



Mobile Phones & Mentors: Using Technology to Test a New Approach to High School Financial Literacy

American Express Serve partners with Clarksdale High School and non-profits [Moneythink](#) and [EveryoneOn](#) for three-year financial education pilot program in Clarksdale, Mississippi

NEW YORK: September 23, 2014—Today, American Express, in partnership with non-profits [Moneythink](#) and [EveryoneOn](#), announced the launch of *Clarksdale Dollars & Sense*, a three year pilot program that aims to improve financial literacy amongst students and their families in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

“All too often, young people enter their adult lives without a good understanding of the tools available to help them save and plan for the future,” said Dan Schulman, group president, Enterprise Growth at American Express. “*Clarksdale Dollars & Sense* stems from our belief that technology is a key tool to solve financial exclusion in the U.S. Our hope is that this mode of financial education taught by mentors and using digital tools will help students build a strong foundation for their financial future.”

How it Works

Trained Moneythink mentors will use a mobile-phone based financial education program from Moneythink, to teach Clarksdale High School seniors and how to budget, save and manage their money during their Government and Economics class.

“We are thrilled to have the support of American Express, Moneythink and EveryoneOn to paint a brighter future for our youth,” said Dr. Manika Kemp, Principal of Clarksdale High School. “We hope this program will not only help the community of Clarksdale, but also serve to educate and motivate others to explore similar financial literacy programs in their communities.”

Students will learn valuable skills to help them build positive financial habits. Having access to Moneythink’s new smartphone app, can help them apply classroom financial knowledge in real-life settings. Participating seniors will receive a free smartphone while enrolled in *Clarksdale Dollars & Sense* to facilitate use of the app.

“Moneythink bridges the gap between theory and action and gives students a chance to apply what they are learning in the real world,” says Ted Gonder, Moneythink Founder and CEO. “Through our program, we hope that Clarksdale High School students will be able to develop positive financial habits now and for years to come.”



EveryoneOn and Cable ONE will partner to offer internet service to eligible Clarksdale High School students to extend and enhance the benefits of the program. With free home internet, eligible students will have the ability to continue their learning after school for no additional cost.

“The internet has become a powerful tool to bring education outside of the classroom and into student’s everyday lives,” said Zach Leverenz, CEO of EveryoneOn. “We are excited to be partnering with American Express and Moneythink, to bring such valuable tools and education to these Clarksdale High students’ homes.”

“Access to technology is no longer a luxury, but a necessity in order for today’s students to be successful both in and outside of the classroom,” Cable ONE General Manager Sandra Melton said. “Because we believe so strongly in improving education through the use of technology, we are thrilled to do our part to support these Clarksdale High School students.”

During the three-year pilot program, an independent research firm, Glass Frog Solutions, will measure the impact of the program to understand how factors like mentoring, mobile phone based learning and free home internet can create positive change in participants’ financial lives. Added Schulman, “We hope to share the results of this program as a blueprint to help other underserved communities.”

#LookingForChange

Alongside the launch of this program, American Express released a short documentary film about the community of Clarksdale, Mississippi. The short documentary, developed by director Derek Doneen of *Spent: Looking for Change* offers a glimpse into the community’s financial challenges which the *Clarksdale Dollars & Sense* program aims to improve. The film can be viewed on YouTube for free. Additionally, American Express commissioned artist Shantell Martin to create a public art piece on September 23 from 4:00pm-7:00pm EST outside the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center depicting people’s hopes and goals for a better financial future. Shantell will be conversing with participants live and using her conversations to inspire the creative direction of her mural. Anyone can contribute to the conversation online, and potentially directly to the art, by Tweeting a goal for their own financial future at @AmexServe using the hashtag #LookingforChange. Tweets about personal financial goals may be shared with Shantell to inspire and guide her artwork in real time. A live stream of the event will be viewable at the time of installation via the Amex Serve Twitter and Facebook pages: @AmexServe and [Facebook.com/AmexServe](https://www.facebook.com/AmexServe).

To learn more about *Clarksdale Dollars & Sense* and its partners, visit www.spentmovie.com.

About American Express

American Express is a global services company, providing customers with access to products, insights and experiences that help enrich lives and build business success. American Express Serve is a full-service reloadable prepaid access account issued by American Express Travel Related Services Company,



Inc. Learn more at americanexpress.com and connect with us on facebook.com/amexserve, foursquare.com/americanexpress, linkedin.com/company/american-express, twitter.com/amexserve, and youtube.com/americanexpress.

About MoneyThink

[Moneythink](#) is the only movement of young people restoring the economic health of the United States through preventative, transformative, evidence-driven youth financial education. By combining high-touch college mentoring with high-tech mobile phone tools, Moneythink helps teens from low-income backgrounds get on a pathway to economic prosperity. Learn more and [join the Moneythink movement](#).

About EveryoneOn

[EveryoneOn](#) is a national nonprofit working to eliminate the digital divide by making high-speed, affordable Internet service, low-cost computers, and free digital literacy courses accessible to all unconnected U.S. residents. EveryoneOn aims to leverage the democratizing power of the Internet to provide opportunity to everyone – regardless of age, race, geography, income, or education level.

About Cable ONE

Serving more than 720,000 customers in 19 states with high speed internet, cable television, and telephone service, Cable ONE provides consumers a wide range of the latest products and services, including wireless Internet service, High-Definition programming, and phone service with free, unlimited long distance calling in the continental U.S. More information about Cable ONE - <http://www.cableone.net>.