the pages that follow, it has been **a year of exceptional innovation, impact and growth for STRIVE**, the nation's leading network of workforce development practitioners creating opportunity and tackling poverty in 20 cities – and counting – across the U.S.

2015 was a year that exemplified how **STRIVE is helping cities across the country thrive**. As cities intensify their strategies to foster equity, inclusion and economic opportunity, STRIVE is at the forefront of collaborating with city and community leaders to ensure that residents have the skills required to succeed and that employers have the talent needed to compete and prosper.

In cities such as **Baltimore, Chicago and Flint**, issues of social justice rose to national prominence and hoisted STRIVE sites into essential roles in devising community solutions. In cities such as **Atlanta and New Orleans**, a focus on economic revitalization and the creation of opportunity for inner-city residents placed STRIVE sites at the center of efforts to best connect workforce strategies with economic development priorities.

We made significant investments to **expand our commitment to Opportunity Youth**, with the launch of STRIVE Future Leaders, a new national endeavor to serve young adults, the result of a wonderful collaboration with MDRC, the Youth Development Institute and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. And we launched several **new career pathways** that are helping to close the skills gap in growth industries such as healthcare and hospitality, across multiple partner cities.

As we pursue the STRIVE Vision 2020 goal of doubling our graduates nationally over the next five years, we **grew in our existing cities**, such as in New York City where we've tripled the number of residents served in recent years. And we **expanded into new cities**, such as New Orleans, which launched in early 2015 and has completed a highly successful first year of operation.

We believe strongly at STRIVE in the power of employment to help individuals and their families break the cycle of poverty, and we saw in 2015 how this power further extends to the creation of opportunity and prosperity in the cities in which we operate. STRIVE is grateful to all of our partners and supporters – in philanthropy and across the public, private and nonprofit sectors – and we look forward to continued growth and impact in 2016 and beyond.

*Sincerely,*



Phil Weinberg  
President & CEO  
STRIVE International



H. Thompson Rodman, Jr.  
Board Chair and Co-Founder





## OUR MISSION

STRIVE's mission is to help people acquire the life-changing skills and attitudes needed to overcome challenging circumstances, find sustained employment, and become valuable contributors to their families, their employers, and their communities.

## OUR VISION

STRIVE envisions a world where everyone has the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency, dignity, and a promising future for themselves and their families.



# OUR VALUES

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## **AUTHENTICITY:**

We are honest in our communication with our clients and tell them what they need to hear, even if it's uncomfortable.

## **DEPTH OF IMPACT:**

We focus on empowerment and transformation for our clients – not just their job readiness.

## **SERVING THE MOST UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES:**

We help individuals with significant barriers to employment – but who want to work.

## **LONG-TERM COMMITMENT:**

We help people not only find jobs, but also be successful and achieve a lifetime of employability.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY:**

We insist that our clients take ownership for their actions, just as we exercise high standards of accountability with our clients, employers and investors.

# STRIVE'S MODEL

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STRIVE believes deeply in the power of employment to help individuals and their families break the cycle of poverty.

Our proven employment model helps men and women permanently lift themselves and their families out of poverty through intensive attitudinal and skills training programs that lead to sustained, living wage employment. In our 30 years, STRIVE has brought economic self-sufficiency, dignity and a brighter future to over 60,000 individuals and their families.

Through our services, STRIVE addresses the specific barriers faced by our clients, which might include a lack of skills, education and work history, a criminal record, systemic disconnection from work and school, and long-term dependence on public assistance. STRIVE's commitment to each graduate is lifelong.

## **STRIVE'S FIVE PILLARS, OUTLINED BELOW, EVOLVED OUT OF DECADES OF RESEARCH:**

**1**

### **CORE ATTITUDINAL AND JOB READINESS TRAINING:**

STRIVE's signature program is our CORE workshop, an intensive four-week "soft skills" training in workplace readiness, responsibility and professionalism.

**2**

### **OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING:**

Graduates of CORE training progress to vocational training in one of several career pathways aligned with local labor market demand and employer needs. Training results in the acquisition of one or more industry-recognized credentials.

**3**

### **CASE MANAGEMENT:**

Beginning in CORE training, all STRIVE participants receive intensive case management to address obstacles that stand in the way of each client's development and success.

**4**

### **JOB PLACEMENT:**

STRIVE's Career Services team forges relationships with employers and assists our graduates in securing jobs that are a good match with their skills and interests.

**5**

### **JOB RETENTION, ADVANCEMENT AND ONGOING FOLLOW-UP:**

STRIVE graduates receive active follow-up and retention services for two years after graduation. Many STRIVE alumni return for second and third placements as they pursue higher wages.



