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National Youth Education and Employment Expert Speaks in Massachusetts

On April 28, 2006, Commonwealth Corporation brought Edward DeJesus, nationally known expert on urban youth employment and educational issues to Massachusetts. Mr. DeJesus is the president and chief executive officer of The Youth Development and Research Fund located in the Washington DC area. Mr. DeJesus's organization educates and empowers, youth, youth service organizations, schools and policy makers on how to use urban youth culture to promote education and workforce development.

On the event, said Ephraim Weisstein, Vice President of Commonwealth Corporation and director of its' Center for Youth Development and Education "There is growing concern in the Commonwealth that far too many of our youth are at serious risk unless we afford them a fair opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed as adults and be competitive in today's economy". The statewide event, which took place at the Sheraton Hotel in Framingham, was designed to provide strategies and information on how schools and youth serving organizations can use popular culture, positive peer pressure and youth involvement to increase youth education and employment outcomes. The event targeted participants from schools, workforce agencies, the Department of Youth Services and other youth programs across the state.

The workshop will also featured Jane C. Edmond, Massachusetts' Director of Workforce Development as the event's opening speaker.

The workshop was hosted by Commonwealth Corporation's Communities and Schools for Success (CS²) initiative which serves the school districts of Amherst, Barnstable, Boston, Brockton, Fitchburg, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Springfield as well as two vocational school districts – Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District and Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Each year, CS² education and school-to-career activities impact over 33,000 students in 40 schools across the state.

For more information on Communities and Schools for Career Success , visit <http://www.commcorp.org/cs2/index.html>. For more information about The Youth Development and Research Fund, please visit www.ydrf.org.

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