

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Joseph Zwiebel, jzwiebel@hartfordpromise.org

Promise Scholar Alumni Join Hartford Promise Reaching Back Team

Hartford Promise is pleased to announce that Erna Alić and Chereece Burrell have joined the Hartford Promise team as Promise Coaches. Ms. Alić and Ms. Burrell will be key members of Hartford Promise's ***Reaching Back Team***. In their new roles, both will work directly and continuously with Hartford Public School (HPS) students, counselors, administrators and teachers. We are thrilled that Erna and Chereece have joined us." says Jordan Green, Director of Reaching Back Services for Hartford Promise. "Erna and Chereece are a welcome addition to our focus on strengthening the college-going culture in each high school and ensuring that every Hartford student is aware of their talents, our scholarship, and the many college opportunities available to them. "

Erna Alić resides in Hartford and is a 2021 Magna Cum Laude graduate of University of Connecticut, Storrs, where she earned a BA in Psychology and Human Rights, with a minor in Arabic.

Erna was born in Geneva, Switzerland where her family were asylum seekers from Bosnia. She came to the US with her family as refugees in 2001, and became a US citizen in 2018. She is multilingual in Bosnian, English, Beginner Spanish and Arabic.

Erna serves as a commissioner on the Hartford Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs and was intern for The Dodd Human Rights Digital Archives Project, helping to make important human rights documents easily accessible to the community. She has been active in many other causes as a volunteer, including Hartford Deportation Defense, Free Uyghur Now as media director, and Fundraising Intern for Helping Hand for Relief and Development.

She currently also works as a Program Coordinator at the Hartford Public Library for the After School English Learner Success Program. When she's not busy being a Reaching Back Coach or trying to save the world, Erna enjoys listening to podcasts while taking very long walks, is an avid reader and coffee drinker and loves tending to her gardens, plants and her kitten, Smoki.

Chereece Latoya Burrell resides in Hartford, and is a 2022 graduate of University of Connecticut, where she earned a Bachelor of arts degree in Psychological Science, with a minor in Human Development and Family Sciences.

Chereece has interned at the UCONN Child Lab, where she engaged with, and provided care to infants from 4-12 months, and helped to develop learning plans for children under her care. She has been an active leader in the Hartford Student Senate, Junior achievement, and served as Valedictorian of Global Communications Academy. Chereece is also a registered behavior technician and works with children diagnosed with Autism and other developmental disabilities.

As a Reaching Back Coach for Hartford Promise, Chereece looks forward to continuing to help students within the Hartford community prepare for their post-secondary education. Chereece likes to watch marvel movies, her favorite character is Doctor strange. Chereece is very family oriented and enjoys spending time with her niece and nephews. She also enjoys doing DIY projects during her free time.

About **Hartford Promise**: Hartford Promise is a large-scale college scholarship and college success program for Hartford Public Schools students. Hartford Promise provides individual students from Hartford Public high schools who have maintained a 3.0 average, had a 93% attendance rate, and resided in Hartford with up to \$20,000 in scholarships to attend the college of their choice, along with providing the support services and key relationships that lead to college success. There are currently 480 Hartford Promise Scholars attending 90 different colleges all over the country. They are succeeding at a high rate, and many are returning to Hartford to give back and be part of a diverse talented pipeline of professionals and employees.