



Press Release

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SECRETARY OF STATE CESAR PERALES AND U.S. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES JEANNIE CHAFFIN COMMEMORATE COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH WITH VISIT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY AND LONG ISLAND

"Governor Cuomo Proclaims May as Community Action Month"

New York Secretary of State Cesar A. Perales joined by U.S. Health and Human Services Director of Community Services Jeannie Chaffin paid a special visit to Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk (EOC) and Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT) to commemorate National Community Action Month.

Community Action Month celebrates the mission of Community Service organizations and highlights the important role they play in helping low-income families and individuals achieve economic independence. Community Action Agencies serve people in rural, suburban, and urban communities across the state through a variety of targeted programs, such as Head Start, job training and placement, financial education, housing and energy assistance.

"On behalf of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, I would like to thank Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow and Economic Opportunity of Suffolk for their diligent work on behalf of the most vulnerable residents of our State. The work of the Community Action Agencies is consistent with Governor Cuomo's goal to continue fostering economic development by providing the people of the State of New York with job training and career opportunities." Stated Secretary of State Perales.

EOC and OBT are both the recipients of the Department of State's Community Service Block Grant Award, a competitive grant program funded by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services Community Service Grants awarded to CAA's that provide underserved communities with a variety of services and initiatives designed to improve the economic conditions of their residents and communities.

"The Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, Inc. has partnered with the Town of Babylon in the Wyandanch Rising Project to bring the distressed community a sense of pride by developing the community into something the local residents can call their own" stated Executive Director of EOC Adrian Fassett.

"We are honored to be one of the recipients of the CSBG, which funds our Job Skills for English Language Learners (JSELL) program. This program is vital for strengthening English language acquisition and job skills for new Americans to transition into the workforce. Without this funding, these students would have limited access to achieving employer-recognized job training certifications and to a wide range of employment opportunities." Stated Randolph Peers, OBT's Executive Director.

EOC of Suffolk has used the Community Service Block Grant funds to expand on the Wyandanch Rising Project, a comprehensive community based revitalization of a distressed community in Long Island. At its heart is a development of new mix-used residential-over-retail buildings adjacent to the train station in a downtown, pedestrian friendly setting. These buildings will frame an intermodal plaza that will serve as a gathering and transfer place for bus, rail, bike and automobile commuters. In 2009 EOC of Suffolk in partnership with The Town of Babylon opened the Wyandanch Resource Center as a way to offer community residents access to employment, counseling and referrals to other human services providers.

Through use of the Community Service Block Grant funds, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow launched the Job-Skills for English Learners (JSELL) program to address the growing need of English learners who have progressed to high level of English proficiency, but needed employment training options to better prepare for work. JSELL aligns with the mission of OBT to help disadvantaged populations recognize their own self-worth, and advance towards self-sufficiency and financial security through employment and training, academic reinforcement, improved life skills, job placement and retention support.