

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Paul Brubaker
973-518-2298

DISTRICT, SCHOOL EDUCATORS OFFICIALLY OPEN T.I.E.S. (TRANSITIONING FOR INDEPENDENCE, EMPLOYMENT, AND SUCCESS) PROGRAM

Program helps adolescents who are on the autism spectrum or are cognitively impaired transition to independent living.

Photos Attached: see end of the release for captions.

PATERSON – Paterson Public Schools officials and educators at S.T.A.R.S Academy today officially opened the Transitioning for Independence, Employment, and Success – or T.I.E.S. – program. The program helps students with special needs, ages 14 to 21, transition to independent living.

“Today is a special celebration of our students with special needs and their ability to transition into independent lives,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “They are talented, capable, and they want what everyone wants: the chance to develop their abilities, realize a purpose in life, and live independently as adults contributing to the good in our society.”

The T.I.E.S. Program began in 2021 after Assistant Superintendent of Special Education Cheryl Coy observed programs in other districts and realized Paterson Public Schools needed to provide more for students with disabilities who are transitioning to adulthood.

The T.I.E.S. Program partners with 12 organizations to place students into worksites including the Central Office Building at Paterson Public Schools, Eva’s Village, the Paterson Museum, the Marshall’s store at the Center City Mall, the Price Rite supermarket at the Center City Mall, the Stop and Shop supermarket in Wayne, the copy center and the culinary department at Passaic County Community College. Some students who have graduated from the T.I.E.S. Program have been offered jobs by Marshall's, Popeye's, Stop and Shop and many other locations.

One T.I.E.S. Program alumnus is currently a student at William Paterson University.

To help students develop skills for independent living, the T.I.E.S. Program has full-scale kitchen, dining room, bedroom, and living space,

Many of the decorations and signs that were displayed at today’s opening ceremony were created by T.I.E.S. Program students in the program’s state-of-the-art in-house print shop with state-of-the-art equipment.

The T.I.E.S. Program also provides parents and families with much-needed community resources. Former Passaic County Surrogate Judge Bernice Toledo and current Passaic County Surrogate Judge Zoila Cassanova have given presentations to parents on how to obtain guardianship for students with unique needs.

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Every month, the state's Division of Development Disabilities and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services give presentations to parents and guardians about the available financial, respite, and support resources.

Circle of Care, an organization that provides care management services for youth and families in Passaic County experiencing emotional, behavioral, and developmental challenges has come to share mental health and daily living support resources with students' families.

Photo 1: STARS Academy Principal Dr. Natalie Heard-Hackett, holding scissors to the left, student Gerald Pena, Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Coy, and Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer cut the ribbon to officially open the T.I.E.S. Program surrounded by students and teachers.

Photo 2: Superintendent Shafer joins in the celebration of the T.I.E.S. Program and the accomplishments of students with special needs.

Photo 3: Assistant Superintendent of Special Education Cheryl Coy.

Photo 4: T.I.E.S. student Gerald Pena delivers his rendition of Marc Anthony's "Vivir Mi Vida."

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