

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Chamber Foundation, Dutchess Community College and Healthy Kids Announce  
SUNY Pre-apprenticeship Program**

The Chamber Foundation, an affiliate of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce (DCRCOC), Dutchess Community College (DCC), and Healthy Kids have joined forces to provide an exciting new opportunity this summer for young adults in the City of Poughkeepsie. The result is a pilot pre-apprenticeship program to take place beginning August 2, enabling persons 18 and older who are interested in the child care industry to gain occupational skills and on the job training at various businesses in Poughkeepsie, plus paid stipends.

The Chamber Foundation is supporting the Healthy Kids apprenticeship program by running this pre-apprenticeship training, designed to prepare job seekers for the Registered Apprenticeship positions available at Healthy Kids locations in Dutchess County.

The Foundation's Workforce Development Center will recruit the youth to apply, as well as teach soft skills and work place habit skills. Each organization will match funds to pay the stipends over the course of three weeks. The end goal of this pilot endeavor is to provide pre-apprenticeship training for all available registered apprenticeship programs in New York State, and to grow the program to include other registered trades.

At the end of the three weeks, each participant will have the opportunity to be interviewed by Healthy Kids, leading into their Registered Apprenticeship Program, employment, as well as access to enrolling in DCC for free along the Early Childhood Education Associate's Degree path. "Our Apprenticeship Program is designed to provide a reflective and guided experience in working with children and families. The ultimate goal of the program is to provide the background, experience, and education for our apprentices to become a Site Director of any School Age Program," says Steve Dwek, Chief Executive Officer at Healthy Kids Programs.

For more information, contact Katrina Gobins at [katrina@drcoc.org](mailto:katrina@drcoc.org) or 845-454-1700, ext. 1024. The pre-apprenticeship program runs from August 2 through August 20 and will include six placements.

"The Chamber's Workforce Development Program continues to mentor members of our community so they may eventually fill jobs here," said Frank Castella, Jr., President and CEO of the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, and President of The Chamber Foundation. "Collaborating with Dutchess Community College and Healthy Kids allows us to increase our training opportunities and get more local individuals on the path to quality employment here in Dutchess County."

"We are proud to be part of this collaborative pre-apprenticeship effort," said Ellen Gambino, acting president of Dutchess Community College. "Access to childcare

bolsters the strength of our community but the benefits hinge on the quality of care provided and specifically, on how well the care giver is prepared and supported. This program is a starting point. It can lead to a sustainable pathway to degree attainment at DCC and most importantly, to higher quality care in our community and future success for our children.”

The State University of New York (SUNY), in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) and U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), coordinate activities to expand Registered Apprenticeship in New York with a focus on engaging small, medium, and large employers to secure paid apprenticeships in high-demand, competitive wage occupations. To meet the growing need for a skilled workforce, New York State has provided funding for community colleges to develop one of the largest statewide public/private partnership apprenticeship programs in the country. The SUNY Apprenticeship Program will assist in developing Registered Apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, cybersecurity, Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and other high needs fields. The SUNY Apprenticeship Program is funded through appropriations in the New York State budget beginning in the 2016/17 Fiscal Year.

About Healthy Kids: Healthy Kids has designed a state-wide Registered Apprenticeship program to recruit and retain staff in early learning centers and before/ after school programs. The apprenticeship was a way to train top talent into difficult to recruit positions, such as Lead Teacher. Through the apprenticeship, employees have the opportunity to complete Related Instruction at Dutchess Community College (DCC). Currently there are 32 apprentices from 15 different counties participating. Credits earned will be applied to the School-Age Care credential, eventually linking to the Child Development Associate credential at DCC.

About Dutchess Community College: Dutchess Community College (DCC) is known for its exceptional faculty, inclusive and diverse community, and a learning environment that provides a wealth of opportunities for students to pursue their academic goals and personal growth. Serving nearly 8,600 students annually, DCC consistently partners with business and industry, universities, school districts, lawmakers, and nonprofit organizations to meet Dutchess County’s evolving workforce, service and educational needs.

About The Chamber: Founded in 1907, the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce is committed to the growth and development of local businesses and the economy. For more information about Chamber happenings, the complete events calendar, or to find out how we might best serve as an advocate for you and your business, please visit [dcrcc.org](http://dcrcc.org).

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