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This Week on Financial Voices Radio

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Guest

Hadass Sheffer, President of The Graduate! Network, Inc.

This non-profit organization champions collaborative local initiatives for increasing the rates of adults with college degrees. In 2005, Ms. Sheffer co-founded Graduate! Philadelphia, an initiative to increase the number of adult college graduates in the Greater Philadelphia area. In this capacity, she built a broad-based regional coalition organized to advance the interests of adult students, and a new college success support platform for adults. Ms. Sheffer continues to lead Graduate! Philadelphia, and is helping to build regional capacity across the country for getting more adults to finish college, through adaptations of the Graduate! model such as Graduate! Connecticut, Complete The Degree-Chicago, and Graduate Memphis.

Graduate! Philadelphia, which originated in Philadelphia in 2005, was the first regional, cross-sector effort to address this acute local need. In the Philadelphia metro area at the time, more than 320,000 adults between the ages of 24 and 60, fully 18 percent of the population in this age range, had started but never completed a college degree. Hitherto largely overlooked in economic and workforce development and college access programming, Graduate! Philadelphia championed investment in these adults because completing college results in them quickly infusing the local talent pool with their new skills and knowledge, moving families out of poverty or near-poverty. For their children, they reduce the risk of dropping out of high school and college associated with first generation college students, and they create a multiplier effect by helping others succeed in college.

For more information please contact:

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Links to other valuable resources provided by Graduate! Philadelphia:

- Public vs. Private loans:
http://projectonstudentdebt.org/private_loan_questions.vp.html
http://projectonstudentdebt.org/look_leap.vp.html
- Repaying public loans: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/repaying.jsp>
- Income Based Repayment: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/IBRPlan.jsp>
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/PSF.jsp#Q1>
- Lots of other important information about Federal grants and loans, including cost and repayment calculators:
<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp> (In English)