

**STRIVE**<sup>®</sup>  
PREPARED  
TO WORK  
DETERMINED  
TO SUCCEED

**30** YEARS



# ANNUAL REPORT 2014

[WWW.STRIVEINTERNATIONAL.ORG](http://WWW.STRIVEINTERNATIONAL.ORG)

# WELCOME LETTER

Dear Friends,

As STRIVE enters our 30th year of service, we've been actively planting the seeds for our continued growth and impact over the next 30 years and beyond. These seeds have focused on three main priorities:


First, with over 2,200 STRIVE graduates annually in more than 20 STRIVE affiliates across the U.S. and globally, STRIVE has been **pursuing a new wave of strategic growth** to reach even more men and women looking to enter promising careers and to break the cycle of poverty for their families. As one example of this growth, you'll read in the pages that follow about the 2014 launch of STRIVE New Orleans, a wonderful new partnership with New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu and his pioneering network for economic opportunity.

Second, we are **investing vigorously in R&D** to build the next generation of STRIVE employment programs to meet the evolving needs of the 21st century economy. These new programs are enabling us to dramatically deepen the impact of our proven employment services for priority populations, such as young adults, parents, men and women leaving incarceration in search of a second chance, and STRIVE alumni looking to advance in their careers. In doing so, we are equipping our graduates with both the attitudes and the skills they need to succeed in work and life.

And third, we've **launched several new initiatives to develop STRIVE's greatest asset - our people**. These are the talented and passionate trainers, program leaders, and career coaches across the STRIVE Network who go to bat every day for our participants and our employer-partners. Our new strategies include forums for professional learning and knowledge-sharing, such as our newly-launched STRIVE Institute and our new online community, STRIVEconnect.

With 30 years of transformative results under our belt, **STRIVE is honoring our heritage by embarking on a new era of growth and vitality**. We are grateful to all of our partners and supporters over the past 30 years - in philanthropy and across the public, private and nonprofit sectors - and we look forward to continued growth and impact together in 2015 and beyond.

Sincerely,



Phil Weinberg  
President & CEO  
STRIVE



H. Thompson Rodman, Jr.  
Board Chair and Co-Founder





## OUR MISSION

STRIVE's mission is to help people acquire the life-changing skills and attitudes needed to overcome challenging circumstances, find sustained employment, and become valuable contributors to their families, their employers, and their communities.

## OUR VISION

STRIVE envisions a world where everyone has the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency, dignity, and a promising future for themselves and their families.

# STRIVE'S MODEL

STRIVE believes deeply in the power of employment to help individuals and their families break the cycle of poverty.

Our proven employment model helps men and women permanently lift themselves and their families out of poverty through intensive attitudinal and skills training programs that lead to sustained, living wage employment. In our 30 years, STRIVE has brought economic self-sufficiency, dignity and a brighter future to over 60,000 individuals and their families.

Through our services, STRIVE addresses the specific barriers faced by our clients, which might include a lack of skills, education and work history, a criminal record, systemic disconnection from work and school, and long-term dependence on public assistance. STRIVE's commitment to each graduate is lifelong.

## STRIVE'S FIVE PILLARS, OUTLINED BELOW, EVOLVED OUT OF DECADES OF RESEARCH:

**CORE ATTITUDINAL AND JOB READINESS TRAINING:** STRIVE's signature program is our CORE workshop, an intensive four-week "soft skills" training in workplace readiness, responsibility and professionalism.

**OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING:** Graduates of CORE training progress to vocational training in one of several career pathways aligned with local labor market demand and employer needs. Training results in the acquisition of one or more industry-recognized credentials.

**CASE MANAGEMENT:** Beginning in CORE training, all STRIVE participants receive intensive case management to address obstacles that stand in the way of each client's development and success.

**JOB PLACEMENT:** STRIVE's Career Services team forges relationships with employers and assists our graduates in securing jobs that are a good match with their skills and interests.

**JOB RETENTION, ADVANCEMENT AND ONGOING FOLLOW-UP:** STRIVE graduates receive active follow-up and retention services for two years after graduation. Many STRIVE alumni return for second and third placements as they pursue higher wages.

