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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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**AREA'S LARGEST JOB EXPO FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES
COMES TO FARMINGDALE**



Hundreds of job seekers filled Roosevelt Hall at Farmingdale State College to meet with recruiters from over two dozen Long Island companies.

Old Bethpage, NY – Over 300 hundred attendees filled Roosevelt Hall at Farmingdale State College for the Annual Community Partnership Forum and Talent Connection Job Expo for adults with disabilities hosted by Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE), in partnership with ACLD, Life's WORC and the

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YAI Network. The "Talent Connection" Job Expo is the largest of its kind in the area, offering adults with disabilities an opportunity to discuss their skills and abilities with recruiters from key businesses on Long Island. The event was a great opportunity for individuals to become familiar with potential employers as well as learn valuable information at the employment workshops that were offered.

"We are thrilled with the turnout at this year's Job Expo," said Robert S. Budd, CEO FREE. "The individuals we serve are eager to get out into the workforce and show that they can be positive, contributing members of society, and I believe that it comes through whenever they meet with these recruiters," he continued.

The day commenced with an open forum of community leaders, welcomed by Dr. John Nader, President of Farmingdale State College, followed by workshops which included: "*Handling the Hot Seat*", "*Workplace Social Etiquette/Tips for Embracing Success in the Workplace*", "*Employment and Your Benefits*", "*Employment Issues Roundtable*" and a **Job Expo** with hundreds of potential job candidates.

The keynote speaker at the Forum was John Kemp, President and CEO, The Viscardi Center. The Forum also included a panel with companies, job coaches and individuals with disabilities who are employed, and Top Star Employer Awards. The Top Star Employers were honored by New York State Senator John E. Brooks and Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino for their efforts in recruiting and hiring individuals with disabilities.



Senator John E. Brooks, left, presented proclamations to Top Star Employers from Panera Bread in Bohemia, Chocolate Works, D3 LLC, Cambridge Art and Framing, Costello's Ace Hardware and Hercules Corporation in addition to hosts of Job Expo: FREE, ACLD, Life's WORC and YAI. Self-Advocates from D3 LLC and Costello's Ace Hardware are also in the photo.

"Thank you to FREE for bringing together jobseekers from a very special labor community, including individuals with different abilities. Events like these help individuals realize their full potential, while introducing unlimited talent to local employers and benefiting our local economy," said New York State Senator John E. Brooks.

Employers from across Long Island sought candidates for positions including entry and middle management level and clerical staffing. On hand to meet with the hundreds of job seekers that attended were eVero, American Maintenance, Astoria Bank, Amneal Pharmaceuticals LLC, Broadridge Financial Solutions, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Prudential, D3 LLC, Genser Dubow Genser and Cona, Hempstead Works, Ocean Janitorial, Suffolk County Department of Labor, Pets4LuvFoundation, The Corporate Source, Public Access TV Corporation, Sky Zone, Hope Fitness, The Employment Connection, FREE, Life's WORC /Family Center for Autism, ACLD, Skills Unlimited, and AHRC Suffolk plus more.



Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino, center, with representatives from FREE, ACLD, Life's WORC, YAI and eVero, Top Star Employers Hercules and D3 LLC and self-advocates who are employed at FREE

“I truly commend everyone at Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. for orchestrating the ‘Talent Connection’ Job Expo, which provides a platform allowing businesses to reach out to a very special labor population,” Oyster Bay Town Supervisor Joseph Saladino said. “This event also provided an opportunity to commend businesses which have become valuable partners and supported the program by hiring someone with disabilities.”

Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE)

Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE), founded in 1977, benefits and proudly supports more than 4,000 individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental illness and traumatic brain injury. It is the mission of FREE to assist individuals of all abilities realize their full potential. FREE provides a diverse array of supports and services including: housing; recovery services; transition to work; employment; day, community and family services; respite; crisis services; education and after school support; specialty health services; and advocacy.

FREE also collaborates with a variety of diverse 501(c)(3) nonprofit partners on educational, vocational, rehabilitative and a myriad of other creative initiatives to enhance the local communities and the lives of more than 25,000 people that reside within them. Each of the valued partners of the FREE Network has a unique mission, vision and strategic goals that are aligned in purpose, and embody the spirit of the meaningful work we do every day. For more information, please call 516-870-7000 or visit www.familyres.org.

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