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## **The Office Of Children And Family Services Awards \$718,000 Grant To Family Residences And Essential Enterprises To Launch The Advantage After-School Program In Wyandanch**

**Old Bethpage, NY** – (September 19, 2014) – A \$718,000 grant from the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) will enable Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE) to serve middle and high school students in the Wyandanch School District.

FREE will partner with the Family Life Center, a non-profit organization located in Wyandanch to operate the after-school program during the school year. The Advantage After-School Program grant of \$143,708 for each of the next five years will benefit more than 500 youth. The program started on September 15, 2014.

The Advantage After-School Program will operate out of the Wyandanch Youth Center, a building owned by the Town of Babylon, located at 20 Andrews Avenue in Wyandanch, NY. The program will operate Monday through Friday from 3:00pm to 7:00pm. Programming will include homework help, individual and group tutoring, basketball, robotics, Zumba, dance, SAT Prep, wrestling and karate. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2014-2015 school year. The program is being offered free of charge and parent's are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible because space is limited.

“I am absolutely thrilled that FREE will be working in the Wyandanch community and with the Family Life Center, said FREE's Chief Executive Officer, Robert S. Budd. “We are equally thrilled to partner with OCFS and this unprecedented grant will enable us to serve one of Long Island's neediest communities.” Our shared vision is for all students to have access to quality after-school programming in a safe and nurturing environment.”

More...

The Advantage After-School Program was created to help provide New York's children with educational, interesting and fun activities to fill the vital three-hour gap directly after school. A growing body of research shows that children who participate in quality after school programs have higher school attendance and academic achievement, and are less likely to be involved in risky behaviors after school hours. Additionally, studies have found that children who attend quality after school programs have better relationships with their peers, fewer behavioral and emotional problems, better grades and fewer absences from school than their peers who are unsupervised after school.

**About FREE**

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 3,500 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](http://www.familyres.org).

**About Family Life Center**

The Family Life Center, founded in 2013, is a non-profit organization that focuses primarily and intensively on the social and educational development of children. The agency currently manages the Wyandanch Youth Center and serves students in K-12 during after-school time and during the summer.

**About OCFS**

OCFS serves New York by promoting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, families, and communities, and regulates more than 21,000 child care providers with a capacity for more than 708,000 children.

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