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Newly Opened Redemption Center in North Tonawanda Gives Workers With Disabilities Paid Job Training

WHEATFIELD, N.Y., Jan. 31, 2018 – Empower, the not-for-profit organization formerly known as Niagara Cerebral Palsy, has opened a second bottle and can redemption center, called Empties for Empower, at 3571 Niagara Falls Blvd.

Empties for Empower is an integrated work setting; workers are people with and without disabilities, who work alongside one another to greet customers, sort and count containers and handle cash transactions. Workers earn a wage while gaining valuable experience and skills that equip them for jobs in the community.

This is a free service that anyone can use. Individuals, nonprofits, community organizations and businesses drop off their bottles and cans for free sorting and return of their full deposit. Empower earns \$.035 for every container processed. So far, \$127,876.00 has been raised, providing an alternate revenue stream to offset government cuts and to sustain the supports and services that Empower provides.

In addition to the Wheatfield facility, Empower operates another redemption center at 4701 Military Rd. (near Rt. 31 intersection) in the Town of Niagara. Both locations are open 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday. There is also a 24-hour drop off bin outside the 4701 Military Rd. location. Customers who create accounts will be credited for drop-offs made after-hours.

According to Empower chief executive officer Jeff Paterson, “Since the first redemption center opened in 2016, there have been so many unexpected positive impacts from unwavering community support to the progress workers have made in realizing their potential. It’s awesome to see workers who were once shy greet return customers by name and with a smile. I urge everyone to stop by and give us a try.”

With 300 employees and a \$14 million budget, Empower is one of Western New York’s 60 largest nonprofit organizations. The administrative offices, preschool, community clinic and service coordination program are located on Lockport Road in the Town of Niagara. The job training and day programs division is based in Niagara Falls, while residential facilities are located throughout Niagara County. Licensed by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and the New York State Education Department, Empower is an affiliate of the Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State.

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