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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BEDC ENROLLING CLIENTS FOR SEPTEMBER LAUNCH CLASS

BROOKLYN, NY—August 8, 2006—Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation's *LAUNCH* program, a unique entrepreneurial training course designed exclusively for clients in recovery from a serious mental illness, is currently accepting applications for its three-month course scheduled to begin in September.

LAUNCH entrepreneur training classes will be held every Wednesday beginning September 14, 2006, and will continue for three months at BEDC's offices in downtown Brooklyn. The program is *free to qualified clients* from all five boroughs of New York City.

Registration is required at least one week before the class begins. For more information and to apply to the *LAUNCH* program, please call Tamara Al-Fadl, program director, at 718-522-4600, ext. 31 or tal-fadl@bedc.org to make an appointment.

LAUNCH, which stands for Lead, Act, Undertake, Navigate, Change, and Heal, offers:

- One-to-one business guidance and business planning.
- Interactive group classroom instruction on entrepreneurship.
- Specialized workshops.
- Networking events.
- Access to retail opportunities.
- Referrals to free legal services.
- And, for those who qualify, referrals to BEDC's Eureka! Loan Fund.

Bill Sweeney, who presents workshops and provides technical assistance to *LAUNCH* clients, will lead the fall class. Mr. Sweeney is a consultant who started his own business after serving 12 years as president of Bio Systems, a healthcare safety services and products company. He joined Bio Systems as a vice president of sales in 1987, and prior to that spent 10 years in sales at Procter and Gamble, Shiley, and Sage Products. He received a Master of Business Administration degree from New York University, and a Bachelor of Science degree from State University of New York, Geneseo.

Since *LAUNCH* began offering classes in 2003, nearly 200 clients have participated or are currently participating in the program. A number of clients have started businesses including landscape services, custom-made bags and accessories, fragrances, handmade jewelry, tutoring services, carpentry, retail, video production, marketing consulting, and others. Many also have participated in the annual bazaars BEDC sponsors to give graduates from all of its entrepreneur programs experience marketing and selling their products and services.

LAUNCH, which is funded by a grant from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, has received national recognition from the Abilities Fund, the Association for Enterprise Opportunities (AEO), and Psychiatric News. The entrepreneurial skills of *LAUNCH* clients have been recognized by the United Nations Year of Microcredit, Brooklyn Business Library's Power Up Business Plan Competition, and other organizations.

BEDC, a private, nonprofit organization, was established in 1979 to stimulate Brooklyn's economy and create job opportunities for the borough and its residents. BEDC has evolved into a multi-service, business-consulting agency, serving more than 1,000 clients annually and offering comprehensive economic development services. More information is available at www.bedc.org.

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