



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
OFFICE TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEW YORK CITY'S BROOKLYN FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER  
HOSTS CEREMONY FOR FIRST CLASS OF 'NYC STEPS' PROGRAM GRADUATES**

*Initiative Provides Training to Help Survivors of Domestic Violence Prepare for and Access  
Entry-Level Jobs in the City's Growing Technology Industry*

*Internship, Mentorships, and Referral Services Available to Program Graduates*

Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez and Citywide Chief Information and Innovation Officer Rahul N. Merchant today congratulated domestic violence survivors who completed 12 weeks of workplace and computer-skills courses through the New York City Supported Training and Employment Preparation Services (NYC STEPS) program, an initiative designed to help individuals prepare for entry-level jobs in the technology field. The Family Justice Center (FJC) clients comprising this inaugural Brooklyn class – hailing from five countries and ranging in age from 26 to 59 – are now working toward self-sufficiency, employment, and financial independence. These graduates join those from the Queens and Bronx NYC STEPS programs implemented over the past two years. This morning's ceremony was held at the New York City Family Justice Center in Brooklyn.

“It is truly an honor to be celebrating the first graduating class of our NYC STEPS program at our Family Justice Center in Brooklyn,” said Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. “Today, the graduates are standing a little taller, smiling a little brighter, and have demonstrated great commitment and dedication towards a safe and independent future for themselves and their children.”

“In an ever-evolving technology landscape, the basic skills required to thrive in it can be empowering – so the time's always right to jump in,” said Citywide Chief Information and Innovation Officer Rahul N. Merchant. “I'm honored to join today's NYC STEPS graduates as they use their new skills to begin or advance their careers, and congratulate them on their efforts to better compete in the digital world.”

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An innovative public-private partnership, NYC STEPS was designed and coordinated by the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) and NetApp, one of the City's strategic technology providers. Program participants attend weekly sessions assisted by FJC personnel with supplemental instruction from private and public sector volunteer guest facilitators. In addition to visiting instructors, NetApp and program partners Skillsoft, Microsoft, and CDW-G provided in-kind donations of laptop computers, secure storage of laptops, and software for the initiative.

"The City of New York has given NetApp and its New York City-based employees a great place to live and work," said Regina Kunkle, NetApp Vice President for State and Local Government and Higher Education. "We are thrilled to be able to give back to the City and the inspiring graduates of the NYC STEPS program. This round of graduates have overcome great personal obstacles as well as the natural disaster – Sandy – in the hope of a better life."

NYC STEPS now also includes a new benefit for participants: a six-month internship for a graduate of the program, funded by NetApp and new program partner ManpowerGroup, a workforce training, consulting and solutions firm. Additional, expanded internship opportunities may follow. The first intern selected in this way, a graduate of the June 2012 class in Queens, assisted with implementation of NYC STEPS at the Brooklyn FJC.

"ManpowerGroup is a proud supporter of NYC STEPS. We are honored to partner on a program that empowers those who face barriers to employment with the foundational skills necessary to succeed in the workplace today," said Melanie Holmes, vice president, community investment, ManpowerGroup. "The program also serves as a model partnership between the public and private sectors with a truly meaningful outcome – work-ready individuals poised to contribute to an employer, and in turn, strengthen the community."

Graduates of the NYC STEPS program will also be invited to enroll in the Advanced Volunteer Opportunity Network (AVON) Mentoring Program – a new initiative at the NYC Family Justice Centers enhancing its Self-Sufficiency Program.

Experienced professionals from various industries will be paired with qualified clients to focus on developing technical, professional, and personal skills, including networking, interviewing skills, and professional etiquette. The AVON Mentoring Program will provide professional guidance, offer relevant advice and feedback on short and long-term employment goals, introduce mentees to professional networks, and teach mentees the necessary tools to cultivate other networking opportunities to enable professional growth.

Today's inaugural Brooklyn class marks successful implementation of NYC STEPS in each of the City's Family Justice Centers. The program was launched in the fall of 2011 in Queens, expanded to the Bronx in spring 2012, and to Brooklyn in the fall of 2012. To date, the program has graduated 34 participants from nearly a dozen countries, with 25 new graduates included in the latest round of three NYC STEPS classes.

The New York City Family Justice Center initiative is a public-private partnership in coordination with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization established to promote partnerships between the City and the private sector. The City's first Family Justice Center, in downtown Brooklyn, was opened in 2005, and the second,

in Kew Gardens, Queens, opened in 2008. The third Center in the Bronx opened in 2010. To date, all three Centers have assisted over 89,000 New Yorkers.

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