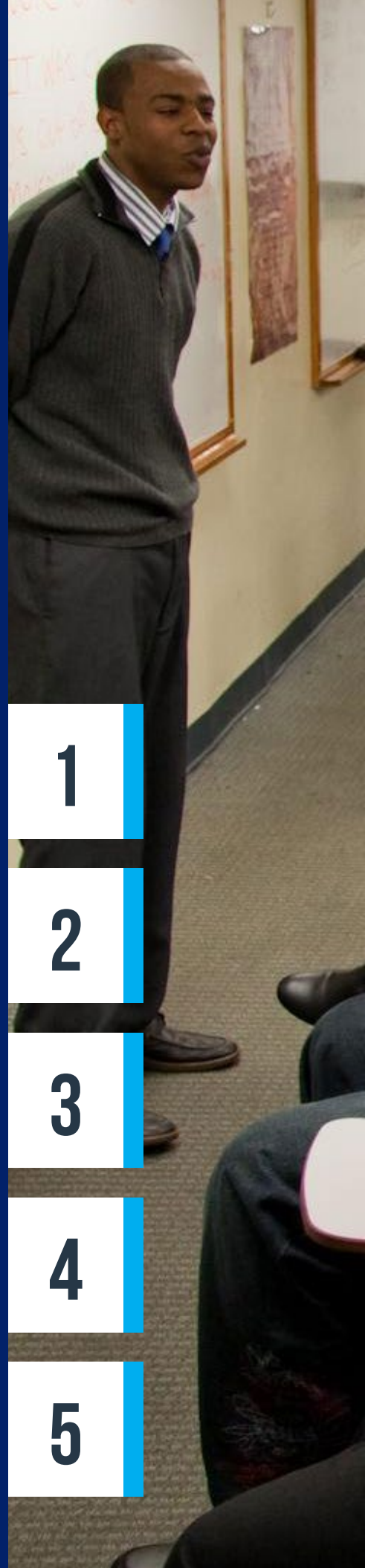
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# OUR VALUES

## AUTHENTICITY:

We are honest in our communication with our clients and tell them what they need to hear, even if it's uncomfortable.

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## DEPTH OF IMPACT:

We focus on empowerment and transformation for our clients – not just their job readiness.

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## SERVING THE MOST UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES:

We help individuals with significant barriers to employment – but who want to work.

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## LONG-TERM COMMITMENT:

We help people not only find jobs, but also be successful and achieve a lifetime of employability.

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## ACCOUNTABILITY:

We insist that our clients take ownership for their actions, just as we exercise high standards of accountability with our clients, employers and investors.

# STRIVE AFFILIATES

The power and strength of STRIVE resides in the remarkable organizations who are committed to administering STRIVE programs in their communities – in cities across the United States and internationally. These organizations are bound not only by a common mission, but also by a common commitment to deliver services at the highest levels of quality and with the highest standards of integrity.

STRIVE’s model has been replicated in over 20 cities, creating an unparalleled network of community-based organizations. The STRIVE model is also administered overseas in the United Kingdom and Israel.

<b>STRIVE Atlanta</b>	New Hope Enterprises	<b>Georgia</b>	<a href="http://newhopeenterprises.org">newhopeenterprises.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Baltimore</b>	Center for Urban Families	<b>Maryland</b>	<a href="http://cfuf.org">cfuf.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Boston</b>	Justice Resource Institute	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<a href="http://bostonstrive.org">bostonstrive.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Bridgeport</b>	Career Resources, Inc.	<b>Connecticut</b>	<a href="http://careerresources.org">careerresources.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Chicago</b>	A Safe Haven	<b>Illinois</b>	<a href="http://asafehaven.org">asafehaven.org</a>
<b>STRIVE DC</b>	STRIVE DC	<b>Washington DC</b>	<a href="http://strivedc.org">strivedc.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Flint</b>	Odyssey House	<b>Michigan</b>	<a href="http://flintstrive.com">flintstrive.com</a>
<b>STRIVE Greenville</b>	L.I.F.E. of North Carolina, Inc.	<b>North Carolina</b>	<a href="http://strivenc.org">strivenc.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Hartford</b>	Career Resources, Inc.	<b>Connecticut</b>	<a href="http://careerresources.org">careerresources.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Maine</b>	STRIVE Northern New England	<b>Maine</b>	<a href="http://strivenne.org">strivenne.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Mt. Vernon</b>	Westchester County Department of Social Services	<b>New York</b>	<a href="http://westchestergov.com">westchestergov.com</a>
<b>STRIVE New Haven</b>	Career Resources, Inc.	<b>Connecticut</b>	<a href="http://careerresources.org">careerresources.org</a>
<b>STRIVE New Orleans</b>	Network for Economic Opportunity	<b>Louisiana</b>	<a href="http://thenetworkneworleans.org">thenetworkneworleans.org</a>
<b>STRIVE New York</b>	East Harlem Employment Service Inc.	<b>New York</b>	<a href="http://striveinternational.org">striveinternational.org</a>
<b>STRIVE Philadelphia</b>	Public Health Management Corporation	<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<a href="http://metropolitancareercenter.org">metropolitancareercenter.org</a>
<b>STRIVE San Diego</b>	Second Chance	<b>California</b>	<a href="http://secondchanceprogram.org">secondchanceprogram.org</a>
<b>STRIVE White Plains</b>	Westchester County Department of Social Services	<b>New York</b>	<a href="http://westchestergov.com">westchestergov.com</a>
<b>STRIVE Yonkers</b>	Westchester County Department of Social Services	<b>New York</b>	<a href="http://westchestergov.com">westchestergov.com</a>

