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**\*\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*\***

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## **FREE ANNOUNCES FIRST ANNUAL LONG ISLAND “SPECIAL NEEDS GOT TALENT” COMPETITION**

**Old Bethpage, NY** – Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE), in partnership with the BroadHollow Theatre, announced that they will be holding the first annual Long Island “**Special Needs Got Talent**” competition. In the style of the X-Factor and American Idol, “**Special Needs Got Talent**” is a competition designed to find the best and brightest stars on Long Island. FREE made the announcement at a press conference today at their Old Bethpage headquarters.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with BroadHollow Theatre on this ground-breaking event,” said Robert Budd, CEO FREE. “We can’t wait to show the world that being differently-abled does not mean you are not able,” he continued.

The first round of auditions will be held on Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6pm to 10pm. Applicants are asked to contact Jessica Gallone at 516-870-1600 ext-1815 to register for an audition time.

Contestants will audition in four different age groups, 7-9, 10-13, 14-17, and 18 & up. Contestants will perform in front of some of Long Island’s top talent professionals for prizes and the opportunity to be considered the best on Long Island. All entrants must bring an accompaniment CD and current photo with their name and phone number on the back. The application fee is \$10 and is non-refundable.

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Finals will be held on Saturday, February 4th at 7pm at the Bayway Arts Center in East Islip. Ticket are \$15 for General Admission.

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

Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE), founded in 1977, benefits and proudly supports more than 4,000 individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental illness and traumatic brain injury. It is the mission of FREE to assist 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; specialty health services; and advocacy.

FREE also collaborates with a variety of diverse 501(c)(3) nonprofit partners on educational, vocational, rehabilitative and a myriad of other creative initiatives to enhance the local communities and the lives of more than 25,000 people that reside within them. Each of the valued partners of the Family of FREE Network has a unique mission, vision and strategic goals that are aligned in purpose, and embody the spirit of the meaningful work we do every day. For more information, please call 516-870-7000 or visit [www.familyres.org](http://www.familyres.org).

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