

**Amalia Duarte**

**Public Relations Director**

ECLC of NJ

Tel: 973-635-1705 X26

Cell: (973-902-8390)

E-mail: [aduarte@eclcofnj.org](mailto:aduarte@eclcofnj.org)

**ECLC of New Jersey's Fund-Raising Campaign Reaches  
Important Milestone with Donation from the Willis Foundation**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Dec. 9, 2013**

**CHATHAM, N.J.** – With a generous \$2,200 grant from the Willis Foundation, ECLC of New Jersey is one-third of its way toward raising \$450,000 to renovate and expand its P.R.I.D.E. Center in Florham Park, where adults with Down syndrome, autism and other developmental disabilities, have the opportunity to learn to cook, read in book club, create arts and crafts, stretch in yoga class, earn a paycheck and much more.

The grant is the second in a row from the Willis Foundation, a nonprofit corporation affiliated with Willis Group Holdings, the global insurance broker, with a local office in Morristown. “We are deeply thankful for their ongoing support because completing this project is so important to our mission. There is a pressing need for adult services, and we have promised our school parents that P.R.I.D.E. will keep growing to accommodate every graduate who wants to take part in the program,” said ECLC Development Director, Heather Alonge.

ECLC is excited about reaching this milestone of \$160,000 in donations, but the campaign is far from over. “If this were a 26-mile marathon race, we would just be crossing mile eight! The finish line is still a long way off in the distance,” said Alonge.

Founded in 1970, ECLC has its roots in education but branched out into adult services and now supports almost as many adults as children through its network of affiliated programs and agencies. ECLC runs schools in Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus for students with special needs who require services that their home public school districts cannot provide.

Six years ago, ECLC started P.R.I.D.E. (which stands for Promoting Responsibility, Independence, Decision-making and Employability) for graduates who were not good candidates for job placement through ECLC's employment arm, Community Personnel Services (CPS). From a handful of clients, the program now enrolls more than 100 adults, employs 35 staff, uses nine vans for transportation and has evening and work components and a second center in Paramus.

This \$450,000 capital project will transform the P.R.I.D.E. Center in Florham Park, including:

Adding 10,000 square feet of space.

Expanding the space used for in-house, contracted work.

Creating a new "super center" with eight skill development rooms; and a teaching kitchen and a model apartment.

Purchasing several 10-passenger vans to transport clients into the community for daily activities, such as book club, fitness and volunteering.

### **About ECLC**

ECLC of New Jersey is a nonprofit offering a network of lifelong services – education, employment and enrichment -- to children and adults with special needs, including autism, Down syndrome and severe learning and/or language disabilities.

ECLC's two schools, in Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus, educate more than 300 children with special needs from ages 5-21. As students prepare to graduate, ECLC's employment arm, Community Personnel Services (CPS), based in Chatham, guides them into the next chapter of their lives. CPS finds them meaningful jobs in their communities and provides ongoing support and advocacy in the workplace. Graduates who are not ready for work can enroll in P.R.I.D.E.

The ECLC Foundation supplements funding for all entities and supports afterschool and evening activities, therapeutic horseback riding, respite weekends (overnights), alumni enrichment classes, adult services and capital projects. Learn more about ECLC at [HYPERLINK "http://www.eclcofnj.org" www.eclcofnj.org](http://www.eclcofnj.org).

### **About Willis**

Established in 2010, the Willis Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation based in Nashville, Tenn. The vision of the Foundation is to encourage Willis Associates and key business partners to participate in charitable activities and engage with the communities Willis serves. Throughout the year, the Willis Foundation organizes fundraising events and, in turn, makes charitable contributions to eligible nonprofit organizations across North America. Grant recipients are nominated by Willis Associates as a vehicle to give back to their communities. Learn more about the Willis Foundation at [www.thewillisfoundation.org](http://www.thewillisfoundation.org).