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**Turning the TIDE Launches Program For Ex-Offenders In West Philadelphia**  
*Project ECHO offers PA CareerLink Access and Life Development Mentoring Series*

**WEST PHILADELPHIA — MAY, 2003** — After much anticipation, Turning the TIDE, a ministry of Taylor Tabernacle, will launch Project ECHO and other new programs during an open house on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>; 10:00am to 2:00pm. Project ECHO will provide much needed assistance to ex-offenders for finding employment and dealing with real life issues after serving their term. Through the use of the technology center, Project ECHO can deliver career training, and mentoring for life-changing development. We are inviting all residents of West and Southwest Philadelphia to share in the event. Attendees will include: Pastor Lucille Ford, other local pastors and political officials from West Philadelphia, representatives from the Mayor's Office of Faith-based Initiatives, Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, PA CareerLink, and Corporate Sponsors. We will have food and door prizes. During the open house, attendees will be able to tour the new technology center, meet the TIDE volunteer teachers, meet our TIDE corporate sponsors and most importantly sign-up for classes. The computer center is located at 427 South 61<sup>st</sup> Street, on the corners of 61st Street and Osage Avenue

**Delivering Technology to the Community Since Year 2K**

Turning the TIDE was conceptualized by Pastor Lucille R. Ford in 1998, built in 2000 and open to the community since 2001. Through faith and dedication, TIDE has opened the world of computing to several hundred West Philadelphia residents. Most TIDE students have little or no previous computer access, and TIDE has enabled them to get on the other side of the Digital Divide. Turning the TIDE will launch new programs on May 17<sup>th</sup> that will benefit children needing academic support, residents needing training for the workforce and ex-offenders seeking gainful employment.

*(additional detail attached)*

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**For more information, press only:**

Rev. Jonathan Ford, (215) 748-4578 [fordj@taylortabernacle.com](mailto:fordj@taylortabernacle.com)

**For more information on Turning The TIDE:**

(215) 472-8268 -- <http://www.turningthetide.com>

Philadelphia, PA - April 28, 2003 In May of 2001, a small church in west Philadelphia witnessed the result of their faith in God and hard work when they opened the doors to it community technology center, Turning the TIDE. "It was nothing short of a miracle" said Rev. Lucille R. Ford, pastor of Taylor Tabernacle. What was to follow was an even greater miracle. The turn out for the grand opening was phenomenal. In it inaugural year, Turing the TIDE provided computer skills training to over 250 residents from West and Southwest Philadelphia. The success of the program and the impact on the community drew the attention of many supporters, including the IBM Corporation. In July of 2002, IBM's West Chester office of Community Relations provided a grant of \$23,000.00 in state-of-the-art hardware and software. The hardware included ten (10) new IBM NetVista PCs, a new network laser printer, a network server and a Little Tykes Children's workstation. As a result of the new hardware capabilities, Turning the TIDE is now able to provide additional multimedia and Internet applications for both children and adult learners . IBM also provided a network copy of its market leading QuickPlace Software. This software enables organizations to collaborate on projects, and will allow us to support replicated Turning the TIDE centers at other locations. "I have remained impressed with the vision and ability to execute that the management of Turning the TIDE has demonstrated over the past two years", commented Diane Melley, Corporate Community Relations Executive for IBM. "Often smaller organizations do not have the ability to handle more sophisticated equipment donations. However, Turning the TIDE not only has the ability, it has a long-term plan for its community and how technology will be leveraged make to it happen."

In August of 2002, Turning the TIDE was awarded a HUD Capacity Building Grant of \$1,500.00 from the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. "They've created a technology center model that includes everything from site development to training materials, which can be replicated in other faith-based organizations very easily" cited Ms. Winnie Smart-Mapp associate director at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnership.

In the fall of 2002, Rev. Jonathan Ford and John Cureton, executive director and technology director, respectively, were engaged by CTCNET to organize and run their 2002 Regional

conference for Southeastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey and Delaware. CTCNet is a national membership association of over 650 community technology centers. The conference was very successful and beneficial for over 70 regional non-profits and faith-based organizations. Following the conference and as a result of these two (2) grants, Turning the TIDE temporarily closed its doors for the winter of 2002/2003. During this period, the management team and staff volunteers began the process of integrating all of the new technology and updating its methodology and course materials.