# STRIVE AFFILIATES

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The power and strength of STRIVE resides in the remarkable organizations who are committed to operating STRIVE programs in their communities – in cities across the United States and internationally. These organizations are bound not only by a common mission, but also by a common commitment to deliver services at the highest levels of quality and with the highest standards of integrity.

STRIVE's model is presently operating in over 20 cities, creating an unparalleled network of community-based organizations. The STRIVE model is also administered overseas in the United Kingdom and Israel.



|                            |  |    |  |
|----------------------------|--|----|--|
| <b>STRIVE ATLANTA</b>      | New Hope Enterprises                             | GA | <a href="http://newhopeenterprises.org">newhopeenterprises.org</a>         |
| <b>STRIVE BALTIMORE</b>    | Center for Urban Families                        | MD | <a href="http://cfuf.org">cfuf.org</a>                                     |
| <b>STRIVE BOSTON</b>       | Justice Resource Institute                       | MA | <a href="http://bostonstrive.org">bostonstrive.org</a>                     |
| <b>STRIVE BRIDGEPORT</b>   | Career Resources, Inc.                           | CT | <a href="http://careerresources.org">careerresources.org</a>               |
| <b>STRIVE CHICAGO</b>      | A Safe Haven                                     | IL | <a href="http://asafehaven.org">asafehaven.org</a>                         |
| <b>STRIVE DC</b>           | STRIVE DC  | DC | <a href="http://strivedc.org">strivedc.org</a>                             |
| <b>STRIVE FLINT</b>        | Odyssey House                                    | MI | <a href="http://flintstrive.com">flintstrive.com</a>                       |
| <b>STRIVE GREENVILLE</b>   | L.I.F.E. of North Carolina, Inc.                 | NC | <a href="http://strivenc.org">strivenc.org</a>                             |
| <b>STRIVE HARTFORD</b>     | Career Resources, Inc.                           | CT | <a href="http://careerresources.org">careerresources.org</a>               |
| <b>STRIVE MAINE</b>        | STRIVE Northern New England                      | ME | <a href="http://strivenne.org">strivenne.org</a>                           |
| <b>STRIVE MT. VERNON</b>   | Westchester County Department of Social Services | NY | <a href="http://westchestergov.com">westchestergov.com</a>                 |
| <b>STRIVE NEW HAVEN</b>    | Career Resources, Inc.                           | CT | <a href="http://careerresources.org">careerresources.org</a>               |
| <b>STRIVE NEW ORLEANS</b>  | Network for Economic Opportunity                 | LA | <a href="http://thenetworkneworleans.org">thenetworkneworleans.org</a>     |
| <b>STRIVE NEW YORK</b>     | STRIVE International                             | NY | <a href="http://striveinternational.org">striveinternational.org</a>       |
| <b>STRIVE PHILADELPHIA</b> | Public Health Management Corporation             | PA | <a href="http://theworkforce-institute.org">theworkforce-institute.org</a> |
| <b>STRIVE SAN DIEGO</b>    | Second Chance                                    | CA | <a href="http://secondchanceprogram.org">secondchanceprogram.org</a>       |
| <b>STRIVE WHITE PLAINS</b> | Westchester County Department of Social Services | NY | <a href="http://westhab.org">westhab.org</a>                               |
| <b>STRIVE YONKERS</b>      | Westchester Putnam Workforce Development Board   | NY | <a href="http://westhab.org">westhab.org</a>                               |

# NATIONAL IMPACT 2015



**2,093**

Total Graduates



**1,436**

Total placed in jobs



**70%**

Job placement rate



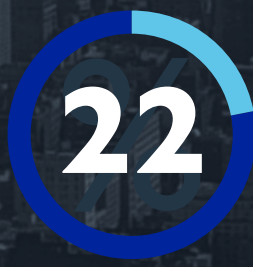
**\$10-\$13**

Average hourly wage

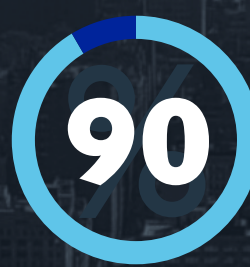
## WHO WE SERVE



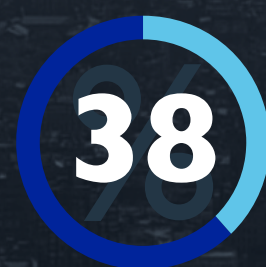
Nationally, 50% of STRIVE participants are women and 50% are men



