



Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE)
191 Bethpage-Sweet Hollow Road, Old Bethpage, NY 11804
Phone: 516-870-1600 Fax: 516-870-1660

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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CONTACT: Patrice Radowitz, Tel: [516-870-1621](tel:516-870-1621)/Cell: [631-553-7432](tel:631-553-7432)
Email: pradowitz@familyres.org

Andy Robles: 516-603-0447
Email: familyres.free@gmail.com

**SPECIAL NEEDS DRUM & BUGLE CORPS ANNOUNCES OPEN
AUDITIONS TO GREATER LONG ISLAND COMMUNITY**



Brian Calhoun, Senior Music Specialist, FREE, Makes Announcement to the FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps

Old Bethpage, NY – At a Press Conference today, Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) announced that the nationally renowned **FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps** will, for the first time ever, hold open auditions for membership to the Drum Corps to all Long Island, not just individuals supported by FREE. For the past several years the FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps has performed across the country at world class events in front of thousands of spectators. Through their social media efforts, they have inspired millions

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of people around the world. The impact the Corps has made on the Differently Abled population locally, nationally and globally is simply tremendous.

The Drum Corps has so much to offer and has helped all their members over the years grow exponentially, both musically and socially, all while building independence, job skills and providing once in a lifetime travel and performance opportunities. Now, there are many openings in the Corps across all 4 sections (Drumline, Front Ensemble, Color Guard & Brass). There is also a plan to add a 5th section to the Corps (Woodwinds) in 2018. They are constantly expanding and need new members to fill numerous open positions.



The FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps Drum Line and Color Guard

By opening auditions to the public, FREE is showing its ability to grow as an agency and reach out to the community, to provide opportunities to all Long Island for those in need, not only internally, but externally as well. FREE wants to provide an opportunity to audition to every aspiring musician, dancer, gymnast, and anyone who is eligible for disability services who has a passion for the performing arts. The FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps wants to make dreams come true and change people's lives forever.

“We believe Long Island is ‘Strong Island’ and there are so many incredibly talented individuals who live here that need a place to share their talents and abilities with the world,” said Robert S. Budd, CEO, FREE. “We can be that place, to provide once in a lifetime opportunity to perform in front of thousands of fans in stadiums and arenas, all while being a part of an all-inclusive family oriented, fun, creative environment,” he continued.

New members that are accepted will be given the opportunity of a lifetime, to make history with the Corps at the 2018 DCI (Drum Corps International) World Championships in Indianapolis IN, amongst many other amazing experiences that will be presented to all new members who are accepted.

Audition Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a HS Graduate or 21 years of age or older.

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- In order to be eligible to audition, one of the following must apply to you. You must live at home with your family and be eligible to receive Respite Services, live in a FREE Residence, or attend a FREE program. Eligibility to audition will be determined on a case by case basis for Individuals or Participants residing or attending programs in other provider agencies.
- Must require minimal behavioral and medical support
- Must live on Long Island and be able to travel to and from all Drum Corps Respite Rehearsals every Wednesday evening. Rehearsals begin at 4pm and conclude at 7pm.

Recently, the FREE Players Drum Corps was selected as the first special needs group to perform at the DCI World Championships in 2018. The DCI World Championships is the largest event in the world for the Marching Arts Activity and has been called the "Super Bowl" of Drum Corps. The best of the best from the entire world gather to compete every year to decide who will become the World Champion. 30,000 spectators are expected to be in attendance for World Class Finals alone!

About the FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps

The FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps is the first Special Needs Drum & Bugle Corps or "Corps" Style Marching Band to exist in the world. The Corps was founded in 2010 by Senior Music Specialist, Brian Calhoun and is based out of Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) Theatre Arts Day Program in Old Bethpage, NY.

Drum Corps is essentially a professional marching band that requires the musicianship of a symphony, combined with the athleticism of a professional sport, mixed with the theatrics of a Broadway show.

The FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps is comprised entirely of members who are Differently Abled (Special Needs), ages 20 to 50 plus, who live all throughout Long Island NY. The Corps currently has 70 members, divided into 4 different sections, Drumline, Front Ensemble, Color Guard, Brass, as well as a Drum Major. There is also a plan to add a 5th section to the Corps (Woodwinds) in 2018.

Over the course of almost a decade, the FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps have performed at world class events in front of thousands of spectators, been featured by over 100 media outlets globally, developed a strong social media following on numerous platforms, and have inspired millions of people around the world!

Participation in Drum & Bugle Corps has helped our members grow musically, socially, all while building independence, life skills, job skills, memories and friendships that will last a lifetime.

The FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps strives to break down boundaries, alleviate prejudice and show that anything is possible with heart, hard work and the desire to push one's self beyond any previously conceived limitations. Members are challenged to be the best they can be, this has led to a great sense of pride and personal achievement for all that have participated.

Website: www.FamilyRes.org/FREEDrumCorps

Facebook: @FREEPlayersDrumCorps

Instagram and Twitter: @FREEDrumCorps

YouTube: @FREEPlayersDrumCorps

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About Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE)

Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) founded in 1977 and headquartered in Old Bethpage, benefits and proudly supports more than 4,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities, mental illness and traumatic brain injury. It is the mission of FREE to help individuals of all abilities realize their full potential. FREE provides a diverse array of supports and services including: housing, recovery services, transition to work, employment, day, community and family services, respite, crisis services, education and after-school support, primary and specialty health care and advocacy. For more information, please call 516-870-7000 or visit www.familyres.org.

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