



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Klein, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and the Bronx Chamber of Commerce Honor First Graduates of Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivors Program

JEFFREY D. KLEIN November 19, 2014

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**BRONX, NY** – State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr, and Bronx Chamber of Commerce executives celebrated the graduation of the first class of women enrolled in the Bronx H.I.R.E. Domestic Violence Survivors Job Readiness and Internship Program Thursday. The graduation marks the first step in securing domestic violence survivors good jobs that will lead them on a path to financial

independence.

“Victims of domestic violence too often return to their abusers because they lack the financial freedom to leave. The Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivors Program was created to empower women and put the financial control back in their hands. The women graduating today have shown a dedication and commitment to making life better for themselves and their families over the past six weeks as part of our training program and I am delighted to surprise them with a graduation gift of a paid internship. This next step will no doubt set them on a successful course for launching a productive career in the months ahead,” **said State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).**

“This program is providing a real service for victims of domestic violence, who often need financial and employment assistance as they escape their abusers and pursue an independent life. These graduates have learned invaluable skills and received critical training through the Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivors Program, and I am proud to have partnered with State Senator Jeff Klein and the Bronx Chamber of Commerce on this important initiative,” **said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.**

“No one should feel compelled to stay in an abusive relationship because they lack the financial resources to provide for themselves and their family. I commend Senator Klein and Borough President Diaz for spearheading an initiative that will give survivors of Domestic Violence the competitive job skills and financial autonomy to lead healthy independent lives. I look forward to hosting program participants as interns in my district office,” **said Councilmember Ritchie Torres (D-Bronx).**

The Bronx H.I.R.E. Domestic Violence Survivors Job Readiness and Internship Program, an extension of Bronx H.I.R.E, launched as a pilot program in October with six women selected from the non-profit Violence Intervention Program, Inc. (VIP), in partnership with the Bronx Borough President’s office. The women embarked on a six-week job training program that

helped them to hone skills including resume writing, interviewing, Microsoft Office, typing, writing and Quickbooks.

Starting in January, six week paid internships will be given to the women who completed their certification during the six week training program. Internships will include a \$1,500 stipend and be offered at businesses and government offices, including: the Office of State Senator Jeff Klein, the Office of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr, the Office of NYC Council Member Richie Torres, the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, the Westchester Square B.I.D., Bronx Community Board #11, Teddy Nissan and Crown Trophy. Following their internship experience, each of the women will enter the Bronx H.I.R.E. Open Doors Initiative where job training specialists will place them in jobs where their talents will shine.

“The collaboration between Senator Klein, the Chamber of Commerce, the Bronx Borough President and the Violence Intervention Program is exactly the life changing opportunity VIP believes is possible with our survivors. We are in the business of changing lives and the lives of these 6 graduates and their families will never be the same,” **said Cecilia Gaston, Executive Director, Violence Intervention Program, Inc.**

Participants in the program include:

- Yilivet Ruiz, a single mother of a 17-year-old daughter, who has experienced verbal, physical, emotional and threats. **Ruiz said:** “I am thankful for the opportunity given and hope that this will open doors for the future.”
- Margarita Urbaez, a single mother with children ages 24, 21 and 12 years, who has endured emotional, verbal and physiological abuse. **Urbaez said:** “I appreciate the opportunity given and I am looking forward to becoming more self sufficient. These six weeks has given me stronger self worth.”

- Maria Flores, a domestic violence survivor with two daughters ages three and two. **Flores said:** “I am excited. I loved class and can’t wait for the internship to begin. This is the beginning of a new me.”

"The H.I.R.E. Survivor Program provides these women with opportunities to gain independence and overcome economic obstacles. It is important to offer survivors resources needed to succeed and break the cycle of abuse," **said Hon. June Eisland, Eisland Strategies and Vice President of The Bronx Chamber of Commerce.**

1. “Sen. Jeff Klein’s grant allows us to assist domestic violence survivors in their return to the workforce and to help them achieve a life of self-sufficiency. Under Bronx H.I.R.E., we are providing these women with skills needed to become employable. Today we celebrate their completion of the intensive classes and look forward to placing them in internships, ” **said Michelle Dolgow Cristofaro, Bronx Chamber of Commerce Chief-of-Staff and H.I.R.E. Administrator.**

“We are happy to partner with the Bronx Chamber of Commerce and the HIRE program to provide a career opportunity to women who are looking for a fresh start for themselves and their families,” **Lisa Sorin, Executive Director Of Westchester Square B.I.D.**

“The Hutchinson Metro Center is proud to host today’s reception for the survivors. Our complex is very active in the fight to end domestic violence. We light our building purple during the month of October, partner with Verizon on the HopeLine project to give survivors phones, and participate in many other initiatives. Today is an opportunity to continue to break the silence that surrounds the issue,” **said Joseph Kelleher President and COO of The Hutchinson Metro Center and Chairman of The Bronx Chamber of Commerce.**

“Congratulations to the women on completing their classes. The chamber is happy to celebrate their success,” **said Lenny Caro, President & CEO of The Bronx Chamber of Commerce.**

Bronx H.I.R.E (Help Identify Real Employment) is a unique jobs program aimed at connecting Bronx workers with real jobs through a comprehensive, direct approach developed by Senator Klein's office and the Bronx Chamber of Commerce. The Bronx H.I.R.E. program, announced in July, is made possible through a \$200,000 grant secured by Senator Klein in this year's state budget.

For more information and to enroll in the Bronx H.I.R.E program visit:

<http://www.bronxchamber.org>