

SWWDB Update

A publication describing matters of interest regarding the services and programs of the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board



*Grow Today,
Invest in
Tomorrow*

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- Java & Jobs Still Taking Participants
- Youth Worker Recovers from Near-Death Experience

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KANDU PARTICIPANTS FIND JOB SUCCESS

Kandu Industries, which has provided work opportunities to people with disabilities for over 40 years, has been able to benefit greatly from the efforts of three workers participating in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)-funded Summer Youth Employment Program. The workers are located, trained, and placed by the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board. (SWWDB).

Ryan Mutchler, Rebecca White, and Steven Torine are all enjoying the program while helping Kandu, and earning money at the same time. Their supervisor, Holly Clark, said, "I'm really impressed by the participants. They've all done very well."

Ryan, who is 17, plans to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) after completing high school. At his job with Kandu, he cares for

patients who attend adult day services. The patients all have some form of disability that prevents them from independent living, such as Alzheimer's. "I could see this as a career some day," he said. He initially planned on becoming a firefighter, "Because I want to help people," but since having this job, he's changed to the CNA plan.

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BELOIT YOUTH SUPPORT FAMILIES THROUGH CONSTRUCTION JOBS

For both Damarvis Neal and Deon Finkely of Beloit, landing work through the Summer Youth Employment Program has been a Godsend, as they are both supporting young children. The two work on the Merrill Housing Project, which started in 2007 when Community Action purchased 12 vacant neglected rental properties in Beloit. The program is supported by ARRA dollars, with the SWWDB coordinating and

operating the program, working in cooperation with the Community Action Program.

"I would definitely be looking for a job if it were not for this program," said Neal, who has a seven-month-old to support. The money he earned goes directly to support his daughter and family as it is the only source of constant income to provide for them. And Neal tries his best to please his daughter, who really makes him happy.

"As long as my daughter is satisfied, then I'm happy," he said.

Deon Finkely, also a construction laborer, supports a one-year-old son and has a daughter on the way, due September. He not only works at the construction site but adds 30 hours a week at a fast-food restaurant. It's not his first work experience, but it is his first exposure to a possible career.

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KANDU PARTICIPANTS FIND SUCCESS (Continued)

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Rebecca White

"I've learned the difference between a job, which you have to have, and a career, which is something you like to do."

--Steven Torine



Twenty-four-year-old Rebecca attends Blackhawk Technical College (BTC), majoring in Business management and Criminal Justice. She relates well with younger kids and likes being a role model, especially to her four-year-old daughter.

Being the receptionist at Kandu is not her first job, but she enjoys this more than the others. "I work great with the people and they are very accommodating with my changing schedule," she said. However, she says office work is not in her future plans as her BTC major reveals.

Steven, who will be junior this fall at Parker High School, performs maintenance at Kandu, but it is diverse, with tasks ranging from trimming greenery to cleaning. He says Kandu provides a better work environment for him than he is used to, and he knows that in the future he

would like a job where he works outdoors. "This experience has helped me to come out of my shell as a person," he said. If outdoor work doesn't come to fruition for Steven, he said becoming a computer programmer would also be a possibility.

"Knowing that we're keeping some of these participants out of trouble and off the streets is a big positive of this program," Clark said. "It's a good feeling to know that we're providing skills to enter and survive in the real world," she added.

The experience has changed how all three view work and careers. "I've learned the difference between a job, which you have to have, and a career, which is something you like to do," Steven said. "I used to work in factory where being fast meant more money. Now work takes time and the amount of effort you put into it makes

a difference." For Rebecca, working with people and developing social skills through monitoring phone calls has been extremely beneficial to her. "I like this program—and it's good for the economy," she added. Steve plans on using part of his earnings toward purchasing his first computer.

"We have so many youth that are doing so well," said Clark. "Plus this program has helped out immensely by cleaning up the area." Kandu enables workers to achieve their maximum potential and enjoy the dignity of being productive citizens. Started in 1961 with a small group of parents and supportive community leaders convening to find ways to meet the employment needs of their sons and daughters with disabilities, Kandu has grown and today employs over 200 "clients" (persons with disabilities) along with a staff of 40.

CORD NEWSLETTERS AVAILABLE AT SWWDB WEBSITE

Since January, 2009, shortly after the CORD (Collaborative Organizations Responding to Dislocation) organization was formed, they have published a monthly newsletter designed to assist the unemployed-dislocated worker. Topics run the gamut from helpful tips

and hints to upcoming workshops and latest job-seeking information.

