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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **RAYMOND JAMES CHARITABLE GRANT HELPS PROMISE LAUNCH MAILING FULLFILLMENT ENTERPRISE**

BREVARD COUNTY — Promise, Inc., will soon launch its newest social enterprise, thanks to a \$10,000 grant awarded by Raymond James Charitable, a 501(c)3 nonprofit foundation.

In addition to providing affordable housing, life-skills classes and a plethora of activities for its 125 residents with special needs, one of the core values of Promise in Brevard, a nonprofit organization based in West Melbourne, Florida, has always been employment.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half of Promise's population has secured long-term employment, whether out in the community at more than 30 area businesses or within its own social enterprises, which include the Promise Treasures Thrift Shoppe at the corner of 192 and Wickham Road; Aves' Place Ice Cream at West Melbourne Community Park; Sweet Sue's Salon at the Promise Main Campus; as well as its homemade All-Natural Doggie Treat and Soy-Based Clean Candle enterprises, which are currently offered in more than 40 businesses throughout Brevard County.

One of Promise's goals is for every resident who wants to have a job to have the chance to be matched with an employment opportunity that meets their needs and interests, said Tammy Farmer, marketing and communications manager for Promise, Inc.

"Some of Promise's residents; however, are very eager to be employed, but are more comfortable and have better success in an individualized, in-house setting with additional job-coaching and simplified work tasks," said Kristin Schwartz, Promise Employment Specialist.

Thus, sparking the concept for Promise's new Mailing Fulfillment enterprise.

Once the enterprise is up and running, Promise will soon be able to solicit businesses and agencies from throughout the community who wish to send mass mailings to its clients. The agency will provide the content and addresses for the mailings, then our Promise employees will fold the content, place it in envelopes and affix the appropriate labels and postage. Included with

each mailing is a message thanking the client for supporting individuals with disabilities by providing unique employment opportunities.

Within the past few months, Promise has been fortunate to partner with several local agencies, including The Platinum Group Keller Williams as well as Carpenter Kessel Homeselling Team, to complete 10 test mailings. The program proved to be efficient and successful for both parties, providing vocational training opportunities for residents, as well as an opportunity for these businesses to relay to clients their support of the special needs' community.

“We chose Promise and its residents to help support our direct mail initiative because we felt as though it was an opportunity to truly invest in our community,” said PJ McLoughlin, Realtor & Team Lead for The Platinum Group Keller Williams. “We deeply value the impact Promise has in the community and its various partnerships with businesses across Brevard County.”

“And from a personal standpoint,” Mr. McLoughlin continued, “I have had several clients who have relocated to this area specifically so that their family members could live at Promise, so we are very familiar with the unique experience Promise provides and were anxious to partner in new ways. During the pandemic, the Promise team got very creative in providing opportunities for us to reach out to our customers in a timely way through this initiative. We look forward to our next project together.”

Out of nearly 300 applicants, Promise was one of 16 charities from across the nation to be selected as a 2021 grant recipient of the Raymond James Charitable Grant Initiative, funded by its board of trustees.

“This funding will provide seed money by allowing us to purchase equipment and fund job-coaching hours for our newest social enterprise, which will be a perfect employment opportunity for a subset of our residents,” said Jeff Kiel, President/CEO of Promise, Inc. “We are so grateful to Raymond James Charitable for supporting our disabilities community here at Promise.”

While some of our resident employees may need a little extra time to complete their tasks than someone without a disability, the overall impact of this enterprise will speak volumes, Mr. Kiel added. Funding from this Raymond James Charitable grant will help pay for a folding machine, job-coaching and offset unbillable hours during the program's launch.

In the short-term, Promise estimates providing employment for six-to-eight part-time employees.

Once Promise hires its job coaches and provides the necessary training for its residents who are interested in being employed in the Mailing Fulfillment enterprise, Promise will begin marketing it to the community.

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#### *About Promise, Inc.*

*Established in 2009, Promise is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to provide affordable, independent housing for individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities utilizing public and private partnerships to develop a model community. For more information about*

*Promise and its mission of providing opportunities for individuals with special needs, please visit [www.promiseinbrevard.com](http://www.promiseinbrevard.com).*

*About Raymond James Charitable*

*Raymond James Charitable is a 501(c)(3) public charity established in 2000 to provide clients a means to engage in philanthropy in a strategic, efficient manner. Raymond James Charitable has supported charities with more than \$700 million in grants through the generosity of its donors. Additional information is available at [www.raymondjamescharitable.org](http://www.raymondjamescharitable.org).*