The Case for Support

Capital Region workforce statistics indicate that more than 70,000 adults lack a high school diploma. Thousands more lack basic skills: the ability to read and understand; communicate verbally and in writing; perform basic math computations; listen and respond to verbal messages; and learn new skills. Over 20,000 Capital Region residents are not proficient in the English language. Employers locally and nationwide report that soft skills like attendance, attitude, proper appearance, and ability to work with others are the most critical factors in job retention, yet many potential workers are lacking these essential skills and attributes. For forty years, the Capital District Educational Opportunity Center, a Division of Hudson Valley Community College, has worked to alleviate these issues by correcting academic deficiencies, preparing individuals for further education, providing job skills training, and helping individuals obtain the workplace readiness skills needed for success on the job.

Since 1966, the EOC has offered tuition-free academic and workforce development opportunities to economically disadvantaged and educationally under-prepared New York State residents 16 years and older. Through its facilities in the cities of Troy and Albany, the EOC offers a wide variety of vocational programs to enhance employability in today's competitive job market, including building trades, welding, cosmetology, culinary arts, nursing assistant, and a number of general and medical business and office technology programs. The EOC also offers a comprehensive array of academic programs ranging from Adult Basic Education through College Preparation, including GED Preparation and English as a Second Language programs. Job skills and life skills are emphasized through the center's Employability Skills classes. Unique EOC services include individualized instruction, continuous enrollment, job placement and post employment support. As a result of these programs and services, thousands of Capital Region residents have acquired the skills necessary to gain employment, to succeed on the job, and to develop self-confidence in their own potential.

The true success of the EOC and the economic impact it renders is measured by the individuals whose lives have been transformed because of their association with the center. Included with these materials are compilations of just a few of the center's many success stories. Yet for each success story the center generates, there are hundreds of others waiting to happen. In addressing the basic skills and workplace competency needs, the center enhances the economic growth of the region and reduces the State's financial burden in supporting those less equipped to support themselves. While the EOC has long been a vital force in correcting these economic and societal challenges, costs far exceed the center's ability to assist the many individuals within the community who most desperately need this level of education and training.

To ensure the long term viability of EOC programs and services, the center, through its sponsor, Hudson Valley Community College, is initiating a process of building a significant endowment fund. The center has elected to initiate this process in conjunction with the EOC's 40th anniversary. A gala celebration will be held on Friday, September 29, 2006. An important part of the event will be the offering of sponsorship opportunities to those who understand and support the mission of the EOC. Please review the attached materials pertaining to these sponsorship opportunities, while also reflecting upon the impact the center has achieved as evidenced in the success stories that have been shared and the thousands of other success stories that could be told. Our collective efforts can, and must, prove sufficient in continuing to ensure that this underserved population will receive the education and training needed to prepare them to meet the employment needs of the Capital Region. In so doing, we can ensure the creation of success stories for years to come.