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Queens Economic Development Corp. Celebrates the Entrepreneur Space's First Birthday with Free Food, Great Cheer and Liz Taylor's Cake

Long Island City, NY — The Queens Economic Development Corporation, 10 elected officials, two commissioners of city agencies and more than 400 other attendees from around the Big Apple celebrated the Entrepreneur Space's first anniversary on Jan. 25, 2012, with free food made by clients, a festive atmosphere and a 20-year-old cake from Hollywood actress Elizabeth Taylor's 60th birthday party.

Located at 36-46 37th St. in Long Island City, the Entrepreneur Space, which is affectionately known as the "Incubator," officially opened on Jan. 19, 2011. This 12,500-sq.-ft., NYC Economic Development Corporation-sponsored food-and-business hub features a fully equipped commercial kitchen, offices and classrooms that entrepreneurs can rent at below-market rates as they build their businesses. To improve outcomes, QEDC also offers a wide array of business counseling, technical assistance and financial classes to clients on site.

Currently, the Incubator has over 155 clients, including various bakers, an employment firm and a tutoring service. During the party, more than 30 clients – including sweets maker Goldleaf Toffee; artisan jams and preserves company Josephine's Feast; and vegetarian seitan gyro manufacturer Taft Foodmasters -- provided free samples of their creations. Plus, the Museum of the Moving Image donated 300 passes providing two admissions to its cultural center for the price of one adult.

Until its mid-party unveiling amid chants of "Happy Birthday," the 20-year-old chocolate cake – roughly four inches in diameter and adorned with sugary, purple flower petals and green leaves – was on display in a glass case (see attached photos). The pastry was made for Liz Taylor's 60th birthday party, which took place at Disneyland in February 1992 with Barry Manilow as the master of ceremony. In addition to Elton John, Melissa Manchester, Jon Voight, Henry Winkler, David Bowie, Gregory Peck, Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick, Joni Mitchell, Richard Gere and Cindy Crawford, acclaimed author Jane Scovell, who helped La Liz write the book *Elizabeth Takes Off*, attended the ceremony...and kept her serving of cake. Recently, Scovell donated her sweet portion and its display case to the Incubator.

"I wanted a special remembrance of the occasion, something unique," said Scovell. "I knew I'd found my memento when an individual, round, milk chocolate frosted birthday cake was distributed to each guest. Putting aside all thoughts of eating it, I gently wrapped my treasure in a violet paper napkin, brought it back to the hotel and placed it in a Ziploc bag. The next morning, clutching an insulated bag containing the cake, I flew back to New York, where it immediately went into my freezer."

The birthday party was proud to have Queens sponsors Cascon Baking Company, a Whitestone-based, full-service bakery; Kaufman Astoria Studios, an internationally renowned film and television production center; and Vallo Transportation which provides bus services throughout the city.

"In a time of economic uncertainty, the Entrepreneur Space has helped start businesses, creating jobs and opportunities for those looking to get back to work again," City Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer said. "By providing an affordable space to budding business owners, they have been able to develop niche services which have created an eclectic mix of products. From tasty taco ingredients to creamy cupcakes, hundreds of industrious individuals have looked to the Entrepreneur Space to create a diverse range of products which many city residents enjoy today. I congratulate the Entrepreneur Space on its first birthday, may it be the first of many."

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“Small food manufacturers are a critically important part of the city’s economy, providing well-paying jobs and representing a key area of growth in the city’s industrial sector,” said New York City Economic Development Corporation President Seth W. Pinsky. “The one-year anniversary of the Entrepreneur Space, which now has over 155 clients, represents an important milestone in the Bloomberg Administration’s successful implementation of a citywide incubator network that is providing entrepreneurs with the resources they need to grow and succeed.”

“The Entrepreneur Space helps small businesses start and grow by providing affordable kitchen and office space, as well as a place for smart and talented people to come together and work on ideas,” said Rob Walsh, commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services. “By supporting small businesses, incubators help create a stronger economy and more jobs for New Yorkers. Happy birthday to the Entrepreneur Space, and may you continue to cook up success for small businesses in NYC.”

"I congratulate the QEDC and Seth Bornstein for their wonderful work in making the Entrepreneur Space such a great success," said Council Member Karen Koslowitz, who chairs the City Council’s Economic Development Committee. “The Entrepreneur Space represents the best of government and business working together in order to strengthen the small business sector. I have visited incubators in Queens and Manhattan and know firsthand how important they are to the city’s economic recovery and future."

Assemblywoman Margaret Markey added: “I am delighted to salute the Queens Economic Development Corporation on the first anniversary of its Entrepreneur Space. In one short year this project has demonstrated how new businesses can be nurtured and grown and the enormous potential it has for creating jobs and boosting the Queens economy.”

“I want to congratulate QEDC and Executive Director Seth Bornstein on the success of the Entrepreneur Space,” said Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan. “This program has allowed many small businesses in Western Queens to get the support they need to succeed. After many visits to the incubator, I am very impressed with the programs they offer and hope they continue to help small businesses in our area to get their start.”

City Council Deputy Majority Leader Leroy Comrie added: “The Entrepreneur Space is an economic engine for the borough of Queens. Happy birthday and many happy returns.”

State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky echoed these sentiments, saying: “I am so proud of the Queens Economic Development Corporation, led by Seth Bornstein, and of all the work they have done to support small business growth in Queens. In a difficult economy, small businesses are our best hope for recovery, and QEDC’s incubator combines business development with Queens’ culinary diversity.”

Senator Michael Gianaris said: “As job creation continues to be our number one priority, the Entrepreneur Space will help bring an influx of small businesses to Long Island City at a crucial time. This is a great example of a successful program catering to the development of new jobs and businesses. I wish the Entrepreneur Space a happy first birthday!”

“There is so much so much to celebrate right now, as we exceeded all expectations during the Incubator’s first year,” said QEDC Executive Director Seth Bornstein. “We have great clients producing fantastic products, and we really hope to build on the success in 2012. Whether talking about this party or the business world, the Incubator really takes the cake.”

Look for “Discover Queens,” “Entrepreneur Space,” “Queens Economic Development Corporation” and “Queens Women’s Business Center” on Facebook or go to discoverqueens.info or queensny.org.