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Houston Educator Named National Life Group 'LifeChanger of the Year' Award Winner

School founder and director Traci Thibodeaux receives \$5,000 cash prize for empowering underserved students to achieve academic and college success

Houston, TX - May 5, 2021 – Traci Thibodeaux, founder and school director of Rêve Preparatory Charter School, has been selected as a Grand Prize Finalist for the 2020-21 national LifeChanger of the Year award.

LifeChanger of the Year is an annual program sponsored by the National Life Group Foundation that recognizes and rewards outstanding K-12 educators and school district employees who have demonstrated a proven ability to make a beneficial difference in the lives of students.

Despite growing up in some of the most challenging neighborhoods in Houston, Thibodeaux was able to use education as a pathway to college and career success. This experience left a lasting impression and inspired her to found Rêve Preparatory Charter School, which now serves the same community which Thibodeaux grew up in.

Rêve Preparatory's student body still faces the same obstacles Thibodeaux did as a child. Almost 80% of students are economically disadvantaged and over 20% have already experienced early childhood trauma. The school's mission is to put students in an rigorous academic environment that ensures college readiness and puts no limits on what they can accomplish regardless of their background.

To fulfill this, Thibodeaux developed a unique model of two teachers in each classroom so that students would receive adequate personalized support and more one-on-one learning. The school also places a central focus on character development, ingraining values such as respect, determination, and preparedness from kindergarten.

"The name of the school, Rêve, means to dream in French. The philosophy is making sure that we give our students the skills and knowledge to turn their dreams into reality," said Thibodeaux. "If a student comes with us, we will be doing everything possible in combination with their family and parents to make sure they are prepared for college."

Thibodeaux was nominated by a school board member, Erik Gomez, and surprised with the award on Wednesday by National Life Group representatives Mallorie Manosh and Joe Bousquet, alongside the Rêve Preparatory board and staff members.

To read more about Thibodeaux, visit her LifeChanger of the Year profile [here](#).

About LifeChanger of the Year

LifeChanger of the Year winners are selected by an independent committee comprised of past winners and education professionals. To be considered for a LifeChanger of the Year award, nominees must:

- Make a positive impact in the lives of students
- Enhance their school or district's atmosphere, culture and pride
- Demonstrate exemplary leadership at the school and/or district level
- Possess a proven record of professional excellence
- Show commitment to building a nurturing environment that supports learning

- Adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards

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In Texas, due to regulatory concerns, National Life Group will donate similar items to the winner or a nonprofit group of NLGroup's choice that supports the winner's school.