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**YWCA SAN ANTONIO AWARDED “GRAND CHALLENGES” GRANT**  
*YWCA San Antonio selected from thousands in Bill & Melinda Gate-managed challenge to spotlight social and economic issues impacting minority women*

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, JUNE 10, 2020 – YWCA San Antonio received a grant of \$100,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s “Global Grand Challenges” program to elevate diverse voices and broaden the national conversation about racism, poverty, and economic mobility.

The project titled, “Why Can’t They Just...” will consist of a multimedia public awareness campaign involving videos of days in the lives of women of color working in hospitality, caregiving, and food service industries in the city. Videos and stories provided by these individuals will answer the questions often posed by those who misunderstand the causes of poverty, such as “Why can’t they just get a job? ...or go back to school? ...or take better care of their health?”

The project was chosen as an example of new ways to bring personal stories to life to help others better understand why people fall into or remain stuck in poverty and what the obstacles are to building and maintaining economic security.

“YWCA San Antonio is deeply honored and grateful to be included among the 28 grant recipients across the country who will use our collective power to amplify the voices of the voiceless,” said Francesca Rattray, CEO of YWCA San Antonio. “Now more than ever, as our community is suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic and the national trauma of racial injustice, this grant provides the opportunity to advance our mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.”

The grant will allow YWCA San Antonio to provide smart phones and stipends to women of color served by the organization to video themselves as they go about their day, navigating challenges of transportation, child care, and more, to provide a window on their lives and show their resilience in the face of poverty.

The project builds on YWCA San Antonio’s equity and advocacy program, launched last year with support from United Way of Bexar County and San Antonio, to create awareness about wage inequality which disproportionately impacts women of color.

YWCA San Antonio aims to partner with local foundations, media organizations, and nonprofits on the project in the year ahead.

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YWCA San Antonio has worked for 110 years to achieve the mission of eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. *Learn more about YWCA San Antonio at [www.ywcasa.org](http://www.ywcasa.org) and follow us on Facebook (@YWCAofSanAntonio), Twitter (@ywcasatx) and Instagram (@ywcasa)*