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## **PHILLY TEENS SHOW THE POWER OF WORK**

**600+ youth display projects and portfolios from summer jobs;  
Political, business and foundation leaders recognized for their support**

PHILADELPHIA, PA. August 9, 2007. More than 600 youth from throughout the Greater Philadelphia region shared their experiences and celebrated the successful completion of summer and year-round internships and training programs offered through WorkReady Philadelphia, the City's system of youth workforce preparation. Selected to participate by certified teachers based on the quality of projects and portfolios developed during the summer, these young people represented more than 8,200 youth who participated in 2007 WorkReady programming. At the ceremony, young people were recognized for their accomplishments and heard congratulatory remarks from Philadelphian Robb Armstrong, a professional artist and the nationally syndicated cartoonist who created "JumpStart." Furthermore, a team of two dozen young researchers reported findings of youth-developed surveys that gauged the satisfaction of their peers regarding their participation in WorkReady programs.

Earlier in the day, an awards breakfast was held to recognize the contributions of major supporters of this year's WorkReady programs. At the breakfast, special presentations were made to Joe Frick, CEO of Independence Blue Cross; Mark Schweiker of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce; Councilwoman Marian Tasco and Council President Anna Verna; William Penn Foundation President Feather Houstoun; and Pennsylvania Representative Dwight Evans.

Mr. Frick praised the young people and the Philadelphia employers who hired them. "We were thrilled to have these students this summer. They were extremely appreciative of the opportunities they were given and were terrific all-around contributors. We created a place for them to learn, grow and succeed, and they took advantage of it in all aspects," he said. "I was also impressed by the commitment of the local business community to rally behind this program. By hiring 1,000 interns, they demonstrated that they're fully engaged in providing meaningful opportunities for our city's youth. They recognize that this is a win-win initiative."

This year's WorkReady programming was particularly impressive because of the strength of the partnership it represented. New investments from the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and employers through the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce's *Working Solutions* program augmented continuing support from the federal government and the William Penn Foundation and other local and regional philanthropies to make this year's program the biggest since the advent of WorkReady Philadelphia in 2002.

The concluding celebration, held annually for the last eight years, recognizes the hard work of thousands of young people as they complete summer and year-round programs. During the morning, students displayed projects and workplace portfolios, prepared as part of their internships, which reflected both practical experiences and academic achievement. Furthermore, at least half of participating students also earn school credit for projects and portfolios produced in WorkReady programming.

In addition to displaying impressive projects and portfolios, young people were also prominently featured in the awards ceremony. Marcellus Taylor, a student at Philadelphia Electrical and Technical High School and moderator of the recent Youth Mayoral Forum held at the National Constitution Center, served as emcee for the program. The Youth Satisfaction Survey Team, comprised of more than 20 talented young people who spent the summer surveying participants in WorkReady programming to learn how it can be strengthened, reported on their findings. And Janell Harmon, lead researcher for the Survey Team, introduced featured speaker Robb Armstrong.

Tracee Hunt, Vice President of the Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Company and Chair of the Philadelphia Youth Council, was among the employers who congratulated the young people on their accomplishments.

“All of you have done a spectacular job, and I commend you for your great work,” Hunt told the young people. “You are the future of our City and our nation. And based on the work you have accomplished, it’s crystal clear to me that our future is bright and full of promise.”

The WorkReady Philadelphia campaign is led by private sector chair Joseph Frick, Chairman and CEO of Independence Blue Cross. Administrative support for WorkReady and staffing for the Youth Council is provided by the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), a citywide youth intermediary organization.

“The work of these students is truly inspiring,” said Laura Shubilla, PYN President. “When you see such talent and energy on display, you begin to understand why it’s so important to give each and every one of our young people the opportunity to succeed.”

With the growing success of WorkReady Philadelphia programs, more and more sponsors are needed to provide these crucial experiences that prepare students for the world of work, and to help them to understand the importance of completing high school and earning postsecondary credentials. Through WorkReady Philadelphia, employers can give deserving young people their first break – helping them to make connections and cultivate skills that can make all the difference.

To hire interns or learn more about WorkReady Philadelphia, visit [www.workreadyphila.com](http://www.workreadyphila.com).

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**About the Philadelphia Youth Network:** The Philadelphia Youth Network is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization founded in 1999. As a catalyst for collective action, PYN makes connections among individuals, organizations and systems. PYN increases capacity and resources in order to provide world-class preparation so our City’s youth can thrive in a regional and global economy. Visit [www.pyninc.org](http://www.pyninc.org)