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## **Ten Black Entrepreneurs Selected for Third Cohort of Silicon Valley Accelerator Program for Black-Owned Businesses**

*Kickoff Celebration on September 7th; Investor “Pitch Day” on October 26th*

SILICON VALLEY, CA – The African Diaspora Network (ADN) has introduced the third cohort of its Accelerating Black Leadership and Entrepreneurship (ABLE) program, intentionally developed to propel the growth of Black entrepreneurs and businesses throughout the United States. In response to a stark and concerning disparity, where Black startups receive a mere one percent of venture capital funding – with Black women-led startups facing even greater hurdles – ADN has been working in recent years to raise awareness and drive tangible change. Through the ABLE program, ADN delivers training, mentorship, and access to funding opportunities for Black entrepreneurs.

The third ABLE cohort represents a diverse spectrum of sectors, including education, healthcare, finance, renewable energy, and connectivity. Each of these sectors plays a pivotal role in addressing critical needs within the Black community while simultaneously fostering sustainable global progress. These 11 Black entrepreneurs join previous cohorts in a growing network of support:

- Serge Amouzou, CEO & Founder, Datatrix, Data-Tech, San Francisco, CA
- Samuel Baddoo, CEO, Fleri, Health-Tech, Columbus, OH
- Christopher Bennett, Founder/Attorney, T-I-L(R) Technology-Innovation-Law, Legal-Tech, Washington, D.C.
- Akinsola Jegede, CEO, Vital Swap Technologies, Fin-Tech, Indianapolis, IN
- Tyrell Junius, Tiami Networks, Connectivity, Elk Grove, CA
- Rhode Malivert, K-12 Preparatory Academy, Education, Plantation, FL
- Bobola Odebiyi, CrossKudi, Fin-Tech, Wauwatosa, WI
- Sarah Odiavbara, Craftmerse, Inc., Retail/Goods, Middletown, DE
- Omolola Omishore, TheraMotive, Health Wellness, Brooklyn, NY
- Clement Owusu-Donkor, Aquanto, Logistics, Smyrna, DE
- Shingi Samudzi, Asoba, Renewable Energy, San Rafael, CA

There will be a virtual Kickoff Celebration to honor the cohort on September 7, 2023, and the program will culminate with a Pitch Day for potential investors on October 26, 2023 at Santa Clara University's Lucas Hall and on Zoom. *Members of the media are welcome to attend either event. Please contact [brett@africandiasporanetwork.org](mailto:brett@africandiasporanetwork.org) to register in advance.*

Building upon the successes of the African Diaspora Network's Builders of Africa's Future Program, ABLE emerges from the urgent necessity to change the systemic barriers hindering Black entrepreneurs' access to capital and resources such as technical mentorship, in addition to limited access to capital, and other challenges. ADN is firmly committed to bridging these gaps by paving robust economic avenues and propelling entrepreneurial endeavors that facilitate adaptation and innovation within the Black entrepreneurial community in the U.S.

“The unwavering tenacity, unyielding determination, and remarkable resilience exhibited by our ABLE cohort never fail to inspire me,” said Almaz Negash, Founder and Executive Director of African Diaspora Network. “These entrepreneurs hold dreams, aspirations, and a strong desire to achieve success, and I wholeheartedly urge those in positions of influence to extend a helping hand, unlocking doors and fostering pathways to invaluable opportunities.”

ABLE is made possible through a unique partnership between ADN and the Silicon Valley Executive Center at the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University, with lead funding from Bill.com and the Makahakama Foundation, and additional funding from KLA Foundation, Black Freedom Fund, Black Rock Foundation, and the County of Santa Clara.

Joyce Chung, President of the Makahakama Foundation, had this to say about Cohort 3: “The support and connections these entrepreneurs will experience, combined with the passion, commitment, and acumen they have demonstrated, are a combination that will power them forward in their journeys. I wish them the very best!”

Jen Shea, Executive Director of the KLA Foundation, added: "We are honored to witness the launch of the third cohort of ABLE, an initiative that resonates deeply with our commitment to fostering diversity, innovation, and economic empowerment. Through mentorship, education, and networking, ABLE is a beacon of hope, lighting the path towards greater opportunities for Black entrepreneurs. Their dedication to strengthening communities and creating lasting impact is truly inspiring. As a committed supporter in this journey, we extend our warmest congratulations to ABLE Cohort 3 and salute ADN for their visionary leadership in advancing equity and positive change."

To delve into the details of ABLE Cohort 3 and the program's profound impact so far, visit <https://bit.ly/ABLE23Cohort3>.

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### **About African Diaspora Network (ADN)**

Founded in 2010, African Diaspora Network promotes entrepreneurship and economic development on the African continent and in the communities in which we live. ADN brings together Africans on the continent, in the diaspora, and friends of Africa to actualize their full potential, activate their entrepreneurial spirit, and strategically mobilize financial and intellectual resources to ensure a brighter future for the African continent. Explore ADN's tireless efforts to foster economic and social progress within Africa and among its allies at [africandiasporanetwork.org](http://africandiasporanetwork.org).