

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Archway Celebrates Grand Opening of Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts

Social enterprise offers community employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

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ATCO, NEW JERSEY (March 26, 2019) – On Wednesday, March 20th, 2019, Archway Programs celebrated the launch of its first social enterprise, Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts, at a ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening event. Waterford Township officials, Archway employees, clients, customers and local community members joined together to unveil the new retail flower shop located on the White Horse Pike in Atco, New Jersey. The new flower shop creates custom floral arrangements for all events and holidays, and provides fresh flowers, as well as a variety of hand-crafted items and unique gifts from other local South Jersey businesses. What sets Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts apart is that it employs individuals with disabilities, promoting inclusion and supporting the community.

Directly improving the job skills of people facing barriers in the workplace, Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts employs adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as special needs students from the Archway Schools. This gives individuals with different developmental abilities an opportunity to achieve independence, productivity and integration into the community.

“Archway Programs changes the lives of people with disabilities every day. We believe that everyone should have access to fulfilling and competitive employment opportunities that gives them a sense of purpose,” said Shawn Gibson, Chief Operating Officer of Archway Programs.

Archway’s main focus is to help students and adults with disabilities learn skills that can translate to a position in the community. Through this new initiative, the South Jersey community has an opportunity to support programs to help individuals with disabilities in their communities.



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www.archwayprograms.org



Pictured left to right is George Richards, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, Waterford Township Committeewoman Mary Sura, Archway Upper School student Serenity Wested, Archway adult client Michelle Horner, Archway Upper School student Teddy McCrone, Store Manager Kristine Henle-Blank, Archway client Lisa Horner, Chief Operating Officer Shawn Gibson, and Archway resident Tamaria Jones.



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Carissa Stark, Archway client from the Adult Counseling and Therapy Program, came to show her support.

“This gives individuals with disabilities a chance to work alongside others in their community. Those in the community will be able to understand different learning styles of these individuals so they can integrate more into our society, which is very important for everyone,” stated Gibson.

For over fifty years, Archway Programs has been an advocate for thousands of families throughout New Jersey. What started off as a summer camp for children with disabilities, quickly developed into an array of programs and unmatched services designed to meet the individualized needs of children and adults throughout New Jersey. Over the course of its history, Archway Programs has maintained a strong partnership with Waterford Township as the nonprofit progressed through innovative development and expansion of services providing new opportunities throughout the community.

“Waterford Township congratulates Archway Programs on this exciting next step of opening Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts. We are delighted to have this new business in the Atco community and are looking forward to continuing this partnership with such a wonderful organization,” said Waterford Township Committeewoman Mary Sura. Township Administrator Susan Danson also attended the event to support the new flower shop.



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Waterford Township Committeewoman Mary Sura welcomes Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts to the Atco community.

Accomplished floral designer and long-time Archway employee Kristine Henle-Blank is enjoying her new role as Store Manager of Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts and is thrilled to have the opportunity to be a positive contributor to the local Atco economy.

“To say that I am excited to be a member of the local business community of Atco would be a major understatement. Waterford Township has been extremely supportive throughout the years and we couldn’t be more grateful for their support. I am looking forward to this new adventure to further Archway’s mission and offer new opportunities to people in our community,” said Henle-Blank.



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Archway Upper School student Serenity Wested with Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts Store Manager Kristine Henle-Blank.

Prior to her new role as store manager, Kristine served the last decade as Horticultural Instructor of Archway's Career Education Program, working alongside Archway students through the Career Education Program. Students from the Archway Schools used an on-campus greenhouse and flower workshop, which is offered to students enrolled in the Horticultural Class. This class gives students opportunities to participate in one of the many on-campus structured learning experiences. Those who are eligible to participate in off-campus job sites, now have the option of working at Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts, Archway's first off-campus storefront.



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Students from the Archway Schools participating in an on-campus structured learning experience, horticultural class, offered through the Career Education Program; Photo courtesy of the Courier-Post.

Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts also offers new opportunities to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities served through Archway's Human Services Department. Some of Archway's adult programs include community living supports, transition planning, prevocational training, community based supports, community inclusion services, and residential community homes. Individuals will be hired at the new flower shop based on their abilities and interests and do jobs in floral arrangement, inventory and customer service.



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Sisters Michelle and Lisa Horner are adult clients from Archway's Supportive Living Program, one of the many programs offered under Archway's Human Services Department.

Blue Violet Flowers and Gifts is located in the Town Square Plaza at 302 White Horse Pike Suite B7 in Atco, New Jersey. Regular business hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.; Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.; and closed on Sundays. Check out the website to learn more www.bluevioletflowers.org and follow the store's social media pages on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest news and updates (@BlueVioletFlowersNJ).



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For more information on Archway Programs, visit www.archwayprograms.org.

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About Archway Programs

Since 1965, Archway Programs has been meeting the individualized needs of thousands of families throughout the state of New Jersey. Archway Programs is a diverse, non-profit, human services organization which includes approved private schools for students with disabilities in addition to several model programs providing unmatched services. Built on a solid foundation of core values, providing safety, possessing compassion and promoting individuality, Archway Programs strives to improve the life of every individual served. Our goal is to ensure that each individual's needs are met and customized services are provided and partnered with passionate, committed and talented professionals in a safe environment. Over 440 individuals are currently employed by Archway Programs and this dedicated and talented staff provides services to over 1,800 children and adults requiring individualized care. Please visit www.archwayprograms.org for more information.



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