Those newsletters are available at the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board's web site at www.swwdb.org. Just find the box at the right side of the front page under

CORD Newsletters and click on it. You can read or download any of them, which come out on or near the first of each month. They are also seeking wider distribution, so if you (or any others you know of) may want to link to the site, please do so or let us know of your desires.

BELOIT WORKERS SUPPORT FAMILIES (continued)

(Continued From Page 1)

Finkely moved from Chicago to Beloit to escape the violence and raise his son and daughter in a much safer environment. He says the ARRA-funded program is excellent—"This is the best experience ever. This environment allows me to be myself and have fun," he explained. The money he earns first goes support his son, then his mother, and if there's anything left, "I'll use it for what I need."

Their supervisor, Aaron Nottingham, feels the results of the program will help teach participants like Neal and Finkely about construction while helping to curb negative attitudes, help them to be positive, and develop working relationships with co-workers. "It's great to see them get through their barriers to achieve success," he said. Between Nottingham and the other site supervisor they have over 30 years of construction experience building homes.

Damarvis Neal believes this experience will affect his future in that he can take his positive attitude, skills and experience and apply it to the Fresh Start program in the fall. The program assists troubled youth continue and complete their education. This work experience has furthered Neal's desire and plans to go on to school to pursue a degree related to architecture or construction.

Similarly, working in construction has sharpened Deon Finkely's goal to work in construction and become an architect. "I have one thing on my mind—my son and keeping my family safe," he said. "They're the reason I'm working so hard. I don't want them to go through what I had to growing up."

Both workers agree that the largest impact the program has had on them has been learning how to carry a positive attitude plus the actual construction skills and processes of building. They cite learning how to read and

develop blueprints plus using and operating construction equipment as positive boons to their job skills.

In fact, Finkely is so motivated to learn the trade that he stays late when he can, working on his own personal projects, including an entertainment center. He says, "It's a positive program for those who want to learn how to succeed in life." He has changed his views on work—"it doesn't have to be fast-paced like in fast-food," he said. "It's shown me the difference between a job and a career, and how strong social relationships can be developed in a career setting."

Their work also helps the Merrill Housing Project, located in one of Beloit's most economically-challenged areas, by developing rehabilitated homes, to be sold to low- and middle-income families with the goal of having more owner-occupied homes, revitalizing the neighborhood.



Both Deon Finkely (above) and Damarvis Neal (below) are earning and learning on their construction job sites.

ENERGY CONSERVATION TEAM FEATURED ON TV

Two students participating in the Summer Youth Work Experience program along with program supervisors and officials were interviewed as a part of the *Discover Janesville* cable TV program.

Host Yuri Rashkin spoke to Program Coordinator Ron Coppennoll, CESA 2's Glenn

Swedlund, the workers' supervisor Cliff Wakefield, with Beneficial Insulation Solutions, Inc., and participants Shirley Burke and Erica Schafer.

The workers were part of a group placed in jobs providing experience in their chosen career pathway. The

students were heavily involved in shooting insulation into the homes to assist in the weatherization project. CESA provided case managers who supervised participants. The program can be viewed at the website :

www.discoverjanesville.com

Program participants Shirley Burke and Erica Schafer are interviewed by Yuri Rashkin.



YOUNG LADY RECOVERS FROM NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

“...the market is well-saturated, but this experience will set Olivia apart from the rest of the field.”

**--Troy Marx,
Director of HR
Upland Hills**

Olivia Majeski



Olivia Majeski’s life completely changed--and almost ended—on a fateful New Year’s Day in 2005. A terrible auto accident left her with a traumatic brain injury and unconscious for two weeks. She spent a month in the hospital and then started the rehabilitation process, having to re-learn basic functions like walking, memory retention and things most people take for granted. She missed the remainder of the school year.

Today, she has made an almost-complete recovery and it is difficult to tell what she’s been through. She’s working in the ARRA-funded Summer Youth Employment Program, coordinated by the SWWDB, performing and assisting in Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) duties, patient care, and learning the role of an RN in a hospital setting. “This program has helped me gain the confidence in myself in being able to fit into the workplace and move forward and be successful,” Majeski said.

The experience has also solidified her career path and what she wants to be.

As an assistant in the recovery room and lab with her CNA license, this is Olivia’s first work experience in a hospital. “This is giving me a chance to see how a surgery and recovery room in a hospital works,” she said. “I like working here and would like to pursue working in a hospital setting.”

