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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Brevard Achievement Center To Meet Key Members of Congress This Week As Part Of  
SourceAmerica's Grassroots Advocacy Conference Held In Washington, D.C.**

Rockledge, Fla. – Brevard Achievement Center's (BAC) President and CEO, Amar Patel, along with Patrick Air Force Base Commissary Associate, Joel T. and his mother, Jean, will meet with key members of Congress on Wednesday, June 18 as part of the 2014 SourceAmerica Grassroots Advocacy Conference held in Washington, D.C. from June 16-19. The four-day conference brings the beneficiaries of the AbilityOne Program, or people with disabilities employed at an AbilityOne federal employment site, and their family members to Washington so that they have the opportunity to advocate on their own behalf.

The BAC team will meet with U.S. Senators Marco Rubio (R) and Bill Nelson (D), as well as U.S. Congressmen Bill Posey (R) and Jeff Miller (R) to discuss key legislative issues like supporting the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act, as well as opposing the Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act of 2013. SourceAmerica and its partner agencies like BAC support efforts to modernize programs and policies that increase the quantity and quality of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and efforts to strengthen the Fair Labor Standards Act including enhanced enforcement, penalties for violations and data collection. There is opposition, however, to H.R. 831, the Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act of 2013, and any legislation to eliminate the principles of self-determination, the rights of individuals, or that would curtail employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities.

"While we are grateful to our leaders on the Hill for strongly encouraging federal contractors and subcontractors to reach a seven percent utilization goal with their hiring practices and setting aside work opportunities through AbilityOne contracts, we still have a long way to go before we significantly lower the unemployment rate for people with disabilities," said Patel.

According to the latest published report by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Labor Market Statistics, of the 32,044 Brevard County residents in the labor force that were unemployed in 2012, 12% were people with disabilities.

"As a person with a disability that resides in Brevard County, Joel will be a terrific advocate for others like him in our community," Patel said. "Because as any one of them will tell you, people with disabilities constitute a very hard working labor force that every organization should consider employing."

Nationwide the unemployment rate in May for people with disabilities was 12.7% as opposed to 5.8% for those without disabilities, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Today, one in five adults living in the U.S. has a disability and more than 22 million families include one or more members with disabilities. In addition, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that fewer than 20% of people with disabilities are in the labor force as opposed to nearly 70% of people without disabilities. Even more staggering is the fact that Census data shows that there are 9.4 million people with significant disabilities in the U.S. who could work given the appropriate opportunity and support.

For more information about SourceAmerica and the AbilityOne Program, visit [www.sourceamerica.org](http://www.sourceamerica.org). Further information about BAC, its programs and services can be located at [www.bacbrevard.com](http://www.bacbrevard.com).

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