



**Educa y Entretiene**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 11, 2017

Contact: Angel Audiffred, (646) 483-0730 / [aaudiffred@hitn.org](mailto:aaudiffred@hitn.org)

---

**FILMMAKING APP HELPS BROOKLYN YOUTH SHINE SPOTLIGHT ON ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-HARRASMENT IN BROOKLYN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Brooklyn District Attorney's Office collaborates with Brooklyn-based Hispanic non-profit broadcaster HITN to tackle youth violence through the use of digital-storytelling and social media*

**Brooklyn, NY** – In a survey conducted by New York City’s Department of Education, 81 percent of its students have experienced bullying or harassment in their schools, a shocking 10 percent increase from last year’s survey. Of even more concern – according to the Brooklyn DA’s Bureau of Youth Initiatives – is that today’s teens live in a digital world where the evolving darker side of social media is taking shape as “an ongoing cycle of cyberbullying and retaliation that frequently escalates beyond online harassment to result in delinquency and arrests -- from inappropriate sexual messaging to one on one gang and gun violence, to even more tragic trends that impact their lives at every level.” And although there are numerous options for parents to help prevent their children from being bullied or harassed, there are not nearly as many tools for teens to use for themselves.

Through a collaboration between the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Bureau of Youth Initiatives, the Brooklyn-based non-profit media company the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network (HITN) and DIYdoc, a smartphone app production company founded by social and technology entrepreneur John Carlin and filmmaker David Grandison, Jr., teens are being empowered to take on the challenge of bullying through a visionary program that enables them to produce their own authentic and compelling short films using their smart phones and specially designed, easy to use story templates. The app does more than make it possible for teens to share their own personal experiences on their smart phones and social media. The goal of HITN and the Brooklyn DA’s Office is to help amplify youth voices by providing the technology and training that make it possible for them to create their own short videos, share them with their peers and work with law enforcement to explore stories and solutions for real world impact.

“We have to face the facts that bullying and harassment among teens is something that has become more dangerous,” says Michael D. Nieves, President and CEO of **HITN**. “By partnering with the Brooklyn District Attorney’s office and using technology to help young people share their stories and possible solutions for bullying, we hope that teens, schools and parents can better address this ongoing issues.”

“This is a terrific opportunity to turn the tables on bullying and teach our children how to use their technology to make a positive impact. It has become all too clear that bullying has stepped out of the schoolyard and into cyberspace, which allows bullies the chance to post anonymous online taunts that are devastating to our children. This app is a great tool for helping kids help each other,” said Acting District Attorney Eric Gonzalez”

This innovative program also allows young filmmakers to help their peers learn about cyber-bullying, offer ideas for ways to stop it and learn more about media literacy and how to create a compelling, well thought-out story online.

This research-based educational method combines project-based learning and peer-tutoring to reach the HITN and the DA’s goal of educating at-risk teens on this challenging topic. The community will benefit since the app enables participants to share informative films on the topic as well as other local news stories with their friends and relatives.

“The world is changing because almost everyone has a powerful video camera in their hands in the form of a smartphone,” says DIYdoc producer David Grandison, Jr. “It’s time we use these smartphones and all the other social media apps for something good.”



## **Educa y Entretiene**

**HITN** is the leading Spanish-language network focused on educational and cultural programming for the whole family. It reaches over 44 million homes across the United States and Puerto Rico through DIRECTV, DISH Network, AT&T U-verse TV, Verizon FiOS TV, Comcast, Charter Spectrum, Frontier Mediacom, CenturyLink Prism, and Cablevision. For more information, log in to [www.hitn.org](http://www.hitn.org).

**The Bureau of Youth Initiatives** creates and manages programs and initiatives designed to meet the Office's overall mission to keep Brooklyn residents safe through the prevention of crime and delinquency. The Bureau fulfills this mission through educational programming, recreational activities, mentorships, internships, and career readiness initiatives that provide an in-depth understanding of the District Attorney's role in the criminal justice system. To that end, the Office aims to build a well-informed citizenry that will contribute to the creation of a safer Brooklyn for generations to come.

**DIYdoc** is a technology company made up of app and media producers with a mission to enable young people to use inexpensive smartphones, that are widely available, to understand filmmaking better and create high quality films that matter

###