22% are youth aged 18-24



90% are African-American or Hispanic



38% have a history of justice system involvement

Nationwide, STRIVE participants have the opportunity to learn occupational skills including:

- Auto Mechanics
- Certified Geriatric/Nursing Assistant
- Culinary Arts
- Construction
- Customer Service
- CPR/First Aid
- Health & Office Operations

- Landscaping
- Maintenance
- Manufacturing
- Microsoft Office
- Patient Care Technician
- Retail
- Welding

STRIVE affiliates nationwide offer supportive services including programs focused on:

- Aging out of foster care
- Childcare
- Clothing donations
- Education
- Fitness
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Mental health
- Parenting
- Re-entry services
- Substance abuse
- Transportation
- Veterans' services
- Women's empowerment
- Youth empowerment



# HELPING CITIES THRIVE

**We are in the “Century of Cities,” with unprecedented numbers of people living in urban areas. The U.S. population is projected to grow by 80 million people by 2050, with at least 80 percent of that growth in urban areas. Cities represent opportunity for millions of Americans. At the same time, U.S. cities face serious challenges, many of which are rooted in persistent poverty.**

As cities work to meet their potential as engines of economic mobility, **STRIVE is part of the solution**, offering a path to living wage employment

for those looking to break the cycle of poverty. In cities nationwide, STRIVE offers training, supportive services, and hope to low-income communities, while at the same time helping employers overcome skills gaps and local governments to help their citizens thrive.

“The success of our disadvantaged job seekers is more important to the fabric of our city now than ever before,” New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu said at a 2015 STRIVE graduation. “STRIVE NOLA takes our Economic Opportunity Strategy to the next level, preparing our men and women of New Orleans with the tools they need to be ready for work.”

Read on for examples of how STRIVE is helping cities meet their challenges and opportunities.





# Baltimore:

Among the challenges facing Baltimore is an incarceration rate that is three times the national average. While one out of 10 Maryland residents is from Baltimore, one out of three Maryland residents in state prison is from the city.

**STRIVE Baltimore**, operated by the Center for Urban Families (CFUF), has been providing job training and support since 1998, helping residents of the city's most challenged communities see themselves in a new light. In May 2015, CFUF partnered with Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn J. Mosby on the Aim to B'More Program,

aimed at reducing Baltimore's incarceration and unemployment rates. While the program had been planned for months, it was announced shortly after the death of Freddie Gray, and the protests and violence that followed, shook the city. CFUF is located in the West Baltimore neighborhood where Freddie Gray was arrested, and is across the street from the church where his funeral was held.

Aim to B'More allows participants - first-time, non-violent felony drug offenders - to have their records expunged after successful completion, which includes completing STRIVE Baltimore's job training program. "Baltimore needs this program," Marilyn Mosby said at its launch. "By offering nonviolent, first-time felony offenders the opportunity to get an education and establish a career, we are affording them the opportunity to be more."

At a press conference announcing the Aim to B'More program, Shanee Myers, the mother of a STRIVE graduate, told the crowd,

***"STRIVE is a blessing. I know this program saved my son's life."***





# New Orleans:

In 2014, the City of New Orleans embarked on a strategic effort to examine a local report identifying that 52 percent of African American working age men in the city were not working. The resulting Economic Opportunity Strategy included the launch of **STRIVE NOLA** in late 2014.

STRIVE NOLA is run by the city's Network for Economic Opportunity. It held five training classes

during 2015, its inaugural year, graduating more than 100 New Orleanians.

*“At STRIVE NOLA we see men and women of our great city graduating and ready to enter the workplace with new skills and a new sense of pride and determination,”* Mayor Landrieu said.



# New York:

Nearly 30% of New York City children live in poverty, with families who struggle to meet basic needs.

**STRIVE New York** is partnering with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to implement MOVE UP, a program that seeks to help children by increasing economic security for families through workforce mobility.

The MOVE UP program is aligned with the city's Career Pathways strategy, launched in 2014 to address rising income inequality in New York City by, among other goals, supporting career advancement and income mobility. A 2015 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is supporting STRIVE New York in providing incumbent workers who have young children with the training needed to move from entry-level to middle-skilled positions.

Because the program helps employers overcome the skills gaps they face, they are eager to get involved. STRIVE New York is working closely with employer partners such as Mount Sinai Health System, which employs nearly 40,000 people. Under MOVE UP, Mount Sinai has identified career paths where workers can advance with short-term training and worked with STRIVE to develop that training. As participants move up in their careers, they will be able to provide better opportunities for their children.