## WELCOME TO STRIVE NEW ORLEANS



STRIVE New Orleans, the newest STRIVE Affiliate, launched in 2014. It was developed as part of the city’s Network for Economic Opportunity, created by Mayor Mitch Landrieu to help improve access to job training for the most vulnerable jobseekers across the city. The program was created in response to the fact that more than half of working-age African-American men in New Orleans are unemployed.

Mayor Landrieu, speaking at the first graduation of STRIVE New Orleans, said, “Lots of people talk about what needs to happen. But there are not a lot of people who want to talk about *how* to make it happen, the steps that everybody has to take, who’s going to show up and who’s going to do the hard work to make it happen. That’s what we are showing today.”

**STRIVE is making it happen in New Orleans.**

# STRIVE'S NATIONAL IMPACT 2014



**MORE THAN 2,200**

participants nationwide graduated from CORE job readiness training in 2014



**67% OF GRADUATES**

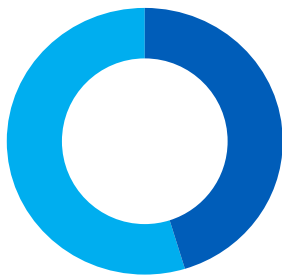
were placed in employment



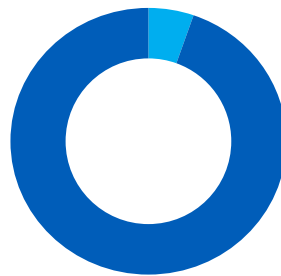
**MORE THAN 2,300**

participants were placed in jobs nationwide

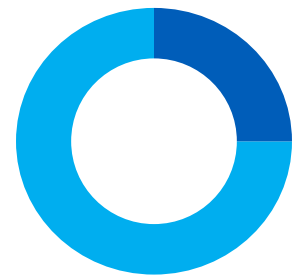
**OUR GRADUATES EARN AN AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE OF \$10-\$13, OR AT LEAST 140% OF THE AVERAGE STATE MINIMUM WAGE**



Nationally, 48% of STRIVE participants are women, 52% are men



91% are African-American or Hispanic



25% of STRIVE participants are aged 18-24 years old

**Nationwide, STRIVE participants have the opportunity to learn vocational skills training, including:**

- CPR/First Aid
- Security Guard
- Computer Literacy
- OSHA Safety
- Medical Office Assistant
- Microsoft Office
- Certified Patient Account Technician
- Health Unit Coordinator
- Customer Service
- Culinary Arts
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Green Maintenance/Construction
- Health & Office Operations
- Medical Information Technology
- Certified/Geriatric Nursing Assistant (CNA/GNA)
- Environmental Services
- Forklift Operations
- Maritime Transportation & Logistics
- Patient Navigator

**In addition to employment, STRIVE Affiliates nationwide offer supportive services including programs focused on:**

- Housing
- Youth Empowerment
- Aging Out of Foster Care
- Healthcare
- Women's Empowerment
- Veterans' Services
- Parenting
- High School Equivalency
- Clothing Donations
- Re-Entry Services



STRIVE's strong relationships with employer partners nationwide are key to our success. By engaging in ongoing dialogue with employers in growing fields such as healthcare and construction, STRIVE learns about the skills gaps facing specific industries and tailors our programs accordingly. This results in more and better opportunities for STRIVE graduates, and allows employers to meet their needs for specific skill sets.

