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IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 3, 2012

Bar Mitzvah Boy Donates TV to Special Needs School

CHATHAM, N.J. – Want to get a sneak peek of life at ECLC of New Jersey's special needs school? Just step into the lobby and you can relive graduations, holiday concerts, basketball games and other events that take place throughout the year.

The school year "trailer" debuted recently on a new flat-screen TV that was generously donated by the Stolar family of Livingston.

The donation came about because Gabe Stolar, an eighth grader at Heritage Middle School, has been volunteering at the ECLC school in Chatham for the past two years. Gabe helps the youngsters tackle their homework assignments and then plays basketball, bingo or does arts and crafts projects with them.

The ECLC students have severe learning and/or language disabilities or autism, Down syndrome or multiple disabilities. But, Gabe doesn't see what they can't do, he sees what they can. "He was a little young to be volunteering when he started, but he felt so naturally comfortable with the kids, right from the start, that it worked," said his mom, Randee. "It was a good fit."

Recently, when Gabe celebrated his bar mitzvah, he saw something that he could do to give back. He took a portion of his gift money and put it toward the TV and its installation. "It's a wonderful addition to our lobby and makes a good impression, especially for first-time visitors to the school," said the school's grateful principal, Diane Gagliardi. "I'm very thankful for this donation

ABOUT ECLC

Founded in 1970, ECLC has grown from a small, early-intervention program into a comprehensive network of non-profit agencies serving more than 600 special-needs children and adults

throughout central and northern New Jersey. These students and adult clients have severe learning and/or language disabilities, Down syndrome, autism or multiple disabilities.

At schools in Ho-Ho-Kus and Chatham, ECLC educates more than 300 students, ages 5-21. For its graduates and other adult clients, ECLC provides job placements and transition services after high school through Community Personnel Services (CPS) and vocational skills and independent living skills training in its P.R.I.D.E. day/evening programs.