THE CLOSE IT SUMMIT announces 2019 Shift Award Winners National Leaders recognized for their innovations in hiring and training

Winning companies are recognized for efforts to ensure equity and access to jobs and pathways for advancement.

SANTA FE, N.M. (PRWEB) November 06, 2019 -- The Close It Summit (https://closeit.org) announced the winners of the national SHIFT Awards. Top-level awards went to Greyston Foundation, Inc of Yonkers, New York and EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute, Cleveland, Ohio. Other companies receiving awards included: (Gold) Hot Chicken Takeover, Nusenda Credit Union, Techtonic, Televerde, Veterans United Home Loans; (Silver) Ability2Work, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, Metis Technology Solutions, Inc., Taos Ski Valley, Vericool; and (Turquoise) Chobani, Cornbread Hustle, and Ponce’s Mexican Restaurant.

The SHIFT Awards were presented at the CLOSE IT Summit in recognition of innovations in hiring, training, and pathways. CLOSE IT is an annual summit promoting the shift to a skills-based economy as critical for ensuring economic success for both the demand and supply side of the workforce. This year’s Summit was the seventh annual event. CLOSE IT was held in Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 15-16, with over 500 global leaders engaging on the rapid shift in the way individuals work and learn and how that will impact our future. A jury selected the winners from a pool of nominations and applications that were submitted from across the United States.

The SHIFT Awards were sponsored by the CLOSE IT Summit and the Society of Human Resource Management, New Mexico (SHRM-NM). “The SHIFT Awards put the spotlight on innovative solutions by business leaders that impact individuals and communities in profound ways. The common theme among these diverse honorees is the creation of new pathways for connecting people to meaningful work and sustainable professional growth. These unique hiring and training solutions were created to address specific workforce needs and solve for business challenges. It’s inspiring to see how these forward-thinking organizations are creating better workplaces for a better world,” stated Sean Sullivan, Director of HR for SHRM in Washington, DC, who presented the awards at the Summit.

The top-level Platinum award was given to two companies: Greyston Foundation, Inc. and EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute. Greyston was selected for their practice of ‘Open Hiring,’ which evolved from the founder’s vision to ‘hire anyone who wanted to work-no questions, no judgment.’ The Greyston Center for Open Hiring (The Center) was conceived in 2015 when Mike Brady was appointed CEO. Prior, as General Manager of Greyston Bakery, Mike saw first-hand the power of a job for people who had been denied jobs for reasons such as criminal justice history, lack of education or job experience.

EDWINS Leadership and Restaurant Institute was recognized for the leadership of founder Brandon Chrostowski for his creation of multiple programs, including a six-month program conducted at EDWINS Restaurant in Cleveland, Ohio as well as within prison walls. Brandon’s approach is simple: arm those re-entering society with a skill set and a smile. The program provides career pathways rooted in the techniques of traditional French cuisine and the fundamentals of fine-dining hospitality, providing tuition-free education in culinary arts. EDWINS’ training and employment program offers the support necessary for successful reentry, including free housing, life skills, access to healthcare, financial literacy, and more. Nearly 100% of their students have been incarcerated, were predominately low-income earners, and are from Cleveland’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. Their 315 alumni have a recidivism rate of less than 1%. 

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“We thank the judges for their efforts in selecting the finalists this year. It was an impressive group of innovators piloting shifts in hiring and training. We look forward to the 2020 Shift Awards at the CLOSE IT Summit next year,” stated Jamai Blivin, Producer and Founder of the annual conference.

Complete list of winners 2019 SHIFT Awards and company contact:

**PLATINUM**
EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute, Chris Keeney, chriskeeney@edwinsrestaurant.org
Greyston Foundation, Inc., Joseph Kenner, joek@greyston.org

**GOLD**
Hot Chicken Takeover, Brittney Price, brittney@hotchickentakeover.com
Nusenda Credit Union, Robin Brule, rbrule@nusenda.org
Techtonic, Nate Aswege, nate.aswege@techtonic.com
Televerde, Jen Lau, jennifer.lau@televerde.com
Veterans United Home Loans, Loreli Wilson, lwilson@veteransunited.com

**SILVER**
Ability2Work, Karen Monroy, KarenM@Ability2Work.org
Hyatt Hotels Corporation, Jessica Schultz, jessica.schultz@hyatt.com
Metis Technology Solutions, Inc, Jennifer Paulik, jennifer.paulik@metis-tech.com
Taos Ski Valley, Inc., Jessica Caskey, Jessica.Caskey@skitaos.com
Vericool, Inc., Leslie Errington, Lerrington@vericoolpacking.com

**TURQUOISE**
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