



HeartShare Human Services of New York
191 Joralemon Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

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Contact: Tricia Fleming
(718) 422-3266

BP Proclaims Edward Brown Day

(Brooklyn, NY)— Edward Brown Day was celebrated on May 16 when Mr. Brown was awarded the First Annual Personal Growth Award from HeartShare Human Services of New York’s Developmental Disabilities Division, an event that was accompanied by a Proclamation from Borough President Marty Markowitz.

Mr. Brown, who has a developmental disability, attends HeartShare’s Brooklyn Day Habilitation Program in downtown Brooklyn and lives in its 35th Avenue Residence in Flushing, one of 22 group homes the agency operates. Through the Day Habilitation program, Mr. Brown works at a variety of jobs including: serving lunch at a nearby senior citizen center, assembling dog collars at a local pet store, feeding horses at a stable in Manhattan, and doing cleaning at HeartShare’s Wellness Clinic. Mr. Brown is also very helpful around the Day Hab Program, always willing to lend a hand. Says Kevin Leiter, the Program Coordinator, “Mr. Brown is a very hard worker and a lot of fun to have around. When we had an opening in the program, I was eager for him to join us here.”

Mr. Brown has been receiving services from HeartShare since 1978, when he moved into its Clermont Residence, at that time a group home for developmentally disabled children. Since then, Mr. Brown has participated in various HeartShare programs to enable him to live to his fullest potential and lead a meaningful and enriched life. He has lived in three different residences, each becoming more independent than the previous.

During the presentation to Edward Brown, various HeartShare staff members, along with several of Mr. Brown’s family members, spoke about how he has grown and what he has meant in their lives. President and CEO Bill Guarinello, who in 1978 was a program administrator who helped Mr. Brown be accepted into Clermont Residence, said, “I have seen Eddie grow through the years. He has always been a strong advocate for himself and others around him. I am very proud to give him this award.”

Borough President Markowitz acknowledged Mr. Brown's "tremendous initiative he has taken to become an active and exemplary member of the Brooklyn community. I congratulate him as he is most justifiably honored here today and I thank him for helping to make Brooklyn a better place to live, work and raise a family."

Otancia Joseph, Residential Coordinator of 35th Avenue Residence, said, "I have noticed how much more mature Edward has become during the years I have been working with him. He handles difficult situations well and is working on skills so that he can eventually live in a supported apartment."

For Mr. Brown, this award means so much, but this isn't the end. He is going to continue attending the Day Hab Program, and he is working towards his goal of moving out of the 35th Avenue Residence, which is a 24-hour supervised group home, into a more independent Supported Apartment. "It was so nice to meet Mr. Markowitz. He is such a busy man and for him to take time to come to my party, I was very happy." Mr. Brown continued, "I am the President of our self-advocacy group [at HeartShare's Brooklyn Day Hab], and I want to go to Albany for the State Advocacy Association of New York's annual meeting so I can learn more about it and encourage others around me to do more for themselves. I am also saving the money from my jobs so I can go to Jamaica to visit a friend."

Mr. Brown has come a long way since first coming to HeartShare more than 25 years ago. HeartShare proudly salutes the outstanding achievements he has made in pursuing his life dreams and goals.

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Celebrating its 92 year, HeartShare is a nonprofit organization that assists more than 16,000 New Yorkers in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. Its wide spectrum of services helps individuals with developmental disabilities, supports people affected by HIV/AIDS, and provides counseling, after-school programs and assistance with foster care and adoption to children and families.