# Chicago:

Even as Chicago struggles with rising crime and a state budget crisis that is cutting services to many nonprofits, **STRIVE Chicago**, operated by A Safe Haven Foundation (ASHF), is helping city residents struggling with homelessness and other challenges achieve economic self-sufficiency. A key strategy, as with STRIVE Affiliates nationwide, is closing skills gaps identified by local employers.

When the manufacturing industry in Illinois pinpointed welding as an in-demand career path that pays trainees

a living wage, STRIVE Chicago rose to the challenge. ASHF transformed a warehouse to replicate a manufacturing plant floor, and the building is now home to the organization's Welding and Landscaping vocational skills and paid apprenticeship job training programs. The warehouse is equipped with welding booths, along with equipment and safety gear.

Participants train to achieve certifications from the American Welding Society. The combination of sector-based training, placement and supportive services leads to significant success. ASHF's job-training programs, including the Welding Program, successfully graduate and place 86% of the trainees enrolled.



# Flint:

Against a backdrop of significant poverty, unemployment, crime, and, most recently, environmental disaster, **STRIVE Flint** works to empower the city's residents to open doors, change lives and strengthen their community.

STRIVE Flint is a partner in the Flint Healthcare Employment Opportunities (FHEO) Program, which helps unemployed and underemployed residents of Flint obtain training and employment in the healthcare industry, one of the area's largest sectors in terms of employment.

This highly successful program, run by the Greater Flint Health Coalition, assists participants in exploring and training for a variety of entry-level and mid-skill healthcare careers, such as Certified Nurses Aid, Phlebotomy, Emergency Medical Responder, Medical Assistant or Health Unit Coordinator. STRIVE Flint provides training on job readiness, basic computer skills, college research and volunteerism, as well as supportive services.

The FHEO program was started with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. In addition to STRIVE, partners include the Genesys Health System, the area's leading health care provider, and regional hospital McLaren Flint.



# LOOKING FORWARD

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STRIVE continues to look to the future with our **Vision 2020**, an ambitious plan to more than double our impact in current and new cities, with the goal of serving 5,000 individuals annually by 2020.

STRIVE aspires to be the nation's premier employment and training model for individuals from low-income communities striving to escape the cycle of poverty. We achieve this through a vibrant network of STRIVE Affiliate partners that fulfill the STRIVE mission to the highest standards of quality, integrity and accountability.

Some of the priorities we are pursuing in support of this goal are as follows:

Engaging in **research and development** to build innovative new programs, such as STRIVE Future Leaders, our new program for youth, and other programs that address the needs of underserved populations.

Further strengthening our culture and practice of **performance management** to ensure we are meeting all internal and external goals, uncovering trends that may influence program design, and identifying successful innovations so we can support and replicate them.

Investing in **leadership development** among our network through peer learning, national convenings, and other forms of support.

Ensuring the **financial vitality** of the network by pursuing national, regional and local funding opportunities with partners who share our mission and vision.

Pursuing **strategic growth** by carefully assessing opportunities to expand existing markets and enter new ones where there is need for STRIVE's services and strong interest among partners who share STRIVE's values.

# STRIVE FUTURE LEADERS

## Positions Youth for Success

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With more than 33% of young high school graduates unemployed or underemployed, there is growing agreement that more needs to be done to help young adults enter the workforce.

In 2015, STRIVE launched **STRIVE Future Leaders**, a new program designed especially for use with STRIVE clients age 24 and under.

The program was developed in collaboration with MDRC and the Youth Development Institute, with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

STRIVE Future Leaders is currently being used by six STRIVE sites implementing **STRIVE Forward**, a U.S. Department of Labor-funded program for justice-involved youth living in high-poverty, high-crime neighborhoods. Research shows that having an arrest decreases employment opportunities more than any other employment-related stigma, and STRIVE Forward is designed to help youth overcome this barrier.

STRIVE Future Leaders builds on learnings from a previous federally-funded STRIVE program for justice-involved youth that served more than 550 young people in seven cities from 2012-2015. The program incorporates a carefully considered progression starting with self-discovery, personal assessment and goal setting, then moving on to career exploration and job readiness training. Social-emotional learning and leadership training are incorporated in accordance with the latest research on youth development.



# STRIVE SUPPORTERS

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STRIVE gratefully acknowledges the support of the institutions below, which provided major support to STRIVE programs in 2015 at either the national or local levels.

