



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Racker, One of the County's Largest Employers Certifies as Living Wage with Tompkins Workers' Ctr

Racker and Tompkins County Workers' Center are excited to report that Racker was recently certified as a Living Wage Employer.

The Tompkins County Living Wage is calculated bi-annually by Alternatives Federal Credit Union. The current Living Wage is \$15.32 per hour. All staff at Racker earn more than \$15.32 per hour.

Racker currently employs 735 staff in Tompkins, Cortland and Tioga Counties. They provide a wide continuum of services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. In 2013, the organization developed a strategic plan that included providing a living wage for every employee. At that time, the Tompkins County Living Wage standard was \$12.42. During this nine-year journey, Racker implemented organizational changes that included efficiencies that moved money to staff wages, particularly for those providing direct care. They ramped up advocacy efforts while working with local state legislators to increase reimbursement rates from contracted New York State agencies. The combination of those efforts allowed Racker to close a \$3 million Living Wage gap, moving the compensation of over 300 staff from below a Living Wage to above a Living Wage.

Sandra Morris, a direct support professional at Racker, reflected on the new certification: "I am so proud to work for an agency that has put in so much effort to become a certified livable wage employer, because it shows that they care about their employees and the people they serve. I believe when people are happy and less stressed, they are able to work better. They don't need to worry about sacrificing time with family by getting a second job just to be able to make ends meet. Being happy at work and being happy at home go hand in hand. When we are happy, we transfer that happiness to the people around us. I feel that Racker has the same philosophy."

Dan Brown, Executive Director at Racker, stated that reaching this goal was a team effort, and financially acknowledges the value of our staff and their impact on our Mission: *We support people with disabilities and their families to lead fulfilling lives by providing opportunities to learn and be connected with others.*

Pete Meyers, Coordinator of TCWC says: "The TCWC views Racker's willingness and commitment to pay all of their workers a Living Wage, especially considering the fact that the industry that Racker occupies doesn't typically pay all of its workers a Living Wage, a tremendous achievement by Racker. We're very thankful for Dan Brown's work to make a Living Wage a reality for all Racker staff!"

Tompkins County Workers' Center is a nonprofit organization that leads the Tompkins County community in a 'moral and economic imperative of paying workers a Living Wage.' Their Living Wage Certification Program provides a standard for local employers and recognizes those businesses that are able to achieve that baseline.

Racker and Tompkins County Workers' Center are proud to announce this achievement and will continue to work to ensure our community provides a fair wage to our neighbors.

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