

A RESOLUTION

Recognizing June 7th, 2014, as "CEA Day" in this Commonwealth.

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is proud to recognize those individuals and organizations who have brought joy and happiness to others and display excellence in an area; and

WHEREAS, Community Empowerment Association Inc. (CEA) was organized by Mr. T. Rashad Byrdsong in 1994 to address the needs of the children, youth, adults, and families among African American communities; and

WHEREAS, CEA utilizes an Afrocentric strategy of integrating culture, social identity and empowerment techniques to effectively achieve desirable goals and objectives; and

WHEREAS, The mission of CEA is to empower communities and families by providing high quality, well-managed, innovative services, including family support services, education, housing, economic development, and employment; and

WHEREAS, The core belief of CEA is that families develop best in a community with a sense of order, positive social interaction, and opportunities supported by positive adults; and

WHEREAS, CEA's cultural frameworks are clearly unique to human and social service providers in the Pittsburgh region, and CEA capitalizes on the powerful role that cultural influences play within the African American communities; and

WHEREAS, As CEA's president and CEO, T. Rashad Byrdsong has successfully expanded the community-based organization from a \$5,000 agency to generating over \$15 million to provide programming that continues to address the effects of systemic issues associated with poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, violence, as well as truancy and emotional and behavioral disturbances in youth; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception in 1994, CEA has served over 14,000 individuals, youth, and families residing in 48 neighborhoods and enrolled in 94 schools and 23 school districts within Pittsburgh and Allegheny County; and

WHEREAS, CEA's distinctive programming works within four identified life-domains (individual, family, community, school), and is guided by 8 core program components which history and research has shown impact family and community changes for self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, In order to work with youth, parents and families to strengthen protective factors for keeping children healthy and well, CEA is focused on serving its participants through these 8 core program components -- Personal Growth & Development, Educational Support, Cultural Enrichment, Economic/Career Exploration, Health and Wellness, Community Service, Recreational Activities, and Family Empowerment; and

WHEREAS, Empowerment begins when these factors are positively addressed in consistent and resourceful ways; hence, as a culturally responsive and community-driven social services organization, CEA is accountable for community empowerment through multi-sector collaboration; and

WHEREAS, Accordingly, CEA is focused on providing violence prevention/intervention, an after-school learning center and summer camp programs, truancy prevention/intervention, therapeutic support and human services, social support groups, community outreach, pre-employment and employment skills training, employment for youth and adults, and mentoring and family empowerment services; and

WHEREAS, In part, to address unemployment in the black community, CEA also developed a landscaping and materials removal and hauling program; and

WHEREAS, The CEA Maintenance Group is a business initiative created for the empowerment of qualified community residents for hire in maintaining residential and commercial properties through landscaping, painting, cleaning, and hauling; and

WHEREAS, In order to achieve continual refinement of quality of client services, service outcomes, and organizational performance, Excellence Research, Inc. (ERI) is providing evidence based evaluative research services designed to help optimize staff performance, client satisfaction, and service outcomes; and

WHEREAS, With guidance from ERI (with over 25 years of experience in conducting applied evaluative and organizational development research), CEA is continually focused on maximizing quality assurance, intervention effectiveness, and organizational performance; and

RESOLVED, The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pays tribute to Community Empowerment Association and its founder, T. Rashad Byrdsong, and offers heartfelt congratulations on the 20th anniversary of this most worthy community - based organization; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives transmit a copy of this resolution to Community Empowerment Association (CEA) at 7120 Kelly Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15208.

