

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2013

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**FRANKLIN COUNTY, COLUMBUS AND COWIC UNITE TO PROVIDE LOCAL YOUTH
VALUABLE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

Recognize Donatos as an Employer Champion

Thanks to a partnership among the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the City of Columbus and the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation (COWIC), nearly 1,700 Franklin County youth will have the opportunity to get real-world job experience to develop the skills, attitudes and commitment necessary to succeed in today's work force.

As part of the 2013 S.O.A.R.hire! Summer Youth Employment Program, Franklin County and the City of Columbus jointly will provide \$4.3 million to support summer youth employment and participating youth, ages 14-24 years, will receive hands-on training in communications, office administration, construction, advertising, marketing, graphic design and green energy, while developing a credible work history for future employers. This year, Franklin County will also administer a companion program, YouthWorks, to connect an additional 500 youth to summer internship employment opportunities.

"Working during the summer – whether it's mowing grass, answering phones and making copies or working at the local swimming pool – is a rite of passage for many youth. They may not realize it now, but earning that summer paycheck is providing them with excellent work experience so that when they're ready to enter the workforce as an adult, they have developed some of the necessary skills to be successful and are confident in their abilities," said John O'Grady, Commissioner Board President. "Franklin County is proud to commit nearly \$4 million to help the talented youth in this program obtain that experience they desire."

"We're asking our business community to join us again this year in providing our youth with meaningful summer work opportunities," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. "This investment in our youth today is a critical investment in the Central Ohio workforce of tomorrow."

"For a number of years, City Council offices have employed young people enrolled in this program," said Councilmember Priscilla R. Tyson, chair of the City Council's Workforce Development Committee. "It is always exciting to see their enthusiasm and desire to learn real world skills."

The summer months are an ideal time for youth to expand their education outside of the classroom. The young adults of today are the educators, entrepreneurs, civic leaders and public officials of tomorrow. By delivering a constructive, positive summer work experience for at least one youth this summer, we will help to develop this emerging workforce that will one day be charged with sustaining our economy and community.

"S.O.A.R.hire! is about more than summer jobs," said COWIC President & CEO Suzanne Coleman-Tolbert. "These are opportunities for our young people to gain access to new skills and knowledge, to connect with community mentors and role models, and to realize their potential to become the success we all hope and expect that they will be."

Last year, our employer community stepped up to deliver paid work experiences to nearly 2,000 interns, nearly 400 of positions came from private employers who committed to hiring and paying the wages on their own. The commitment from private employers is essential to the success of the program, and to help us reach out to the Central Ohio employer community, Donatos Pizza has agreed to join us as our Employer Champion.

“Donatos Pizza is thrilled to lend our support to the S.O.A.R.hire 2013 campaign. Young men and women are the backbone of our economic future and they deserve every opportunity possible to become a part of the workforce,” said Jane Grote Abell, Chairman of the Board & Owner, Donatos Pizza.

County Commissioners are expected to approve the federal funding for COWIC at the May15 General Session.

Youth and young adults ages 14-24, both in and out of school, can register for the summer jobs program by going to www.hirecentralohyouth.org. Application will open May 1, 2013.

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