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Connecticut Walmart Stores Team Up with The Ryan Woods Autism Foundation to Hire Young Adults with Special Needs

Partnership will include all stores throughout state, prepare young adults for employment

Middleton, Conn. (April 6, 2016) – Walmart today announced plans to expand the company’s partnership with The Ryan Woods Autism Foundation (RWAf) to include all Walmart stores statewide in Connecticut. The partnership began in 2011 at the Cromwell, CT store, where RWAf started its on-site job training for young adults with autism. The initial training led to the hiring of seven of the program’s participants. RWAf is now in the process of staffing the Walmart in Avon, CT, which has already hired two program participants.

“We are thrilled to build on the partnership that we have created with Walmart to assist in training and finding employment within the company for so many worthy young adults,” said Brenda Wilson, Founder of RWAf. “ The company’s willingness to work with us on this program speaks volumes of Walmart’s management and their commitment to our community. This

opportunity provides the program participants with the tools they need to develop their independence and helps to 'flip the switch' to have their own resources rather than waiting for a handout from state agencies and/or their families, drive their own vehicles, and meet and be social with great associates who turn into lifetime friends. All of these benefits make this partnership a win-win opportunity."

All program participants are considered for permanent employment after completing training that takes from one to four weeks. RWAF follows the placements for 18-months after the date of hire and is available for questions and store visitations as necessary.

"We are proud to support RWAF and its commitment to improving the lives of young people with special needs," said Chris Buchanan, Walmart Director of Public Affairs & State and Local Government Relations. "We know the job training services RWAF provides can really make a difference in the lives of the young people they serve as well as their families, and we look forward to continuing to see positive outcomes from this program."

According to RWAF, not many employers are willing to take a chance on individuals with special needs, and with budget cuts the employment of these individuals become more critical after they turn 21. RWAF program participants hold positions as Walmart cashiers, overnight maintenance associates, fitting room associates, apparel associates, and phone receptionists.

About The Ryan Woods Autism Foundation

The Ryan Woods Autism Foundation (RWAF) was founded in 2008 and became a 501(c)(3), nonprofit, charity with a mission to raise the awareness about autism in December 2009. RWAF held four music festivals, the first being co-sponsored by Autism Speaks with keynote speaker, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal in Middletown, CT. RWAF is a collaborative resource of Autism Speaks, Los Angeles (Headquarters) and listed on its website. RWAF started out as an after-school program in the Middletown Public High School, moved to its own private space in 2009 and in 2014 had to terminate these services because of the lack of funding. It was awarded a grant of \$10K towards this initiative. RWAF offered a summer program to the Special Needs for since summer 2011 and 2016 will mark its 6th Annual Summer Camp, now referred to as Camp RWAFF.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

By using our strengths to help others, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation create opportunities for people to live better every day. We have stores in 27 countries, employing more than 2.2 million associates and doing business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. We are helping people live better by accelerating upward job mobility and economic development for the retail workforce; addressing hunger and making

healthier, more sustainably-grown food a reality; and building strong communities where we operate and inspiring our associates to give back. Whether it is helping to lead the fight against hunger in the United States with \$2 billion in cash and in-kind donations or supporting Women's Economic Empowerment through a series of grants totaling \$10 million to the Women in Factories training program in Bangladesh, China, India and Central America, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are not only working to tackle key social issues, we are also collaborating with others to inspire solutions for long-lasting systemic change. To learn more about Walmart's giving, visit www.foundation.walmart.com.

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