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Lt. Governor Guadagno Celebrates Ribbon Cutting of Florham Park P.R.I.D.E. Center

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Trenton, NJ - Emphasizing New Jersey's status as an Employment First state, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno today joined ECLC of New Jersey for the grand opening of the new Morris P.R.I.D.E. Center in Florham Park for adults with autism, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

"Helping individuals with disabilities find meaningful employment recognizes their full potential as members of our communities," said Lt. Governor Guadagno. "Our Administration has given steadfast support to these efforts throughout the state, and I am pleased to witness ECLC's leadership in providing employment training through the P.R.I.D.E. Center here in Morris County."

P.R.I.D.E., which stands for Promoting Responsibility, Independence, Decision-making and Employability, was founded in 2008 for graduates of ECLC's schools who were not ready for the workplace. Today, its centers serve about 140 adults, providing opportunities for paid work, pre-vocational training, volunteer opportunities and a full, dynamic day/evening program to improve clients' independence and daily living skills.

The Morris P.R.I.D.E. Center was expanded and renovated entirely through private donations. ECLC honored major donors at today's event, especially Mr. and Mrs. Leon and Toby Cooperman, who contributed a \$125,000 matching challenge grant to encourage others to give.

"ECLC is excited to officially open our Morris P.R.I.D.E. Center to serve adult clients as an extension of our schools for students with special needs, including autism, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. And, we are grateful to our donors, who made it all possible by contributing the entire cost of this \$450,000 project," said Bruce Litinger, Executive Director of ECLC of New Jersey. "P.R.I.D.E. is a dream come true to offer a program that is intellectually stimulating, community-based, pre-vocational, safe and, yes, enjoyable. We hold fast to the belief that people with developmental disabilities continue to grow and progress after their age 21 entitlement schooling is completed, and we have witnessed that amazing growth in our clients."

This is the second P.R.I.D.E. Center grand opening the Lt. Governor has attended. In April of 2013, she joined ECLC for the grand opening of its Paramus site.

ECLC of New Jersey was founded in 1970 and is an accredited non-profit that provides education, employment and day/evening programs to nearly 700 people with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome or other developmental disabilities. ECLC prepares students to live as independently as possible when they are adults. Its supported-employment agency, Community Personnel Services, offers transition services and job placements and has a 90% success rate of placing clients into fulfilling jobs within their communities.

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