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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Area Businesses Recognized for Employing Special Needs Adults

Community Personnel Services celebrates 15 years of finding jobs for special needs adults

CHATHAM, NJ – In these challenging economic times where empty commercial spaces dot New Jersey's highways, area businesses continue to open their doors to adults with special needs, who are eager to earn a paycheck.

These employers – ranging from small businesses to large corporations – provide ECLC of New Jersey's special-needs adult clients with a chance to work, doing everything from driving a forklift to corralling shopping carts in parking lots to stocking shelves.

The adults find jobs through ECLC's employment arm, Community Personnel Services (CPS), which is based in Chatham. On May 13, CPS hosted a breakfast with some 30 local employers to recognize their commitment to the special needs community.

In turn, the employers emphasized that they aren't doing CPS or the clients any favors. One after another, employers thanked the clients for their hard work, dedication, reliability and willingness to take on any task. At ISP Chemical in Chatham, Rich Pitarresi worked his way up from janitorial duties to driving a forklift and taking measurements of hazardous chemicals.

Trader Joe's of Florham Park raved about client Tim Devine. "Tim is so friendly and has such a great attitude," said Kristine Shehady of about him. "He has a smile on his face from the moment he walks in to when he leaves. Thank you for being a rock star."

The employers recognized were Acme Markets of Randolph, AMC Theaters at Clifton Commons, Bagel Bistro of Newton, Belgrove Post Acute Care Center in Kearny, Children's Corner at Morristown

Memorial Hospital, Glen Rock Board of Education, Home Depot in Parsippany, ISP Chemical of Chatham, Marshalls of Paramus, Metro YMCAs Livingston/Caldwell, Morris View Nursing Home in Morristown, Panera Bread in Florham Park, Rocking Horse Rehab in West Orange, Sears of Rockaway, Sears of Watchung, Shop-Rite of Parsippany, Stop & Shop of Basking Ridge, Target of Riverdale, Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, Tiffany & Co., of Whippany, Trader Joe's of Florham Park and the Verona Township Senior Services Center.

Celebrating 15 Years of Success

Located in Chatham, CPS was created by ECLC in 1995 to enrich the lives of their special needs students by helping them determine options for life after graduation. Based on their skills, abilities and interests, students sample jobs prior to graduation with the goal of identifying the best match. For students who may not be ready for employment, the CPS staff arranges tours of programs and assistance in locating funding sources for those programs. CPS also helps clients navigate through the maze of state and federal agencies to access aid and services. CPS serves more than 200 clients.

About ECLC

Founded in 1970, ECLC has grown from a small, early-intervention program into a comprehensive network of non-profit agencies serving special-needs children and adults throughout central and northern New Jersey. ECLC students and adult clients have severe learning and/or language disabilities, 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 CPS and vocational skills and independent living skills training in its P.R.I.D.E. day/evening programs.