



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### ***Hundreds of Students Celebrate Completion of "WorkReady" Internships***

*National Advocate Congratulates Philadelphia Youth;  
Participating Employers Urge Local Businesses to Keep Hiring Student Interns*

**August 12, 2004:** More than 600 youth from throughout the City and region came together today to share experiences and celebrate the successful completion of summer and year-round internships offered through WorkReady Philadelphia, the City's system of youth workforce development programs. Sharing projects and portfolios of work from their internships, students networked with area employers and were congratulated on their accomplishments in a rousing speech by Ed DeJesus, a nationally-recognized youth advocate.

The closing celebration, held annually for the last five years, recognizes the hard work of more than 7,000 young people as they complete summer and year-round programs. Dozens of area employers who hosted young interns were also on hand to observe student accomplishments and to encourage them to continue their good work in college and in future careers.

DeJesus, one of the most inspiring and motivational speakers in the youth development field, delivered a powerful message about the centrality of education and its importance in preparing young people for successful futures. "Looking at these projects and portfolios, and interacting with many of you here this morning, it's clear to me that you have made incredible progress through WorkReady Philadelphia. Now you have to keep moving forward, stay focused and build the positive future that you want for yourselves."

Hundreds of employers, youth-serving organizations, public agencies, foundations and individuals participate in and support a variety of programs under the WorkReady Philadelphia banner, including, Employer-Paid Summer Internships; federally-funded

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summer and year-round YouthWorks programs; and the Summer Career Exploration Program, funded by the William Penn Foundation and other local and regional philanthropies.

The WorkReady Philadelphia campaign is co-chaired by Mayor John Street; Lincoln Financial Chairman and CEO Jon Boscia; and School District of Philadelphia CEO Paul Vallas.

Business leaders also had a message for regional employers: *keep hiring young people*. “Today we congratulate these students for their hard work and the progress they have made,” said Pamela Crawley, Senior Vice President of Citizens Bank and Chair of the Philadelphia Youth Council. “But there are thousands of students on WorkReady waiting lists, eager to earn and to learn. We need more employer partners to step up to the plate —  
to hire young interns and to invest in our future workforce and our future leaders.”

With the growing success of WorkReady 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, employers should call 215-875-4823 or visit [www.workreadyphila.com](http://www.workreadyphila.com).**

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