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**LaGuardia Community College's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program  
Celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on June 19**

Long Island City, NY—May 29, 2013—LaGuardia Community College's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program, which was the first health career program at the College, will be celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 19.

Graduates, current students, and faculty past and present will come together to celebrate the program's milestone at the Poolside Café and Cobblestone Courtyard from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

During the formal program, keynote addresses will be made by Professor Mary Beth Early and Dr. Fran Babiss, a 1976 graduate. The program will also honor those individuals who provided fieldwork education over the years; more than 100 institutions through the metropolitan area and beyond have partnered with LaGuardia to provide valuable internships for students.

The OTA program was established in 1973 when the founders decided that in order to sustain science courses in a business college atmosphere there had to be a health care program. They chose occupational therapy since it was a growing field and was not yet offered at CUNY.

That same year, Professor Naomi Greenberg became the first health career faculty member. The program, which had an articulation agreement with York College, offered its first 25 students a trend-setting model curriculum that provided both day and evening classes.

Today, the program is one of more than a dozen majors within the Health Sciences Department with current year enrollment in the major at 388 students. The program has graduated over 1,500 students.

The program prides itself on preparing its students to provide services for people who have suffered injuries, children with learning disabilities and older adults who are experiencing physical and cognitive changes. In 2012, the first year the national certification exam was required to practice as an occupational therapy assistant in New York State, 83% of LaGuardia graduates passed, beating the 81% national average.

In another accomplishment, four students and a faculty member from four continents authored an article that will appear in the May 2013 issue of the *World Federation of Occupational Therapists Bulletin*. Since only one article from the U.S. was allowed to be considered, the article, "Significance of Culture when Working

with Families,” had to be selected by the American Occupational Therapy Association before going through an arduous peer review.

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LaGuardia Community College located in Long Island City, Queens, was founded in 1971 as a bold experiment in opening the doors of higher education to all, and we proudly carry forward that legacy today. LaGuardia educates students through over 50 degree, certificate and continuing education programs, providing an inspiring place for students to achieve their dreams. Upon graduation, LaGuardia students’ lives are transformed as family income increases 17%, and students transfer to four-year colleges at three times the national average. Part of the City University of New York (CUNY), LaGuardia is a nationally recognized leader among community colleges for boundary-breaking success educating underserved students. At LaGuardia we imagine new ideas, create new curriculum and pioneer programs to make our community and our country stronger. Visit [www.laguardia.edu](http://www.laguardia.edu) to learn more.

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