In Atlanta, STRIVE Affiliate New Hope Enterprises has created a partnership with Delta Airlines that allows qualified New Hope graduates to apply for employment with Delta. Headquartered in Atlanta, Delta has a major

impact on the Atlanta economy and is a role model for many other employers.

In the words of one STRIVE Atlanta graduate, "STRIVE helped me to look deep within myself and get to the root of my issues that I needed to overcome to be successful. **I learned how to carry myself in a positive, confident way. I learned how to set goals and work hard to achieve them.** I gained great interview skills and learned about being punctual and consistent. All these helped me to gain employment with Delta Airlines and I am very happy working for such an amazing company."

*"STRIVE helped me to look deep  
root of my issues that I needed*



# EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

In New York City, STRIVE has collaborated with Mount Sinai Health System – the city’s largest employer – to create a model program in which selected STRIVE graduates are trained in specific skills required by Mount Sinai and other health industry employers. As a result, STRIVE now offers two intensive healthcare training programs, one in Patient Navigation and one in the billing and scheduling software used by Mount Sinai and many other employers.

Valerie Orellana, Mount Sinai’s Vice President of Human Resources, said, “STRIVE listened closely to our needs and worked with us to create a program that provides the specific skill set we were looking for. Equally important, **STRIVE graduates come in with both the necessary technical skills and a positive and professional attitude** that helps them achieve success at Mount Sinai.”

*“STRIVE listened closely to our needs and worked with us to create a program that provides the specific skill set we were looking for.”*

*~Valerie Orellana, VP of HR,  
Mount Sinai Health System*



*within myself and get to the to overcome to be successful.”*



# CREATING OPPORTUNITY

In addition to our commitment to the many men and women served by STRIVE, we offer targeted programs for youth, ex-offenders, parents and women, which ensure that we are reaching those most in need of our employment services. The following stories illustrate how STRIVE helps people overcome the specific obstacles they face.



**RE-ENTRY** Richard had a long history of depression that led to alcoholism and the abuse of drugs. Eventually this took its toll and he was arrested about 14 years ago, which started him on a downward spiral. In July 2014, he connected with STRIVE Bridgeport (CT) and began attending classes.

“I believe I made a wise decision in doing so,” he said. “I found answers and structure, a path to having a more disciplined mind set, a way of being a better candidate for a job position that I could choose to pursue. **They taught me as a worker how to prepare better not only for the workforce, but also for life in general.**”

The very day of graduation Richard received a call back from a prospective employer, and interviewed that same day. He was hired on the spot for a position as a chauffeur. After a few months in the job, he found another job with steady work and hours and transitioned into a permanent position as a driver with Park City Livery in Bridgeport.

“**STRIVE helped me to overcome some of my fears about my past;** especially one of the greatest fears, of rejection, of being unable to be employed and not being able to be productive in the workforce and community,” he said. “I give thanks to STRIVE Bridgeport.”

**FAMILIES** Kelvin and Angela are a young couple (both 20 years old) with two children ages three and one. They were both unemployed and sought support from the Baltimore Department of Social Services. They were receiving \$1,079 per month in state benefits when they were referred to STRIVE’s Baltimore Affiliate, the Center for Urban Families (CFUF).

Initially, they enrolled in CFUF’s Couples Advancing Together program to seek assistance with communication issues and guidance on parenting skills to best raise their children. Motivated to get on a career path and back into the workforce, they both completed the STRIVE CORE job readiness program.

Within 45 days of graduation, Kelvin secured a job at Sinai Hospital as an Environmental Services Technician. Angela qualified for the Johns Hopkins Hospital internship program, a long-time partner of CFUF, where she completed a five-month, subsidized internship. She is employed as a Support Associate. In less than four months, this couple’s combined earnings amount to \$3,773 per month (\$45,000/year), **a significant increase over the public benefits they were receiving.** Their family is now on a stable pathway towards economic self-sufficiency.

