



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Melissa Orner  
267-502-3718 (desk) / 215-778-5791 (cell)

### ***Hundreds of Students Celebrate “WorkReady” Internships Local Marketing Executive Salutes Philadelphia Youth; Participating Employers Urge Local Businesses to Give Youth Their First Break***

**August 10, 2006:** 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 development. These young people represented the 7,000+ youth who participate annually in WorkReady programming. At the ceremony, area employers recognized the accomplishments of the young people, and David Brown, Founder and President of BrownPartners Multicultural Marketing, congratulated them on their achievements.

The closing celebration, held annually for the last seven years, recognizes the hard work of thousands of young people as they complete summer and year-round programs. Students displayed projects and workplace portfolios created during the course of their internships that reflected both practical experiences and academic achievement. Historically, more than 70% of participating students have earned school credit for projects and portfolios produced in WorkReady programming.

This year's celebration was emceed by Tracee Hunt, Vice President of Human Resources for the Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Company, a company that has been a consistent supporter of the WorkReady campaign. Hunt also serves as Chair of the Philadelphia Youth Council, which launched WorkReady Philadelphia and, as a committee of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, oversees the federal funding that supports several of its programs.

“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.”

-- continued --

During the morning, students' projects and portfolios were reviewed and evaluated by teams of employers, government officials and youth-serving organizations, with awards presented for the most outstanding work. A highlight of the awards ceremony was the announcement of the 2006 Michael J. Walker awards, presented to students participating in the Summer Career Exploration Program who exhibit special characteristics of leadership and integrity. Kelly Woodland, Program Officer for Children, Youth and Families at the William Penn Foundation, a major supporter of WorkReady, presented the awards to the deserving young people.

Tekoah Judge, a Philadelphia resident who is now attending Kutztown University, provided an overview of the Youth Satisfaction Survey, a youth-administered instrument that helps the Youth Council gauge the experiences of young people and improve programming, and also introduced keynote speaker David Brown. Brown, who is also an ordained minister with a masters degree from Eastern University, delivered an inspiring address in which he called on young people to set their sights high and never falter in their efforts to meet their goals.

Hundreds of employers, youth-serving organizations, public agencies, foundations and individuals participate in and support a variety of programs under the WorkReady Philadelphia umbrella, which include Employer-Paid Internships; YouthWorks, federally-funded summer and year-round jobs and related activities; and the Summer Career Exploration Program, supported by the William Penn Foundation and other local and regional philanthropies.

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, 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).

###