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**NORTH SUBURBAN  
YMCA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Community Teamwork Helps Young Adult with Special Needs Find His Fit at North Suburban YMCA**

**Northbrook, Illinois: October 2014** – For individuals with special needs, the transition from teen to young adult can be complicated and challenging. Local school districts provide education and programming for individuals in cooperation with the North Suburban Special Education District (NSSED), but these services end once an individual reaches age 22. To help these young adults achieve an independent, productive lifestyle, coordination between social service agencies and private companies can provide a bridge to the next stage. One of these community connections recently has placed a young man in a meaningful role at the North Suburban YMCA.

The YMCA received a call from TotalLink2 Community, a Northbrook-based nonprofit organization that helps develop jobs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. TotalLink2 and the NSSED were working with the family of Jonathan Korey to find an appropriate job placement for the 23-year-old Deerfield resident. As TotalLink2's staff assessed Korey's interests, they learned that he had the skills to work on collecting and sorting recyclables. They also learned that he felt comfortable at the Y, where his father had been a long-time member, and that the Y's staff had extensive experience in supporting young people with special needs.

When TotalLink2 Community approached the Y about its client, the Y's staff took proactive steps to create a position that would benefit both Korey and the Y itself. Since the Y did not have an established recycling system in place, management contacted Ben Dykstra, Area Manager at Advanced Disposal, to inquire about setting up a program to fit the Y's budget. Dykstra and Advanced Disposal responded with a donation of bins as well as a significant discount on pickup charges, making it possible for the Y to apply those savings toward Korey's new position.

Korey is now settled in his routine at the Y and enjoys the pride and satisfaction of being employed. His success reflects the central goal of TotalLink2 Community. As summarized by Janice Weinstein, chair of Total Link2 Community, "We're creating opportunities for real work that promote the talents and abilities of our diverse community."

"This was a wonderful example of collaboration and teamwork between educators, service providers, our organization, and local business working together for a common goal," said Howard Schultz, Executive Director/CEO of the North Suburban YMCA. "We are very happy to be able to help Jonathan and to have him on staff." Schultz continued, "The Y partners with other agencies such as Keshet and

NSSSED in supervised work programs, but also has provided a welcoming and accessible environment for all, and now has a workforce that includes nine individuals with disabilities working in various capacities from IT to maintenance to guest services. They all help make a difference every day.”

**About the North Suburban YMCA** The YMCA is a not-for-profit entity and relies on donations to make services available for all families and individuals in its 15-city region. All board members are volunteers, who donate their time, talents and financial resources. Located at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook, the YMCA has served the northern suburbs of Chicago for over 45 years. The Y is about youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, providing programs and services that address the needs of our diverse community and are accessible to all. For more information or to make a donation, contact Barb Flanagan at 847-272-7250 or [bflanagin@nsymca.org](mailto:bflanagin@nsymca.org), or visit [www.nsymca.org](http://www.nsymca.org).

**About TotalLink2 Community** TotalLink2 Community is a nonprofit human service corporation that empowers people with disabilities to live the life they choose within their community, through employment, education and social opportunity. Their vision is to realize a fully-inclusive community that values, accepts and respects the abilities, talents, and rights of each and every person. As neighbors in the community come together in collaborative partnership with TotalLink2, people with developmental disabilities achieve an enviable life so they can live, work, and play like everyone else. They are located at 3100 Dundee, Suite 914 in Northbrook. For more information, contact [info@totallink2.org](mailto:info@totallink2.org) or (224) 412-4718.



*Caption: Teamwork pays off for a young adult with disabilities. Pictured from left are: Ben Dykstra (Area Manager, Advanced Disposal), Liz Stejskal (Job Coach), Jonathan Korey (NSYMCA employee, seated), Janice Weinstein (Executive Director of TotalLink2 Community), and Howard Schultz (Executive Director/CEO of the North Suburban YMCA).*

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