*“They taught me as a worker how to prepare better not only for the workforce, but also for life in general.”*



**YOUTH** Samantha survived a childhood that included child abuse and stints in 10 different foster homes. Seeking family, she began running with a gang.

"Soon I was using drugs and committing crimes," she said. "Two convictions for armed robbery resulted in a year in juvenile detention. I got out when I was 13. I wound up pregnant when I was 14 and gave birth to a beautiful baby boy."

After having her son she tried hard to change her life, but went back to selling drugs to support her son. When she was 17 she was in a bad car accident and broke her leg. "That's when I knew I had to slow down and find help," she said. "Second Chance [STRIVE's San Diego Affiliate] gave me a job and a chance for a future away from the streets. I signed up for the STRIVE for the Future program and after two weeks of job readiness training they put me to work."

Second Chance got Samantha a paid internship with the San Diego Seed Company. After completing it, she learned that the San Diego Downtown Partnership was hiring full-time landscapers/maintenance ambassadors. She interviewed and got the job.

"Working full time has allowed me to get an apartment, buy a car and take better care of my son," she said. "I'm completing my high school diploma at Second Chance and hope to go to college soon."

"I did not want my son to have the same trouble I had in my childhood," she said. "I knew I needed help to make that a reality. **Because of STRIVE for the Future, I have a skill and a craft. And I have hope for a bright future** and I share my hope every day with my beautiful son."

*"Because of STRIVE for the Future, I have a skill and a craft. And I have hope for a bright future."*

**WOMEN** In 2014, Lashawn joined STRIVE New York's Women's Empowerment Initiative. She was unemployed, living in a homeless shelter with her three children, and struggling to keep her family together with no support system. As she tried to find a way to improve her family's life, depression was a daily struggle. She had few skills and little access to job information.

Then Lashawn enrolled in STRIVE's Women's Empowerment program, where she received twelve weeks of training in the Health and Office Operations program culminating in industry recognized credentials such as Word and Excel. She also participated in STRIVE's facilitated support group covering topics such as domestic violence, parenting, workplace expectations, financial literacy, and educational advancement.

After enrolling, Lashawn began to see results quickly. Upon graduation, she was accepted as an intern at Bronx Lebanon Hospital. She worked so diligently that the hospital hired her before her internship was complete.

Since then, she has transitioned to a higher paying position working as an Executive Secretary for a New York City agency. She has also moved her family out of a shelter and into permanent housing, and is further investing in her future by taking night courses at Kingsborough Community College to obtain her Associates Degree in Biology-Occupational Therapy.

In Lashawn's words, **"STRIVE taught me improved communication skills and increased my confidence.** I began to learn the importance of a team which allowed me to engage more with my classmates and others in my community. STRIVE also taught me the importance of setting goals and maintaining them until I achieve them."

# VISION 2020:

As STRIVE honors our history and celebrates 30 years of transforming lives through employment, we are fully focused on the future. To expand our reach, STRIVE has embarked on STRIVE Vision 2020, an ambitious plan to significantly increase our impact in current and new cities, with the goal of serving 5,000 individuals annually by 2020 – a 2.5x increase – through the opening of STRIVE Affiliates in new cities and expansion within existing cities.

STRIVE's aspiration is to be the nation's premier employment and training model for individuals from low-income communities striving to escape the cycle of poverty. We will achieve this through a vibrant network of STRIVE Affiliate

partners that fulfill the STRIVE mission to the highest standards of quality, integrity and accountability.

Under STRIVE Vision 2020, STRIVE is providing heightened program leadership and innovation, quality assurance, resource development, and support to each of our Affiliate partners. We are investing significantly in our ability to support Affiliates in areas such as programs, performance management, evaluation and capacity-building. We have redoubled our commitment to research, innovation, and testing new models for training individuals and helping them access good careers.



## GOALS: QUALITY

STRIVE is committed to offering programs that are implemented with fidelity to our proven model. We will provide technical assistance and performance support to all Affiliates, through forums such as *STRIVE Institute*, our online *STRIVEconnect* community, and ongoing opportunities for staff development.

## IMPACT

We will increase the number of individuals trained and placed annually and replicate the STRIVE model by opening new Affiliates in areas of high poverty around the U.S. We will deepen services for targeted groups such as women, ex-offenders and youth to further strengthen outcomes.

