



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

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

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

Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV) Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez and newly-appointed Citywide Chief Information and Innovation Officer Rahul N. Merchant today congratulated domestic violence survivors who have completed 12 weeks of workplace and computer-skills courses under the Supported Training and Employment Preparation Services (NYC STEPS) program, created to help individuals prepare for entry-level jobs in the technology field.

The ceremony was held at the New York City Family Justice Center (FJC) in the Bronx. This first Bronx graduating class of the NYC STEPS program consists of 11 FJC clients from nine different countries who are working toward self-sufficiency, employment, and financial independence.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the graduation of the first NYC STEPS class of our Family Justice Center in the Bronx. We hope that with the knowledge and skills that our clients have acquired, they feel empowered and ready to continue their journey towards greater independence," said Commissioner Yolanda B. Jimenez of the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. "Job-readiness is a key tool for victims of domestic violence in achieving a life of self-sufficiency and one that is free of abuse."

"Among the most important – and rewarding – goals we can pursue as government officials is to help New Yorkers get the tools and training they need to begin or advance their careers," said Citywide Chief Information and Innovation Officer Rahul N. Merchant. "I congratulate all of today's NYC STEPS graduates, and wish them luck as they use the skills they've acquired to explore new opportunities 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. Today's graduates attended weekly sessions assisted by FJC personnel with supplemental instruction from private and public sector volunteer guest facilitators. In addition to visiting instructors, NetApp and its partners provided valuable in-kind donations of laptop computers, secure storage of laptops, and software for the program.

The NYC STEPS program is being piloted through the NYC Family Justice Center's on-site Self-Sufficiency Program, which was launched in the Bronx in February 2011. With support from the Avon Empowerment Grant from the Avon Foundation for Women, the Self-Sufficiency Program is now in its third year of helping survivors of domestic violence move from surviving to thriving. The Program is administered by a Self-Sufficiency Coordinator who supports, educates, and empowers while leveraging as many resources as possible.

NYC STEPS graduates have an array of training resources and career development opportunities available to them. The NYC Family Justice Center will also provide information on paid internships, entry-level job openings, and mentorships, and will refer the graduates to several partner organizations.

DoITT provides for the sustained, efficient and effective delivery of IT services, infrastructure and telecommunications to modernize, unlock, innovate and enhance service delivery to New York City's residents, businesses, employees and visitors.

The New York City Family Justice Center in the Bronx is a public-private partnership coordinated with the help of 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. This Center in the Bronx, built by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services using a number of green and recycled materials, is supported by a diverse group of companies, foundations, and citizens which includes: Verizon Wireless, Verizon Foundation, the Avon Foundation for Women, the Robin Hood Foundation, the Brooke Jackman Foundation, Xerox, WebHouse, Inc., Dell, Inc., Cisco Systems, Inc., and NetApp, Inc. Additional information on how to make a donation to the New York City Family Justice Initiative is available at www.nyc.gov/fund.

The City's first Center, in downtown Brooklyn, was opened in 2005, and the second Center in Kew Gardens, Queens, opened in 2008. To date, all three Centers have assisted over 89,000 victims.

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