



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Jeff Klein, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., Bronx Chamber of Commerce: Graduates of Bronx h.I.r.e. Survivors Program Start New Internships in the Bronx

JEFFREY D. KLEIN January 11, 2015

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*New Year Means New Start & New Job for Six Local Domestic Violence Survivors*

**BRONX, NY** - Graduates of the Bronx H.I.R.E. Domestic Violence Survivors program will start new internships at small businesses and city and state offices across the borough, State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. and Bronx Chamber of Commerce executives announced today. The two-part initiative includes a six-week job training course followed by a six-week paid internship program geared toward increasing job readiness, preparing survivors for the workplace and putting women on a path to financial independence.

**Senator Jeff Klein said:** “All too often, victims of domestic violence lack the financial freedom to leave harmful, and sometimes, life threatening relationships and start over for themselves and their children. The Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivors program is the first of its kind in the community and plays a significant role in creating a bridge to employment for victims of abuse who have felt disconnected, or unable to find work. It’s opportunities and initiatives like this one that are empowering women, providing them with essential skills, and ultimately, connecting survivors with real jobs that will lead to future stability and success.”

Participants in the Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivors program will complete administrative internships at six Bronx-based small businesses and government organizations, including: Senator Jeff Klein's office, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.'s office, Councilman Ritchie Torres' office, the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, the Westchester Square B.I.D., and Teddy Nissan. Participants in the program will receive a \$1,500 stipend.

**Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., said:** "Today, we welcome our first Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivor Program intern who will join my executive office to hone the administrative skills she was trained in. My hope is that the real life, high intensity experience she will gain over the next six weeks will serve her well in her permanent job placement and future success. Financial independence is the surest way to keep survivors of domestic violence empowered and free from abusive, dependent relationships."

**Michelle Dolgow Cristofaro, Bronx Chamber of Commerce Chief-of-Staff and H.I.R.E.**

**Administrator, said:** "As a result of Senator Jeff Klein's grant, we are able to help domestic violence survivors return to the workforce and achieve financial independence. These women are fully ready to start their internships, using the new skills they have acquired after completing a series of professional development and job training courses."

**Councilman Ritchie Torres said:** "I am proud to host my second intern as part of Bronx H.I.R.E. Expanding access to economic opportunity has to be core component of any effort to prevent and combat domestic violence. This program provides meaningful work experience for victims of abuse and I applaud Senator Klein and Borough President Diaz for spearheading this innovative initiative."

**Maria Martinez, Bronx Non-Residential Program Coordinator at Violence Intervention Program, Inc. (VIP), said:** "Internships like the one being offered through the Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivors program is a true example of how a grassroots domestic violence organization like VIP can create change when it partners with local elected officials and economic development

engines. With the support garnered by VIP from Senator Jeff Klein, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., and the Bronx Chambers of Commerce, the Bronx H.I.R.E. Survivors program has been able to provide victims of abuse with an opportunity to learn and apply new skills, and begin the path to self sufficiency through internships and support services."

**Victims of domestic abuse called the initiative a life changing opportunity:**

- Demoris Ruiz said: "I am so excited. I researched Councilman Ritchie Torres and read about the great things he has done and I was so impressed that he has been involved in politics since he was 18."
- Aleena Decaris said: "I love the Bronx, I can't believe I will be working at the Bronx Borough President's Office! I am so grateful for this opportunity."
- Natisha Holnes said: "Thank you so much for this opportunity, looking forward starting and learning at Westchester Square BID."
- Yilivet Ruiz said: "I'm looking forward to working at Senator Klein's office; its such an honor."
- Maragrita Urbaez said: "Wow, Teddy Nissan, I still can't believe that I will be starting an internship on Monday. As a survivor of Domestic Violence, I feel empowered and ready to conquer the world."
- Maria Flores said: "I'm nervous, excited and looking forward to starting the internship at the Bronx Chamber of Commerce. Every day, I think about obtaining a job and with this opportunity I feel confident."

After completing their internships, all participating women will enter the Bronx H.I.R.E. Opening Doors program. There, job training specialists will place survivors in new jobs, matching their unique skills to permanent employment opportunities within the community.

Bronx H.I.R.E. (Help Identify Real Employment) is a dynamic 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. For more information and to enroll in the Bronx H.I.R.E. program visit: <http://www.bronxchamber.org>