

Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing Diversified Community Services, on the 50th Anniversary of its incorporation, for the organization's dedication to improving the South Philadelphia Community through education and economic empowerment.

WHEREAS, Diversified Community Services (DCS) is a community-based non-profit organization dedicated to providing services to South Philadelphia's most vulnerable children and families. Growing out of the University of Pennsylvania's settlement house camps founded in the 1890s, Diversified was formally incorporated in 1968 and has expanded to become the largest social service agency in Point Breeze; and

WHEREAS, The dedicated leadership and staff at Diversified Community Services have implemented a 'Two Generational Approach' for realizing its goal of long-term economic and social well-being in Point Breeze and across South Philadelphia. The Two Generational Approach seeks to link high-quality early childhood education for neighborhood youth together with employment, housing counseling, and financial literacy programs for their parents and other family, with the aim of breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty; and

WHEREAS, Early childhood education has long been the centerpiece of DCS's approach to community empowerment. The organization's Western Learning Center and Dixon Learning Academy are nationally recognized and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and both schools have obtained a Keystone STAR 4 rating, the highest possible rating for early childhood education centers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. More than 300 children each year receive a high-quality education through the schools operated by Diversified Community Services; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Diversified introduced the Home Instruction of Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) as a means of increasing educational attainment. The HIPPY Program seeks to empower parents to be their child's first teacher by providing parents with the support and resources needed to play an important role in their child's education. Educational research conducted across the U.S. and in eight different countries has consistently found the HIPPY model to be effective in improving school readiness, parental involvement in education, school attendance, standardized test scores, and academic performance; and

WHEREAS, Diversified Community Services has expanded its programming aimed at older youth as well, with the goal of creating a "continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions." The Organization's Out of School Time (OST) Program provides high-quality after-school and summer activities for nearly 200 young people each year. Furthermore, DCS's Intensive Prevention Services (IPS) provides intervention programs for at-risk youth, with the goal of redirecting these youths toward more positive goals through targeted counseling as well as behavioral and educational support; and

WHEREAS, In partnership with Harcum College, Diversified Community Services has initiated a program that enables students to earn their Associate's Degrees in Human Services, following a curriculum that combines local classroom learning with hands-on practical experience in DCS's social services programs; and

WHEREAS, Through the Dixon House, Diversified strives to help adults and families achieve self-sufficiency

through home ownership and financial literacy. A key plank of the Organization's Two Generational Approach, the Dixon House offers support for first-time home buyers such as financial planning, credit repair, and education on the home-buying process. The Dixon House also offers crucial housing stabilization services for individuals who face foreclosures, utility shut-offs, or other financial hardships that can threaten homeownership. Diversified Community Services has also taken an active role in the preservation of affordable housing units in South Philadelphia through its stewardship of the Tasker Village Apartments. Tasker Village Apartments consists of 28 rental units that will remain affordable for low-income Philadelphians as a result of Diversified Community Services' leadership; and

WHEREAS, Diversified Community Services operates programs aimed at building job-readiness and connecting individuals with employment opportunities. Through its Community Based Workforce Solutions Program, Diversified trains 60-1000 individuals on a yearly basis. Recognizing that technological literacy is crucial for competing in the modern job market, Diversified became a KEYSPOt location. In partnership with the Mayor's Office on Literacy and Drexel University, the KEYSPOt Program aims to bridge the digital divide in low income communities. In addition to GED and other digital education opportunities, DCS's KEYSPOt Program also offers job search assistance to those seeking employment; and

WHEREAS, The programming at Diversified Community Services reaches thousands of individuals and families in Point Breeze, and the Organization's holistic approach to community empowerment has made it a leader among social service agencies in Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors and recognizes Diversified Community Services, on the 50th Anniversary of its incorporation, for the Organization's dedication to improving the South Philadelphia Community through education and economic empowerment.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Diversified Community Services as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.