



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **The Step UP Network Brings STRIVE International for the First Time to South Carolina: STRIVE Brings a 30 Year History of Transforming Lives Through Employment**

The Step UP Network, a local non-profit with a mission of improving the lives of tri-county individuals through education, training and social support, is the first STRIVE Affiliate in the State of South Carolina. The Step UP Network is sponsored privately by the Rom Reddy Foundation through the Coastal Community Foundation.

Featured on 60 Minutes, Sundance Channel, and CBS News, STRIVE has developed a novel approach to personal accountability. “What’s unique about STRIVE is its focus on addressing the behaviors and attitudes that hold people back from success”, says Phil Weinberg, - STRIVE, President and CEO. “STRIVE gives its participants the skills and behaviors needed to find success in employment, and in life. We’re excited to be partnering with The Step UP Network and the Rom Reddy Foundation to bring this program to South Carolina.”

The Step UP Network places an emphasis on providing the education and support needed to increase participants’ levels of hope, self-respect, and economic stability. “Our focus has always been on helping people in need help themselves,” Nikki Opoulos Dickens, program director for The Step UP Network, said. “We see our graduates as creating a sense of community...One where members continue to work together within their own network, and with the continued assistance of Step Up, to reach whatever personal and economic goals they have.”

Amanda Wagner, regional director for SC Works, confirmed the need for a new approach to career readiness. “When we were approached by The Step UP Network to take a look at this program, we immediately saw the benefit. Addressing accountability and attitudes in the workplace is an area we consistently hear from partners and companies that needs improvement.” The Step UP Network will host its first pilot classes at SC Works in North Charleston later this year.

“This is an exciting partnership for the City,” Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg said. “Residents who struggle with economic stability need programs that not only teach hard skills, but they need programs that increase hope... increase their belief in their own potential”. Both The City of Charleston and MUSC have signed on to become first employer partners with Step UP.

The Step UP Network is set to begin its first Class Cycle in September of this year. All interested applicants should visit [www.stepupnetwork.org](http://www.stepupnetwork.org) or call 843.631.3566 for more information.

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