New Year, New Look, New Career

HOUSTON (January 10, 2017) They have helped the returning veteran adjust to civilian life, taught the little girl born with a developmental delay learn to walk and talk, given the teen with cerebral palsy a sense of community at camp, taught a family how to save and buy their first ever home, and been an essential partner in countless of other successes but the organization's name still puzzles most. After nearly 100 years of the Easter lily logo representing the indispensable resource for people and families challenged by disabilities, Easter Seals Greater Houston now turns its bright new logo to shine a light on the broad range of new issues America faces. The organization has launched a major, positive new vision to reflect the life-changing differences Easter Seals makes in the lives of people and families facing today's disabilities.

In examining how they could best empower the 10,000 Houstonians with disabilities and their families served yearly it became apparent there was a breakdown in transition. Nearly 50% of students with disabilities will not graduate from high school and less than 20% of people living with disabilities are employed. Easter Seals Greater Houston recognized the dire need for young adults with disabilities to have supports put in place so that they can succeed and gain independence and therefore created High School/High Tech almost two decades ago and Transition Services through the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health two years ago. Most individuals with disabilities have not had the encouragement, role models, access and stimulation to pursue challenging technical careers or courses of study. High School/High Tech was started by NASA addressing concerns that not enough students—especially those with disabilities—were being prepared for careers in technology-focused industries. Through High School/High Tech, students with disabilities are presented a mix of learning experiences that promote career exploration and broaden educational horizons. Transition Services help youth become more independent and successful in their communities through programs such as social skills training, internships, college classes, financial coaching, on-line drivers education and more.

Michael could have been a part of the disheartening drop out and unemployment statistics for individuals with disabilities if he hadn’t begun working with Easter Seals Greater Houston’s Transition Services. He participates in Coffeehouse Social Skills and Job Club at The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD. He’s developed interview skills and created a resume that he
took with him to the job fair where he landed a job with Goodwill Industries. Michael’s involvement with the Transition program has not only given him a paycheck, but most importantly pride and independence that neither he nor his family previously thought possible.

Employers and mentors from companies such as CVS Pharmacy, John Eagle Honda, and CompuCycle are partnering with Easter Seals Greater Houston’s young adults throughout the city that have untapped potential. The skills gained are leading youth with disabilities to see that they can continue their education and find their place in the workforce, a major success for them, their families, and tax payers. Easter Seals is honored to see our work paying off through national employers such as Ford Motor Cars, Comcast, AT&T and Procter and Gamble and their Hiring Programs. Program growth and achievements such as that experienced by Transition and High School/High Tech, along with their minimal 1% dropout rate, prove that Easter Seals Greater Houston’s new slogan, “Taking on Disability Together”, is the way we will all win.

About Easter Seals Greater Houston
Easter Seals Greater Houston, Inc. is a non-profit corporation established to provide comprehensive services to individuals of all ages with all types of disabilities and their family members. For more information, visit www.eastersealshouston.org