**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE’S JOB READINESS PROGRAM ON THEIR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SKILLS TRAINING TO INCARCERATED YOUTHS.

Whereas, employability training at the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has taken center stage as the agency offers educational programs such as brick masonry, carpentry, picture framing, graphic arts, welding, and horticulture along with after school programs including ceramic tile design, sewing, and upholstery; and

Whereas, these programs are foundations from which DJJ youth are learning skills that will translate into jobs after they leave DJJ. The programs offered at DJJ’s Broad River Road Complex are showing positive advances in providing incarcerated youth with practical manufacturing experience; and

Whereas, the Department of Juvenile Justice burst with pride on Saturday, June 29, 2013 as news was released that Max, a Birchwood School student had won the silver medal in the National SkillsUSA Competition, which was held in Kansas City, Missouri; and

Whereas, Max is an inspiration to many other youths. He has turned a difficult situation into a chance to grow. He has utilized every opportunity that the Job Readiness Program has offered to him. Max is an experienced carpenter, working on building houses for Habitat for Humanity. He is also a skilled upholsterer, remanufacturing many pieces of furniture sold in DJJ’s Store of Hope. His amazing project incorporates the disciplines of welding, carpentry, and auto collision repair. In the national competition, Max soared above youth whose schools and work stations for their projects are not situated behind high‑rise razor‑wire fences. His determination was and remains unshakeable; and

Whereas, Max is a tremendous example to all as he is taking advantage of job readiness opportunities in order to excel. Max continues his good work now that he has left DJJ, working at a local prominent car dealership as a highly skilled auto body collision repair technician. Max acknowledges his success was made possible because of the many caring professionals at DJJ; and

Whereas, DJJ is on a quest to make sure every child they serve has the same job readiness opportunities that Max has experienced. In October 2013, the DJJ opened its innovative, Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Columbia. The facility will provide life and job skills classes to DJJ youth on probation, parole, or in committed status. The program has directly impacted over 500 students in fourteen counties in just a few months. The JRTC is scheduled to train over 600 students during their statewide “Financial Literacy Blitz” this spring. Additionally, so far this year, DJJ has opened eight additional Job Readiness Training sites in communities throughout the state with funds provided by the legislature. DJJ expects to continue to build more job readiness opportunities for all youth supervised in communities across the state; and

Whereas, last fall, for a second year in a row, youth at the DJJ submitted hand‑crafted items for competition to the South Carolina State Fair, and there were big winners in nearly every category. More than eighty‑five items, all hand‑crafted by DJJ youth, were submitted and fifty of them placed with first or second place ribbons including two Best in Show awards; and

Whereas, DJJ recognizes that employability training and job placement is paramount to a young person’s future success and is striving to incorporate this at every level of service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the Senate, by this resolution, recognize and congratulate the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice’s Job Readiness Program on their efforts to provide skills training to incarcerated youths.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Department of Juvenile Justice.

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