CAMBA Applauds Budget Restoration of Learning To Work (LTW) Funding

Will Ensure Education Program for At-Risk Young Adults

BROOKLYN – Friday’s announcement by Mayor Adams and Speaker Adams of restorations to the City’s education budget is great news and particularly tremendous for young people who want to re-engage with their education and finish high school, CAMBA President and CEO Joanne Oplustil said.

“CAMBA applauds Mayor Adams, Speaker Adams, Council Education Committee Chair Rita Joseph and all our City’s leaders for having the backs of our young people and working to ensure they have a future,” Oplustil said.

CAMBA, a Brooklyn-based non-profit, has helped nearly 5,200 students rediscover their paths to a successful life over the past decade – by providing “over-age, under-credited” students with support through Learning To Work (LTW) programs nestled within the city’s Transfer High Schools and Young Adult Borough Centers.

Friday’s budget announcement restores $31 million needed to continue to run the Learning To Work programs, which have proven to be incredibly successful in helping re-engage students who have fallen behind academically and failed to thrive in a traditional high school setting.

LTW programs provide students with a supportive environment, place them in paid internships that prepare them for future careers, and help them to graduate from high school.

Angelina Jackson is one of the New Yorkers who the LTW program helps. She is a CAMBA LTW participant at Forsyth Satellite Academy on the Lower East Side.

“I wouldn’t want to be in school if the CAMBA office wasn’t here,” Ms. Jackson said. “Everything I need is here in the office. It helps me be motivated to come to school and graduate.”

The importance of graduating high school cannot be overstated. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income of individuals without a high school diploma is nearly $10,000 less than an individual with a high school diploma and no college education.

LTW programs provide academic and student support, career and educational development, post-secondary advising and preparation with students to reach their individual post-secondary goals. The programs include sessions on how to complete the complicated FAFSA form for financial aid for those heading to college. They also
help with work preparation, skills development, and paid internships with such companies as Cinnabon, Five Below, Big Apple Urgent Care and many more.

LTW programs have also led to innovative community partnerships including a strong partnership with Trader Joe’s who provides bi-monthly deliveries of fresh produce and baked goods, as well as microwaveable meals. These much-needed food supplies are available not just to the LTW students at Forsyth but to all 577 students who attend all the schools in the building. In addition to Learning To Work, Forsyth is also a Community School and thanks to the community school initiative they have brought in Warby Parker and the Helen Keller Institute who provide students with much-needed free eye exams and glasses.

LTW encourages students – more than 90% of whom are Black, Latino or Asian – to become civically engaged and to be more aware of opportunities available to them. LTW programs have held toy drives, mental health and self-care workshops, college fairs, holiday events, award ceremonies, and more.

Just last year, CAMBA’s LTW celebrated 565 students graduating from high school. Based on feedback from 468 of these graduates, 75% of them went on to enter post-secondary education or the workforce. As part of the program, 700 students participated in paid internships, earning more than $1.5 million, transforming those students’ educational and career pathways.

About CAMBA, Inc./CAMBA Housing Ventures, Inc.
Founded in 1977, CAMBA, Inc. is one of Brooklyn's largest community-based social service organizations. Our mission is to provide services that connect people with opportunities that enhance their quality of life and develop their communities. CAMBA annually provides services to more than 65,000 individuals and families in six core areas: Economic Development; Education and Youth Development; Family Support; Health, Housing and Legal Services. CAMBA clients are those who are: moving from welfare to work; individuals and families experiencing, at risk of or transitioning out of homelessness; individuals living with or at risk of HIV/AIDS; immigrants and refugees; children and young adults; entrepreneurs; and others struggling to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency.

In 2005, CAMBA created CAMBA Ventures, Inc. (CHV), an affiliated development corporation. The mission of CAMBA Housing Ventures is to develop sustainable and energy-efficient buildings that provide safe and affordable housing for low-income and formerly homeless individuals and families. When provided with resources that are meaningful and culturally relevant, CAMBA's clients make tremendous contributions toward strengthening their own lives and communities.

Learn more about CAMBA’s life-changing services at www.camba.org.

For CAMBA Housing Ventures, please see www.cambahousingventures.org.

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