

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bank of America Supports Inspirica's Jumpstart Career Program

STAMFORD, CT –Inspirica announces that the Bank of America Charitable Foundation has provided \$15,000 in funding for its results driven Jumpstart Career Program, which in the past fiscal year made 182 job placements among the homeless population the organization serves. The Jumpstart Career Program at Inspirica offers education services, vocational training opportunities and job placement assistance to the homeless in the community.

"We are humbled that Bank of America recognizes the valuable impact that our Jumpstart Career program makes in the lives of our participants and subsequently in our community," said Jason Shaplen, CEO of Inspirica. "Obtaining training and skills for employment is the first step to breaking the cycle of homelessness. Inspirica is excited to partner with Bank of America as we address the critical need for workforce development training among the lowest income population in Fairfield County."

Inspirica's Jumpstart Career program provides participants with the foundation and skills they need to prepare for, find, maintain and advance in employment that, in turn, allows them to earn the income necessary to transition from homelessness to permanent housing. 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.

"Providing the homeless with the skills they need to enter or reenter the workforce is a critical step in helping them get back on their feet," said Bill Tommins, Southern Connecticut market president, Bank of America. "Simply put, Inspirica is transforming lives."

The **Jumpstart Career Program** provides Inspirica clients with a full array of vocational, education and employment services and is comprised of three distinct components:

- **Jumpstart Vocational Training** teaches critical work and life skills through classroom training in a Culinary Arts Program and on-the-job experience at the Jumpstart Café.
- **Jumpstart Education** is a 13-week workshop series that provide participants with the core skills they need to prepare for, find, maintain and advance in employment as well as obtain housing.
- The **Jumpstart Employment Agency** offers one-on-one counseling for residents that assists in placing people in jobs and helps them advance in their careers.

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. The workforce development grant generously provided by Bank of America will allow more clients the opportunity to prepare and train for future employment through the Jumpstart Career Program.

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. 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

Bank of America Corporate Social Responsibility

Bank of America’s commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a strategic part of doing business globally. Our CSR efforts guide how we operate in a socially, economically, financially and environmentally responsible way around the world, to deliver for shareholders, customers, clients and employees. Our goal is to help create economically vibrant regions and communities through lending, investing and giving. By partnering with our stakeholders, we create value that empowers individuals and communities to thrive and contributes to the long-term success of our business. We have several core areas of focus for our CSR, including responsible business practices; environmental sustainability; strengthening local communities with a focus on housing, hunger and jobs; investing in global leadership development; and engaging through arts and culture. As part of these efforts, employee volunteers across the company contribute their time, passion and expertise to address issues in communities where they live and work. Learn more at www.bankofamerica.com/about and follow us on Twitter at @BofA_Community.

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