For Immediate Release

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**Benedictine Selected for Federal Employment Program for Individuals with Disabilities**

Baltimore, MD (February 16, 2015) – Benedictine Adult Services Program of Ridgely, Md., has been selected by the Maryland Department of Disabilities to participate in the Federal Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program. As part of the program, Benedictine will further develop its vocational training and employment placement and coaching services for people with disabilities and share its expertise with other regional organizations that provide job training and job placement for individuals with disabilities.

"Benedictine is very happy to have been selected to work on this important program with the Maryland Department of Disabilities and the U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy," said Beth Mathis, Benedictine’s Adult Services Director. "Benedictine has always valued the dignity of work and we are committed to transforming our work training programs to enhance employment and community-based outcomes. This mentoring program will allow us to share our experiences with other organizations that provide employment programs for people with disabilities."

The State of Maryland is one of 15 core states participating in the mentoring program, which will provide intensive onsite and virtual technical assistance to developmental disabilities service providers like Benedictine that are interested in increasing integrated employment opportunities for Marylanders who are developmentally disabled.
Integrated employment refers to jobs held by people with disabilities in workplace settings where the majority of employees do not have disabilities. Individuals with disabilities earn wages consistent with those paid workers without disabilities performing the same or similar work, make at least minimum wage and are paid directly by their employers.

Other Maryland organizations participating in the mentoring program are The Arc of Baltimore; Compass, Inc. in Silver Spring; Spring Dell Center in La Plata; St. Peter's Adult Learning Center in Baltimore; and Way Station, Inc. in Frederick.

The Maryland Department of Disabilities, along with its partner agencies: the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration, Maryland Behavioral Health Administration, Medicaid, and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, identified Benedictine and the other organizations for the Employment First mentoring initiative.

"Maryland is committed to improving employment options and outcomes for people with disabilities," said George P. Failla, Jr., Acting Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities. "The mentoring project demonstrates the importance of coordination and collaboration between State agencies, the U.S. Department of Labor, and community based providers all across our State to work together to realize our goal that employing people with disabilities is good business," Failla noted.

Benedictine provides special education, vocational training, supported employment and housing for 250 children and adults with severe developmental disabilities including autism. In addition to their main campus, Benedictine operates 17 group homes in Talbot, Caroline and Anne Arundel county. One of Benedictine's objectives and greatest strengths is community integration--creating opportunities and supporting individuals as they move out into the world while raising community awareness of the tremendous character and abilities of people with disabilities.

For more information call 410-634-2112, visit online at www.benschool.org, or like Benedictine School on Facebook.

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Photo 021915 Brad and Sal.jpg, caption:
Brad, an individual with Benedictine's Adult Services Vocational Program, at work at Sal's Pizza in Denton.