



Everything Jersey

Jersey City company that employs 400 disabled workers says it's thriving

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By **Andrew Steadman/The Jersey Journal**

Supported by some major grants, a Jersey City nonprofit that helps people with disabilities has spawned three thriving companies.

The Jersey City-based Hudson Community Enterprises (HCE) last month received a Kessler Foundation 2011 Signature Employment Grant for \$250,000. In addition, the foundation extended a \$250,000 interest-free loan to HCE, officials said.

HCE President Maureen Walliser said the group received its first grant from the Kessler Foundation six years ago. That \$100,000 donation enabled the nonprofit to transform itself from a job placement service into an employer for people with disabilities, Walliser said.

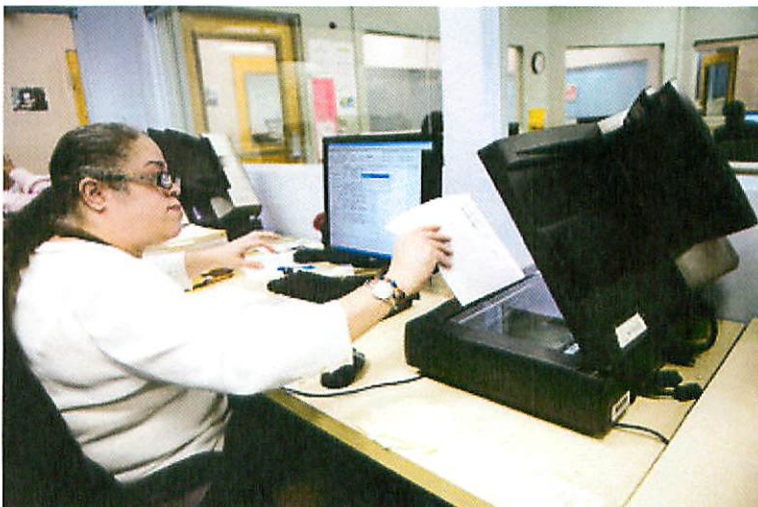
"Basically, they put us in business," Walliser said of the Kessler Foundation. "But our businesses are now able to support themselves."

HCE now operates a full-service document management operation with sales of \$5 million per year. Located on Montgomery Street in Jersey City, the business has three divisions Metro Shredding, Metro Scanning and Metro Digital Document Solutions offering services ranging from document shredding to digital archive conversion.

Kessler Foundation Communications Specialist Lauren Scrivo said HCE deserves the support.

"Hudson Community Enterprises employs more than 400 individuals with disabilities overall," Scrivo said. "Their salaries are very competitive and they hold jobs at every level, from entry-level to management positions."

HCE recently opened a branch in Newark and plans to use its most recent grant to expand operations to



REENA ROSE SIBAYAN/JOURNAL PHOTO

Lisa Castro, an employee at Hudson Community Enterprises in Jersey City, scans documents. The business is a non-profit organization that employs people with disabilities.

Trenton, where Walliser said the organization will be able to capitalize on the document management needs of the state capital.

Based in West Orange, the Kessler Foundation awarded a total of \$2.7 million in grants to organizations across the country. The foundation is a charity established in 1985 by Dr. Henry H. Kessler, who also founded the Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in West Orange where "Superman" actor Christopher Reeve received treatment following his neck injury in 1995.

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