

## MEDIA ALERT

### LADDER UP WINS IRS STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP AWARD, NOMINATED IN 5 RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

**WHO:** [Ladder Up](#), a Chicago-based non-profit that offers FREE financial literacy and tax preparation services to low-income families and individuals. Since opening its doors in 1994, Ladder Up has returned \$1.42 billion to over 750,000 clients.

**WHAT:** Ladder Up's Tax-a-Thon Event won the EITC Awareness Day Event category at Monday's IRS Virtual Partner Recognition Ceremony! Furthermore, Ladder Up was nominated and recognized in a total of five categories, far exceeding the number of nominations for most other VITA programs across the nation.

Each year, the IRS Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) Program takes time to celebrate their VITA partners and to recognize those organizations that they feel go "above and beyond - elevating the community." Monday's celebration was attended by 540 VITA partners from across the country.

Judy Brooks, Senior Relationship Tax Consultant at the IRS, nominated Ladder Up. Ms. Brooks said she was drawn to nominate Ladder Up for the hard work the organization puts into the VITA Program year-round in support of low-income taxpayers in our community.

Ladder Up's 5th Annual Tax-a-Thon Event won the EITC Awareness Day Event category because, as Ms. Brooks explained, the SPEC Program appreciated that Ladder Up took the time and made the effort to create the successful awareness program. "The event had an enormous impact on that under-served community by giving families a degree of financial freedom and encouraging consumer spending in neighborhoods that need it most," reported Brooks. She also noted that the over 100 returns filed during Tax-a-Thon was a great testament to the organization's strong planning, preparation, and execution.

Ms. Brooks, who works closely with Becky Santiago, Greg Williams, Phyllis Cavallone and Hedi Belkaoui, also expressed her great admiration for the entire team, describing Ladder Up as "efficient", "service-minded" and "very committed to taking care of the people in our community." She also recognizes and appreciates that Ladder Up doesn't just work hard during tax season but puts forth tremendous effort to serve its clients throughout the year.

Ladder Up's programs were also nominated and recognized in the following categories:

- Champion of Training
- Catalyst for Financial Stability
- Multilingual Community Connector
- Creative Trailblazer

"I am beyond proud of the entire Ladder Up team," stated Executive Director Phyllis Cavallone-Jurek. "We are very honored to be recognized by the IRS for our continued commitment to our clients."

**QUESTIONS:** Contact Aneta Pietraszek [apietraszek@goladderup.org](mailto:apietraszek@goladderup.org) or visit @ladderupchicago on social