



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## Senator Montgomery Celebrates the Opening of Brooklyn's newest SUNY ATTAIN Lab

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY June 2, 2016

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Senator Velmanette Montgomery joins Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, Senator Jesse Hamilton, Assemblywoman Latrice Walker, Settlement Housing Fund and the State University of New York for a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to celebrate the opening of SUNY's newest Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN) Lab at the St. John's Place Family Center located at 1604 St. Johns Place (between Buffalo and Ralph Aves) in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

The opening of the newest **ATTAIN** lab was the culmination of almost two years of coordinated advocacy and legislative leadership that began when Senator Montgomery, Assemblywoman-Elect Walker, Settlement Housing Fund President Alexa Sewell and her management team met with Lisa McKay, Associate Provost and Director for the University Center for Academic and Workforce Development (UCAWD); Christopher Ellis, Senior Staff Associate for EOC Operations; and Derek Westbrook, ATTAIN Project Manager to discuss a proposal to open a new technology lab in Brooklyn and toured potential sites in the Crown Heights community.

This state of the art computer lab offers **FREE courses** to anyone interested in earning valuable academic, occupational and technology credentials to advance their workforce and post-secondary access. The new lab features 23 stations in a newly renovated space at the Family Center. Settlement Housing Fund's DREAMS YouthBuild students worked on the renovation, as well as a mural for the space in partnership with other young adults from the Crown Heights Mediation Center (<http://crownheights.org/>) and Groundswell (<https://www.groundswell.nyc/>), one of New York City's premiere arts in education and social justice organizations.

The State University of New York University Center for Academic and Workforce Development (UCAWD), through funding support from the New York State Legislature, created the Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN) in 2001 project to promote digital parity in New York's economically challenged communities. Through this initiative, technology labs are placed in communities where residents can have access to the Internet, state-of-the-art hardware and interactive, multimedia software. The resident users are able to enhance their employability and academic skills in an ATTAIN lab, as well as gain invaluable insight into how technology profoundly affects the lives of the entire family.

The ATTAIN project seeks to narrow the existent digital divide by providing ongoing access to education and training through the use of technology. Once access occurs, computer literacy and training can begin, and opportunities for success in school and at the workplace increase. The natural outcomes are enhanced employability skills leading to greater earning potential and academic skills leading to post secondary enrollment.

During her remarks, Senator Montgomery expressed her appreciation to SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher, Associate Provost McKay, President Sewell and Paige Bellenbaum, Director of Community Programs at Settlement Housing Fund for their invaluable assistance in bringing this important resource to our community.

Settlement Housing Fund is a nonprofit organization devoted to building strong, diverse neighborhoods through affordable housing. They routinely collaborate with partners on projects that provide low-to-moderate income New Yorkers greater access to not only affordable housing but also education, employment and wellness programs. Settlement Housing Fund also sponsors DREAMS YouthBuild, a program which allows unemployed young adults without high school diplomas to resume their education, build skills and receive paid construction training and certification. For more information on Settlement Housing Fund, their programs and developments, visit:

<http://www.settlementhousingfund.org/index.html>.

All Brooklyn residents are encouraged to take full advantage of this vital resource to supplement current skills and learn new ones. For more information about SUNY ATTAIN Labs and to find other locations throughout the city, visit: [www.attain.suny.edu](http://www.attain.suny.edu).

