



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Independent Care to Unveil Banner Created by MPS Students and Staff**

(Milwaukee, March 4, 2013) A banner celebrating both diversity in the workforce and the collaboration between *iCare* and the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) School-to-Work Transition Program, will be unveiled on March 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. in the *iCare* suite at 1555 N. RiverCenter Dr. The banner, which was almost two years in the making, was created by students and staff from the Special Education Program at Milwaukee School of Languages. Two different sized versions of the banner are displayed in the *iCare* suite.

The unveiling will be the culmination of a day of activities for twenty students with varying abilities, participating in a School-to-Work Transition Program mock interview, sponsored by *iCare*. The mock interviews will take place in the first floor conference center at Schlitz Park from 10:30 to 12:00. Twenty staff from 18 area businesses will be participating in the mock interviews, which are designed to help students hone their interviewing skills.

Independent Care has been involved with the School-to-Work Transition Program since 2008, providing internship opportunities for five students since its inception. All five students were from Milwaukee School of Languages, and have performed clerical and custodial duties within *iCare*'s office suites at Schlitz Park. Independent Care is a managed care organization that provides health care coverage for disabled and low-income beneficiaries. MPS Transition Coordinator Sue Gumina-Cannon stated, "Our students have been involved with *iCare* for quite a few years now in the School-to-Work internship positions. We have always been grateful to *iCare* for the opportunities they have provided to our students."

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Gumina-Cannon indicated that the idea for the banner originated from a suggestion by *iCare* Human Resources Director Daniel Wink, who heads the diversity committee at *iCare*. The committee was interested in creating a banner for the office area that reflected *iCare*'s philosophy of diversity and acceptance in the work place. Sue thought that her students with special needs could create something and enlisted the support of MPS paraprofessional Gary Hodel, who is also an artist. Both met with *iCare*'s diversity committee numerous times to come up with ideas for the banner and to present rough sketches of their vision.

Gumina-Cannon outlined how the banner was created indicating that her students used their own self portraits in silhouette to portray themselves in the banner. After cutting out the silhouettes, Hodel placed them into a creative composition and the students performed the work of filling in their silhouettes with colored paper, markers and paints. "We had a student who was a talented graffiti artist and he did the lettering," stated Gumina-Cannon. There were approximately 15-20 who worked on the project in one form or another. Many of those students have graduated, but a video of the students working on the banner will be featured in the *iCare* board room.

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