

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **“Who Gave You Your First Break?”**

### **WorkReady Philadelphia Kicks Off the 2006 Youth Employment Campaign; Salutes Philadelphia-Area Executives for Hiring Local Students**

PHILADELPHIA, PA (October 5, 2005) – The Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board and its Youth Council launched the WorkReady Philadelphia 2006 youth employment campaign at a reception for current and prospective employer partners and area leaders, held this evening at the National Constitution Center. The WorkReady Leaders Reception also celebrated hundreds of executives from local companies who participated in WorkReady Philadelphia, a city-wide partnership supporting programs to prepare the City’s young people for productive employment.

The event unveiled the WorkReady Philadelphia 2006 campaign theme, “Who Gave You Your First Break?” Created to remind employers of those people or businesses that took a chance on them, the campaign encourages today’s corporate leaders to offer internships that can provide similar life-changing experiences for today’s young people.

Guests at the Second Annual WorkReady Leaders Reception viewed displays with images and “first break” stories from more than a dozen prominent Philadelphians, including Billy King, President and General Manager of the Philadelphia 76ers; broadcaster and author Larry Kane; Mark Schweiker, Executive Director of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce; Pedro Ramos, Philadelphia’s Managing Director; Channel 3 news anchor Larry Mendte; and Alba Martinez, President of the United Way of Southeastern PA.

The event also honored hundreds of participating employers who have hired interns, hosted youth for job shadowing experiences and otherwise supported the variety of WorkReady Philadelphia programs. Through these activities, employers are given the opportunity to invest in youth workforce development and the City’s economic growth. The event celebrated the continuing high level of coordination and cooperation among organizations across the city concerned with youth workforce development, and documented the progress being made to

provide employers with clear and efficient ways to help young people become effective employees.

The keynote speaker for the WorkReady Leaders Reception was Carol Ammon, Founder and Chairman of Endo Pharmaceuticals, headquartered in Chadds Ford. Ammon cited examples from her own career of employers and colleagues who took a chance on her, providing breaks that made critical differences in her career. She challenged employers to provide these kinds of opportunities to tomorrow's business leaders. "Imagine," she said, "that in 15 or 20 years, you pick up the newspaper and read a profile of a successful employer, and that individual credits you with giving him or her a critical first break. Wouldn't that be terrific?" Ammon underscored Endo's commitment to WorkReady by announcing that the company would hire summer interns and also host 25 students at Shadowing Day, which will be held on January 25, 2006.

Three young WorkReady Philadelphia participants played visible roles in the Leaders Reception program. Mary Carrero, a graduate of Mastbaum High School, current student at Bucks County Community College and full-time Information Technology Apprentice at Lockheed Martin Integrated Systems and Solutions, convened the program and introduced Workforce Investment Board Chair and Citizens Bank Senior Vice President Pamela Crawley. Devon Morton-Battles, who is a graduate of William Penn High School, currently a student at Community College of Philadelphia and a full-time employee with the Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Company, introduced keynote speaker Carol Ammon. And Somaly Srey, an 11<sup>th</sup> grader at Philadelphia High School for Business and Technology and part-time employee at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, announced the recipient of the WorkReady 2005 Employer of the Year Award, Mr. Lovell Harmon, who is former chair of the Youth Council's Employer Engagement Committee. As part of their presentations, all three young people spoke about how their WorkReady experiences provided critical lessons and opportunities that were helping them to move toward successful careers.

The WorkReady Philadelphia 2005 program offered summer and year-round jobs and career preparation opportunities for more than 7,000 City youth. While the great majority of these slots were funded by public programs and foundation investments, almost 400 of them were internships that were fully funded by the employers themselves. Due to the increasing demands on federal funding, WorkReady is seeking significant increases in private sector support through the 2006 campaign.

"WorkReady Philadelphia employers realize that supporting our city's youth is the one of the most important investments we can make," said Pamela Crawley, Senior Vice President of Citizens Bank and Chair of the Philadelphia Workforce

Investment Board. “We continuously hear from participating companies how thrilled they are with the WorkReady student interns. And the young people gain real-world, hands-on experience that will help them to become successful, productive members of our workforce.”

WorkReady Philadelphia is one of the Workforce Investment Board’s strategic priorities, spearheaded by the PWIB’s Youth Council and administered by the Philadelphia Youth Network. This event marked the third year of successful partnership among representatives of the private sector, city government, youth serving organizations, local foundations and the School District of Philadelphia to enhance workforce preparation opportunities for Philadelphia’s youth.

### **About WorkReady Philadelphia**

WorkReady Philadelphia is a broad-based partnership dedicated to building the region’s future workforce. Through strategic investments of public, private and foundation funds, WorkReady provides academic enrichment, career preparation and access to the growth economy for thousands of teenagers each year. Opportunities for employers to participate in WorkReady Philadelphia’s family of programs include::

- presenting at career awareness and job-readiness workshops (e.g. at schools, youth centers, industry fairs)
- hosting one-day worksite visits (e.g. Shadowing Day)
- mentoring at the workplace (e.g. Business Mentoring Youth)
- providing internships (e.g. Summer Career Exploration Program)
- hiring youth for part-time or full-time jobs
- making a financial contribution to support program costs

**About the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board.** The mission of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board is to build the city’s competitive workforce advantage. Under the leadership of a private sector-led volunteer body appointed by Mayor John F. Street, the PWIB sets the strategic direction for Philadelphia’s public workforce system, which is supported by approximately \$250 million in federal, state, and local annual investments. Through its governance of that system, which delivers a wide array of services to employers and job seekers, the PWIB works to promote and enhance the economic development strategies of the region.

**About the Philadelphia Youth Network.** The Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), a six-year-old non-profit intermediary organization, is a catalyst for collective action to promote career and academic success for 14 to 21 year-old

youth residing in the City of Philadelphia. PYN staffs the Youth Council and oversees the administrative functions of the WorkReady initiative. PYN is a founding partner and member of the National Intermediary Network, a peer-led association of leading education and workforce development organizations working in local communities to ensure the success of youth.

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