ABELL FOUNDATION

ANGELL FAMILY FOUNDATION

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BARKER WELFARE FOUNDATION

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HECKSCHER FOUNDATION FOR  
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JOB START REVOLVING LOAN  
PROGRAM (CHASE BANK)

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LORING, WOLCOTT & COOLIDGE TRUST

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CORRECTION

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OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY  
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NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST

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ASSISTANCE

NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

O'NEILL FOUNDATION

PINKERTON FOUNDATION

PUBLIC HEALTH FUND

RUDIN FOUNDATION

SAMUEL FREEMAN CHARITABLE TRUST

SAN DIEGO FOUNDATION

SEEDCO

STARBUCKS FOUNDATION

STATE STREET FOUNDATION

TIGER FOUNDATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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ZONE

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

WELLS FARGO

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CORPORATION

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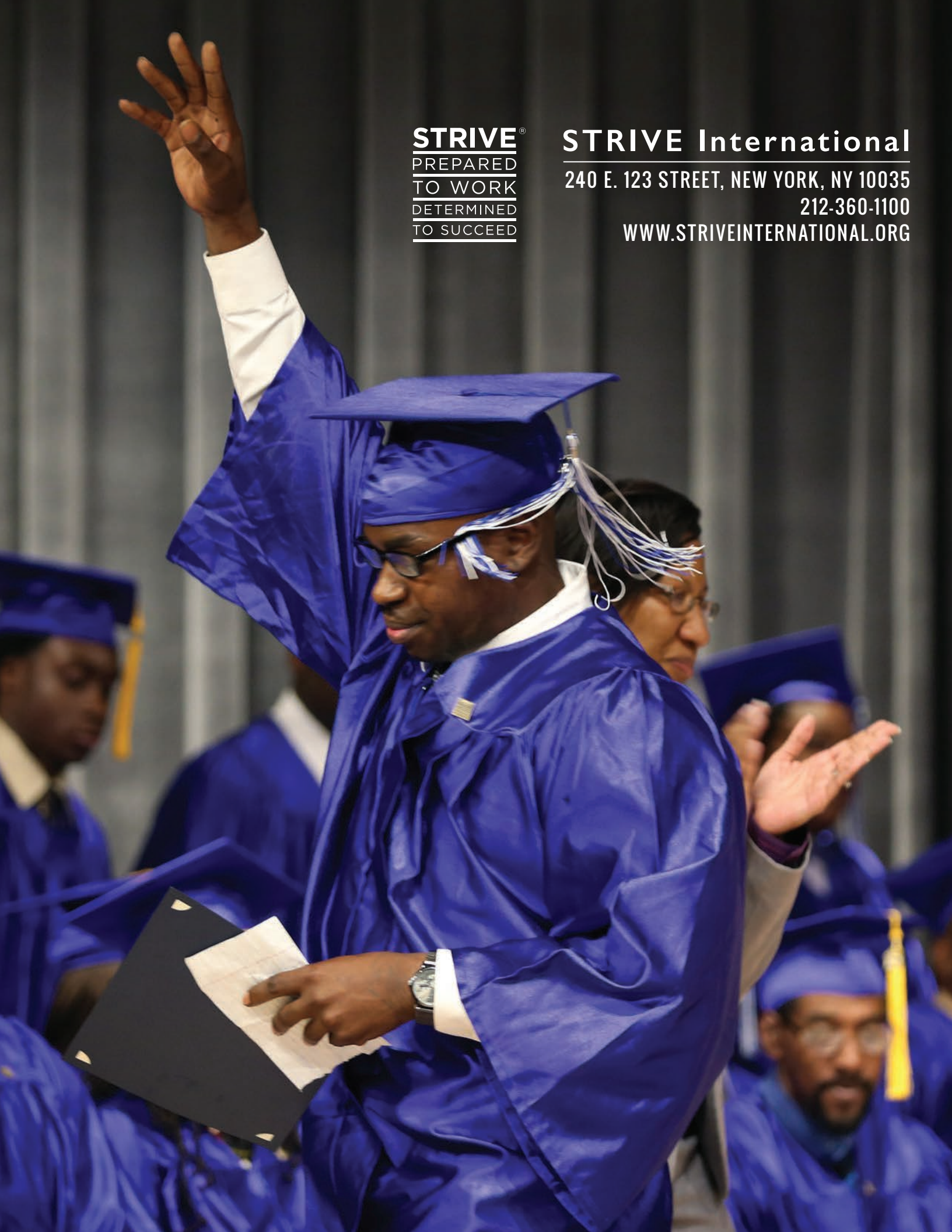
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A photograph of a graduate in a blue cap and gown, with his right hand raised in the air. He is wearing glasses and a watch. In the background, other graduates in blue gowns are visible, some with their hands raised. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**STRIVE**<sup>®</sup>  
PREPARED  
TO WORK  
DETERMINED  
TO SUCCEED

**STRIVE International**

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