

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Date: October 28, 2022

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County launches ‘Raising the Bar’ program with Akron Municipal Court, APS

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—County Executive Shapiro, Akron Municipal Court Judge David Hamilton, and Akron Public Schools (APS) Principal LaCresia Beecher and Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack launched a pilot program, Raising the Bar, earlier this week. Raising the Bar seeks to engage students early on in their education with the legal profession, exposing those students to the opportunities that a legal education and career can provide to them. The pilot program will include one session per month for three months at APS’s Buchtel Community Learning Center (CLC) and provide interactive lessons to students about the legal field.

Heart to Heart Leadership is providing two-hour instructive sessions for Raising the Bar, and the pilot is ultimately aimed at addressing racial and ethnic disparities at law schools and in the legal and judicial fields. In 2019, the American Bar Association reported only 7.9% of law school enrollees were Black and only 5% of practicing attorneys were Black in the United States. Raising the Bar seeks to help amend this issue by building career pathways for students earlier in their education.

Raising the Bar is funded by My Brother’s Keeper Summit County and represents a relaunch of the program under the direction of Executive Shapiro. My Brother’s Keeper Summit County is a chapter of a state and national community challenge first launched by President Barack Obama in 2014. My Brother’s Keeper Ohio is led by Senator Sherrod Brown and guided by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. While the Summit County chapter has existed in various forms, the County’s Department of Human Resources is now leading this initiative.

“My Brother’s Keeper is yet another example of the County’s integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion into our work,” said Executive Shapiro, “I am proud that the County can be a champion for positive change in our community. Raising the Bar is a great step-up for our students.”

In addition to lessons about the legal field, students will have opportunities for networking and professional development and will earn community service hours that count toward their requirements for college and their career pathway. After the completion of the pilot the County, Akron Municipal Court, APS, and Heart to Heart hope to grow the program in the future.

For more information about Raising the Bar and My Brother’s Keeper, visit co.summitoh.net/departments/Human-Resources-My-Brothers-Keeper.html For more information on Heart to Heart Leadership, visit htohleadership.org.

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