

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Inclusive Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities

The Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University has been awarded an Enitiative grant titled *Inclusive Entrepreneurship*. Gary Shaheen, MPA (Maxwell 1986), Managing Director for Program Development at BBI, will use the funding to support StartUP NY, one of three national technical assistance centers on self-employment for people with disabilities established through the US Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy.

StartUP NY is an Onondaga County initiative, managed by BBI in partnership with the Whitman School of Management and other local partners. It provides business training to people with diverse disabilities and helps them obtain micro loans to start their businesses. The *Inclusive Entrepreneurship* Enitiative grant developed and proposed by Shaheen will help 12 entrepreneurs with disabilities leverage a 1:1 matched savings through Individual Development Accounts established at the Syracuse Cooperative Credit Union to support their businesses.

Shaheen also will receive an E-Professorship award to establish a new course: “Inclusive Entrepreneurship for People with Disabilities”. The new course will provide social entrepreneurship principles and practices, challenges and facilitators as they relate to improving employment and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. Students from the Whitman School, the College of Human Ecology, and others will first learn in the classroom and then will undertake supervised field work with StartUP NY, providing services and supports to entrepreneurs with disabilities who are starting their businesses in Onondaga County.

Shaheen notes “This is a fantastic example of Scholarship in Action, building on work we are already doing with the community, and enabling students to learn and then practice what they’ve learned – increasing our ties to the community. Focusing on inclusive and social entrepreneurship will expand the experiences of SU students and may encourage them to think about their own businesses in the future.”

This project was made possible, in part, through an Enitiative award. Enitiative (the Syracuse Campus-Community Entrepreneurship Initiative) is funded by a grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman foundation of Kansas City, MO, focusing on entrepreneurship in the arts, technology, and our neighborhoods. To learn more about Enitiative, please visit www.entrepreneurship.syr.edu.

The Burton Blatt Institute: Centers of Innovation on Disability (BBI) fosters public-private dialogue to advance the civic, economic and social participation of persons with disabilities in a global society. The institute takes its name from Burton Blatt (1927–85), a pioneer in humanizing services for people with mental retardation, a staunch advocate of deinstitutionalization and a national leader in special education. BBI currently has offices in Syracuse, New York City, Washington, D.C., Atlanta and Tel Aviv. For more information, visit <http://bbi.syr.edu>.