

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Alternatives, Inc. Launches New Center Targeting Employment Opportunities for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community**

### *First State Funded Facility in Central Jersey for Deaf & Hard of Hearing*

**RARITAN, N.J. (July 22, 2009)** – Alternatives, Inc. has opened a new center designed to improve the quality of life and employment opportunities for many of New Jersey's 800,000 people with varying degrees of hearing loss.

The Bridges to Employment Career Development Center at 600 First Avenue provides people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing with a wide range of evaluation, employment training, job coaching, placement and support services. The Career Development Center was established through a major grant from the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), the first such facility funded by DVRS in Central Jersey and only the third funded center statewide. The Career Development Center, located at the Alternatives headquarters, will provide services in collaboration with the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH).

“People with hearing loss often face great challenges in finding and retaining employment, particularly in the current economic environment,” said Nancy Good, President of Alternatives, a non-profit social service agency for those with a wide range of special needs. “There is great uncertainty among both job seekers and employers when it comes to creating effective workplace opportunities. Working with our colleagues at DDHH, Alternatives is confident that we will open up new doors for both those with hearing loss and employers.”

The Career Development Center is administered by Bridges to Employment, a division of Alternatives that provides a comprehensive career counseling and placement program. Services are available to residents of Somerset, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

“Our goal is to provide people with the resources and tools necessary to find and maintain successful employment,” said Glori Bine-Callagy, Director of Bridges to Employment. “We have helped hundreds of people with special needs lead more fulfilling lives through workplace independence and that is our goal for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. At the same time, we are committed to helping companies large and small satisfy their business needs.”

The Career Development Center offers support groups, seminars and workshops related to employment. Bridges to Employment is available to provide short and long term job coaching and additional employment supports for people with a wide range of special needs. The Career Development Center also houses a DDHH Demonstration Center for Assistive Technology.

For more information about the Career Development Center, contact Alyse Betso, Manager of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, at 908-685-1444 ext. 284/VP: (908) 458-9204. Based in Raritan, Alternatives provides residential, employment, and support services for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental illness and other special needs. For information on Alternatives, please call 908-685-1444 or visit [www.alternativesinc.org](http://www.alternativesinc.org).

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