## INNOVATION

We will develop new program models and curricula tailored to specific populations and needs – including those of our employer partners – based on the best available research and evidence. These innovations and best practices will be shared and amplified across the STRIVE Network.

## FINANCIAL VITALITY

We aim to attract national and local funding opportunities through committed partners who share our vision and mission of transforming lives through employment, and who want to collaborate with us to expand our impact.

# STRIVE SUPPORTERS

STRIVE gratefully acknowledges the support of the institutions below, which provided major support to STRIVE programs in 2014 at either the national or local levels.

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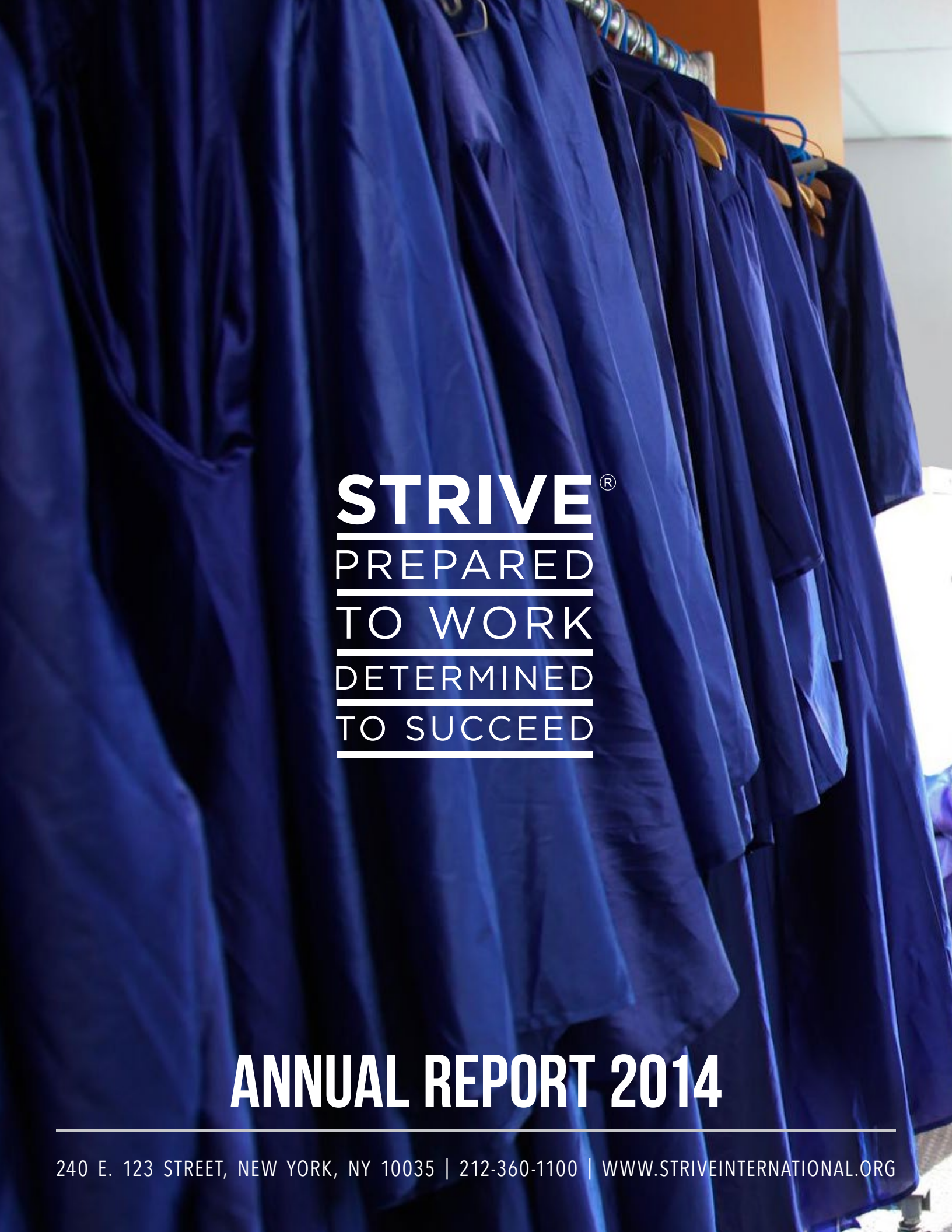
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