While the doors to their technology center were closed to upgrade its facility, Turning the TIDE remained in the forefront of community and technology related issues challenging the Delaware Valley. In January of 2003, Taylor Tabernacle's Turning the TIDE was selected with two other churches, Mt. Airy C.O.G.I.C. and Bethlehem Church of Deliverance, by the City of Philadelphia's Workforce Development Board to participate in *Project Empowering Communities Help Others*. Project ECHO is an initiative of Mayor John Street to provide ex-offenders with faith-based organizations where they can receive access to the State of Pennsylvania's CareerLink system for employment. Participants also receive spiritual and emotional support for their transition back into society. "Turning the TIDE was an obvious choice as an access site and lead partner with Project ECHO", stated Nick Taliaferro, the director of Faith-based Initiatives for the City of Philadelphia. "They have one of the leading technology centers in the city and are lead by a pastor, Rev. Lucille Ford, who has a real heart to help the community." Project ECHO will allow Taylor Tabernacle to bring together both of its passions, providing care and assistance to the community while leveraging its state-of-the-art technology center to serve a difficult to reach population. Turning the TIDE will be filling a much needed void as an access site location for the CareerLink system that closed its West Philadelphia location a few years ago. The closing of that office requires residents to travel all the way to the Germantown section of Philadelphia to receive service. "While not a full service center, Turning the TIDE's participation in Project ECHO will help us to begin to close the servicing gap that part of the city", said Joe West, director of the CareerLink service center in that area.

Turning the TIDE has been selected as a participant in the Greater Philadelphia Computer Skills Collaborative. GPCSC is a collaboration of industry, government, academic and other

institutions dedicated to bringing improved worker skills and productivity to the Philadelphia area through the introduction of the ICDL certification program. The GPCSC consist of representatives from the IBM Corporation, The Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, The Mayor's Commission on Technology, the City of Philadelphia Arts and Business Council, the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, The United Way of Philadelphia and a diverse list of other participants.

The International Computer Driver's License (ICDL) is the world's leading IT user certification. ICDL is offered in 100 countries around the world and is now available in the United States. ICDL has been endorsed by governments, institutions and leading organizations worldwide. A successful ICDL candidate is: more productive and avoids excessive need for support, makes better use of available technology, has the skills necessary to compete in today's digital marketplace and is ready to acquire additional skills if an IT career path is pursued. To learn more about this exciting program please visit their website at [www.icdlus.com](http://www.icdlus.com)

"Turning the TIDE was a natural fit for this pilot program. They reach a constituency that is not served well by some of the other participating organizations but which could most benefit from this type certification," commented Diane Melley, corporate community relations executive for IBM, and one of the lead organizers in bringing the ICDL to the greater Philadelphia area.. The ICDL partnership will augment and enhance the existing services and programs offered by Turning the TIDE.

After much anticipation, on Saturday, May 17th from 10:00am to 2:00pm Taylor Tabernacle will launch these new programs at its Turning the TIDE technology center. The center will be open to the entire community. We are inviting all residents of West and Southwest Philadelphia to share in the event. Attendees will include: Pastor Lucille Ford, other local pastors and political officials from West Philadelphia, representatives from the Mayor's Office of Faith-based Initiatives, Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, PA CareerLink, and Corporate Sponsors. We will have food and free giveaways. During this event, attendees will be able to tour the technology center, meet the TIDE volunteer teachers, meet the TIDE corporate sponsors and most importantly sign-up for classes. This underscores the importance of this program and the need to get the word out to as many people as possible so they can take advantage of this

wonderful learning opportunity. The computer center is located on the corners of 61st Street and Osage Avenue.

If this is any indication of things to come, Taylor Tabernacle will continue to be at the forefront of spiritual, economical and educational revitalization in West Philadelphia.

For any further information regarding Turning the TIDE please contact:

Jonathan Ford  
Executive Director  
(215) 472-8268 phone  
(215) 474-9401 fax  
fordj@taylortabernacle.com