



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GRADNATION COMMUNITY SUMMIT CONNECTS REGION'S
EDUCATION, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS**

Charleston, S.C. – Friday, October 31, 2014, the City of Charleston hosted a regional GradNation Community Summit at the Francis Marion Hotel. The goal was to discuss how the community can accelerate the progress in increasing the graduation rate, and be a catalyst for further action.

The Summit took place from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and featured a keynote speech by Senior Policy Advisor to the White House, Mr. Rafael Lopez, followed by a presentation of data on regional graduation rates, and a panel with the school district superintendents from Charleston County, Berkeley County, Dorchester District 2 and Dorchester District 4.

The Summit also featured youth speakers who relayed to the audience the importance of having a “Caring Adult” in their lives.

The City of Charleston received a grant from America’s Promise Alliance, the nation’s largest partnership organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth, to hold the GradNation Community Summit and is one of 100 communities nationwide conducting a summit over the next four years. Each summit is part of the GradNation campaign, a large and growing movement of dedicated individuals, organizations and communities working together to raise the national high school graduation rate to 90% by 2020.

City of Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. said, “Our community comes together in many ways to support our schools. The GradNation Summit offers our region an opportunity to address our successes and discuss what still needs to be done to raise the graduation rate.”

Several partners assisted the City of Charleston in planning the event including AT&T, the City of North Charleston, Communities in Schools, the College of Charleston, Charleston County School District, TriCounty Cradle to Career, Trident Technical College, and Trident United Way. Following the Summit, TriCounty Cradle to Career will carry the work forward, convening partners around the Graduation Rate data point.

The premier sponsor for all GradNation Community Summits is AT&T, whose support is part of AT&T Aspire, the company’s \$350 million commitment to graduate more students from high school ready for college and career. Other Charleston GradNation Community Summit sponsors include the Mike and Gillian Goodrich Foundation, Ford Foundation, DeVry Foundation, Southwest Airlines, and the Apollo Group.

"The progress we are seeing toward the national goal of raising graduation rates is based on communities coming together to support and insist on better outcomes for young people," said John Gomperts, president and CEO, America's Promise Alliance. "Summits like the event in Charleston are rallying points for communities. America's Promise is delighted to support this effort and work with the leaders in Charleston and communities across the country to help advance this campaign."

For more information and to learn how to get involved visit www.americaspromise.org

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America's Promise Alliance is the nation's largest partnership dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth, bringing together more than 400 national organizations representing nonprofit groups, businesses, communities, educators and policymakers. Through its GradNation campaign, America's Promise mobilizes Americans to end the high school dropout crisis and prepare young people for college and the 21st century workforce. Building on the legacy of its founding chairman General Colin L. Powell USA (ret.), America's Promise believes the success of young people is grounded in the Five Promises—Caring Adults, Safe Places, A Healthy Start, Effective Education, and Opportunities to Help Others. For more information, visit AmericasPromise.org.