

NEWS RELEASE
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Contact: Sherry Bruck, Harquin Creative
914-738-9620, sbruck@harquin.com

CITY OF NEW ROCHELLE LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO GET YOUTH WORKFORCE ‘READI’

(WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM) June 28, 2018 – On Wednesday, June 27, 2018 at 12:00 noon, the Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board, My Brother’s Keeper Challenge, Westchester Children’s Association and The Guidance Center of Westchester hosted an official launch and press conference for the READI program. Additional stakeholder partners involved with bringing the READI curriculum to New Rochelle include Councilmen Jared Rice’s Office, New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle Youth Bureau, Westhab, Inc., Boys and Girls Clubs of New Rochelle, New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce, and The Westchester Bank.

READI represents the workplace attributes Westchester businesses look for in youth they hire. The acronym means: Respect, Enthusiasm, Articulate, Dependable and Initiative.

The interactive READI curriculum is taught over several weeks to students who are then better prepared to be hired. A critical component of the program is that youth are employed over the summer where they can put their new skills into action. The Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board works with various agencies to facilitate this process including the New Rochelle Youth Bureau, Westchester Children’s Association and The Guidance Center of Westchester.

This curriculum was originally created to solve a workforce challenge pinpointed by area employers.

“READI was developed based on feedback we received from employers,” stated Thom Kleiner, Director of the Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board. “We went to work with our partners to determine how best to foster and develop the desired attributes and today we are all very proud of the result. We have a curriculum and we have trained several instructors who have begun to deploy this resource within our counties. READI is a grassroots, collaborative effort of community stakeholders who want to invest in and prepare our youth for their futures.”

“The READI framework gives us a platform and the tools to prepare youth to be productive members of their communities and gain valuable skills for the workplace,” said Westchester County Executive George Latimer. “What makes READI unique is that it belongs to our community—it is available to whoever is committed to training our youth and we encourage you to reach out and find out more.”

“We’re excited to provide our youth with the tools and guidance on how to become the best version of themselves while gaining the professional attributes to make themselves valuable to area employers,” said Jared Rice, New Rochelle Councilman, District 3.

“Providing our youth the tools to make a positive entry into today’s workforce is an important, meaningful endeavor,” remarked John Tolomer, President of The Westchester Bank. “The Westchester Bank is privileged to support READI, where helping launch new careers may well impact the development of our business leaders of tomorrow.”

“As a child advocacy organization, we are excited about the READI program coming to New Rochelle. Volunteers from the New Rochelle community will play a vital role in getting this training to as many young people as possible.” Allison Lake, Executive Director, Westchester Children’s Association.

The kick-off event took place on the steps of New Rochelle City Hall located at 515 North Avenue.

The New Rochelle READI program follows a successful pilot program launched in Peekskill in the summer of 2017. To date ten organizations have participated in READI training that teaches them how to deliver the READI curriculum to youth. They are:

1. The Guidance Center of Westchester, Inc.
2. WestHab, Inc.
3. Westchester Independent Living Solutions
4. Career Support Solutions
5. RSFG Consulting Group
6. The City of Peekskill Youth Bureau
7. Rochester Works, Inc.
8. Family Ties of Westchester
9. The City of Peekskill Boat Works Program
10. The Hudson River Healthcare Center

These training sessions have yielded over 40 trained facilitators throughout Westchester and Putnam Counties. To date over 500 Youth have received the R.E.A.D.I. program.

The New Rochelle program seeks additional volunteer trainers to teach the curriculum. Youth agency representatives are encouraged to register as are retired teachers and others who work with youth in any capacity. Applications for consideration can be submitted online <http://www.goo.gl/TZy3dq> or by contacting Allison Jones at 914-813-6153 or via email at alw3@westchestergov.com.

PROGRAM HISTORY

In November 2011, The Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board (WPWDB) appointed an ad hoc committee to examine the attributes that businesses look for when they hire youth and to develop a strategy for helping teens prepare for the work experience. The committee was comprised of representatives from local colleges, universities, businesses, business membership organizations, youth services organizations, and religious organizations.

The committee recommendations became READI. Hospitality Resource Group was hired to develop the curriculum which was then made available to organizations in Westchester and Putnam counties to help youth prepare for the workforce. WCA’s Connecting Youth workgroup fully endorsed the initiative.



Pictured left to right; John Tolomer, *President, Westchester Bank*; Noam Bramson, *Mayor, City of New Rochelle*; Allison Lake, *Deputy Director, Westchester Children's Association*; George Latimer, *Westchester County Executive*; Jennifer Lanser, *Executive Director, New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce*; Thom Kleiner, *Executive Director, Westchester Putnam Workforce Development Board*; Jared Rice, *New Rochelle Councilman, 3rd District*; Nicholas Rosa, *WestHab, Inc.*; Allison Jones, *Westchester Putnam Workforce Development Board*; Daniel Bonnet, *Deputy Director, The Guidance Center*; Front left: Kelley Johnson, *Director of New Rochelle Youth Bureau*. On the steps: New Rochelle READ! Youth!

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THE WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WPWDB) is comprised of leaders and staff of state and county government agencies, non-profits, public education, and the private sector who work together to strengthen the partnerships between business, education, and service providers within the “Career Center Network” to meet the needs for a skilled workforce. The WPWDB pursues funding opportunities and develops model programs and leading-edge practices. The “Network” is made up of four Career Centers (White Plains, Mount Vernon, Peekskill, and Carmel) as well as partner agencies that provide state-of-the-art technology, training, resources, and services to youth, adults and employers. For more information, visit www.westchesterputnamonestop.com.

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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