

PRESS RELEASE

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Fairfield County Community Foundation Supports Inspirica's Jumpstart Career Program

STAMFORD, CT – Inspirica, formerly St. Luke's Lifeworks, was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation (FCCF) to support its innovative Jumpstart Career Program. The Jumpstart Career program provides participants with the foundation and skills they need to prepare for, find, maintain and advance in employment, which, in turn, allows them to earn the income necessary to transition from homelessness to permanent housing.

"The grant funds provided by the Fairfield County Community Foundation will enable our agency to continue provide our clients with the absolute best resources to prepare themselves for a sustainable life in our community. For most of the homeless in our community, employment is simply the only way out. We are incredibly grateful to the FCCF for their commitment to our Jumpstart Career Program and our organization as a whole.", said Jason Shaplen, CEO of Inspirica.

The Jumpstart Career Program provides a strong three-fold approach to workforce development, which includes the ***Jumpstart Education Program, Jumpstart Vocational Training*** and ***Jumpstart Employment Agency***.

Over the past three years, a comprehensive approach to serving clients has led to Inspirica making a record 489 job placements and helping a record 383 people who were homeless find permanent housing. For most participants the only way to escape homelessness is through securing employment. The starting wages that clients earn demonstrate the value of the workplace readiness skills that Jumpstart provides. Inspirica clients who have entered the workforce achieve an average starting salary of \$10.25/hr which is 24% above minimum wage. In the past twelve months, seventy percent earned \$9/hr or more and almost sixty percent earned \$10/hr or more.

Because of the work Inspirica does in our community, many don't realize that homelessness is an issue in lower Fairfield County. Last year, 16,000 people stayed in Connecticut shelters, including almost 3,000 in lower Fairfield County. In the face of this challenge, Inspirica makes a measurable impact. The Fairfield County Community Foundation's investment in this program will allow more individuals the opportunity to prepare and train for future employment through the Jumpstart Career Program.

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About Inspirica: Inspirica's mission is to break the cycle of homelessness by helping people achieve – and maintain – permanent housing and stability in their lives. As one of the largest providers of services to the homeless in the state of Connecticut and the largest in lower Fairfield County, Inspirica provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and affordable housing to

approximately 240-260 people each night. Additionally, it provides education & employment services, youth services and access to a vast array of other services such medical and dental care, in-patient substance abuse treatment, psychiatric care etc. through a network of formal, strategic partnerships. For more information visit www.inspiricact.org

About Fairfield County Community Foundation:

The Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations and organizations can establish charitable funds and contribute to existing funds. The Foundation provides philanthropic advisory services and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues. It is in compliance with the Council on Foundations' national standards for community foundations. The Foundation has awarded over \$151 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond. For more information, visit www.fccfoundation.org.