

Need Inspiration for Your Graduate? Start With the *Time* 100 List

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We all need a little graduation inspiration, especially when it can feel like [we're sending our graduates off on ice floes](#). So let me share my inspiration: the *Time* 100 list.

[Jeremy Lin made the list this year](#), and from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's comments about him, it's clear that Mr. Duncan and I see the same spark. It's not just Lin's moves on the court that inspire us; it's what he represents.

"I don't care whether you are an Asian-American kid, white, black, or Hispanic," Duncan wrote in *Time*, "Jeremy's story tells you that if you show grit, discipline and integrity, you too can get an opportunity to overcome the odds."

Duncan should know about opportunity. The US Department of Education is entering its third year of the Promise Neighborhoods program, which uses the principles of the successful Harlem Children's Zone to provide comprehensive community supports to allow children of all races and income levels to learn, grow, and succeed. Jeremy Lin's story shows us that when children get the opportunity to reach their full potential, the results can be spectacular.

A successful Promise Neighborhood is like a winning basketball team. You need strong players who work together, good coaches who encourage talent, loyal fans, and a way to keep score. In Promise Neighborhoods, the teamwork happens at all levels: high-quality schools coordinate with health clinics and community-based organizations; students have a fan base of

families, teachers, and neighbors; and data are collected every step of the way to make sure that the neighborhood is keeping its promise to the children. They score when neighborhood kids are healthy, attend school, and graduate from college.

More than 30 Promise Neighborhoods throughout the country have been funded by the Department of Education, including the Boston Promise Initiative led by the acclaimed Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. Dozens more are pursuing the model without federal funding. They're ready to replicate the success of the Harlem Children's Zone, which currently has over 700 young people in college.

That's huge. And that's beginning to happen all over the country.

Imagine what will happen when Asian-American students in the diverse Boston Promise Initiative -- six miles away from Harvard University, Jeremy Lin's alma mater -- receive the supports they need to be successful. Imagine what will happen when Latino children in San Antonio's Eastside Promise Neighborhood are given the chance at a good education and a healthy, safe community. With Promise Neighborhoods, we can look forward to a new generation of star athletes, scientists, educators, entrepreneurs, and leaders.

We need more Promise Neighborhoods now. Today, nearly half of all children are kids of color. **By 2042 a majority of Americans will be people of color.** Almost **half of all jobs in 2018 are projected to require at least an associate's degree**, but among today's workers only 27 percent of African Americans, 26 percent of U.S.-born Latinos, and 14 percent of Latino immigrants have achieved this level of education. If we want a generation of well-rounded leaders making positive contributions to society tomorrow, we need to provide pathways to success today.

With targeted investments in neighborhoods across the country, we can look forward to a future with more Jeremy Lins. That 9 year-old African-American boy in Cleveland dreaming of

becoming a teacher, and that 14 year-old Latina girl in San Antonio working on her science project are part of a new generation of leaders and thinkers. Let's promise to support them now so that they can succeed in school, graduate from high school and college, and go on to fulfill their dreams. We can make sure our graduates do not go adrift, and in so doing, build a better future for our nation.

I'm looking forward to reading the *Time* 100 list in 2042.