Troy Marx, Director of HR at Upland Hills, Dodgeville, WI said, “The chance of employment in the nursing field is low, as the market is well-saturated, but this experience will set Olivia apart from the rest of the field.” Olivia’s supervisor, Heather Schimmers, who works and assists in the Surgery and Recovery Room, says “Olivia’s a great worker and perfect fit.” She also said it is wonderful to see a new person on the OR. Olivia is also assisting RNs and Surgery Technicians by lessening the clerical work. Schimmers loves the

program and hopes it can be longer in duration.

Olivia is using the money she’s earned to further her education. She will attend UW-Richland Center in the fall to earn general education credits and then transfer to MATC-Madison to obtain her RN licensure. “This experience is a great resume-builder,” she said, citing her co-workers as being very understanding and providing the freedom to schedule her hours as necessary. In addition to working with all types of patients and situations, she’s learned about medical record-keeping, exit care for patients, and hospital procedures and sterilization. “I really love the program and opportunity it’s given me and my future career,” she said.

Having gone from being a utilize of the hospital services four-and-a-half years ago to a provider of those services, Olivia Majeski knows that she wants to continue working in a hospital setting.

JAVA AND JOBS CONTINUES TO MEET NEEDS

“It’s a great workshop for a little bit of venting and finding out others are in the same situation.”

--Ed Martinez

The *Java & Jobs* sessions being held at the Rock County Job Center Annex have been helping to get clients pointed in the right direction in education and how well they do fit in—regardless of their age. They’re also great workshops for a bit of venting and finding out others are experiencing the same things! The numbers are excellent, according to Employment Training Specialist Ed Martinez, with an average of 12 every Friday and still growing. All are welcome to attend. They meet Friday from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Call Ed at 741-3427 or 755-5120, Ext. 103 for more details.



JOB CENTER 'SPRUCED UP' BY UWNRC *DAY OF CARING*

Corporate volunteers helped to make the Rock County Job Center a brighter, more welcoming place through their efforts on Wednesday, September 16. The SWWDB submitted a proposal on behalf of the Rock County Job Center to the United Way of North Rock County (UWNRC) to be considered for the **Celebration of Caring** event, in which corporate volunteers conduct community service projects. The Job Center was selected as one of a number, and subsequently 19 volunteers from the First American Credit Union, U.S. Bank, and

Lowes Millwork Distribution Center repainted the entire lobby, a full wall in the large conference center, plus an accent wall in one of the classrooms.

The painting has gone a long way in improving not only the ambiance of the facility, but also the morale of both the on-site personnel plus the clientele. Additionally, this unique opportunity exposed community members who might otherwise be unfamiliar with the SWWDB as well as the Job Center to the services provided by member agencies .

The SWWDB extends our sincere appreciation to the **Celebration of Caring** volunteers and participating companies for their gift of volunteerism, as well as to the UWNRC for fostering such a unique collaboration.

FURNITURE DONATION

We would also like to thank the United Way of North Rock County for their donation of furniture to help 'spruce up' the main lobby area of the Job Center. The furniture works quite well and helps to give the lobby a more 'welcoming' feel.



One of the United Way workers helps paint a wall at the Job Center.

SUMMER WORKERS GIVE WETLANDS A BOOST

If Wisconsin's DNR is to do its part in preventing invasive species, the public needs to be informed. Thanks to the ARRA-funded and SWWDB-organized Summer Youth Employment Program, that is precisely what has happened. Three program workers—Robert Haskins, Adam McClimans, and Justin Johnson—are educating boaters about how they can help control invasive species. Started in 2004, the protection program includes 31 counties, with most

inspectors—about 1,100—being volunteers from the area. This is the first year that there are inspections being done in this area of the state, and according to Wisconsin Lakes and Wetlands Section Chief Jeff Bode, the goal this year is more about informing the public, but next year may center more on enforcement. The 21-year-old Haskins works as an inspector, mainly at Boscobel or Wyalusing State Park. He approaches arriving or departing boaters, informing them about the

diverse species rules and regulations. "This job is a lot of fun and very interesting," Haskins said. "I'm interested in learning more about the DNR." He said the experience has changed his, "giving me a chance to get back up on my feet and take, allowing me to pursue the career I want," he said.

His other career interest would be attending a technical college pursuing welding, possibly underwater welding. He said with the Summer Youth Program, he'd



(L to R) Robert Haskins and Adam McClimans take time out from their jobs to pose in front of the Wyalusing State Park Public Boat Landing sign with supervisor Jeff Bode.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.swwdb.org

Wetlands

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Probably still be looking for a job. "Nobody in this area is hiring," he said.

Bode said the most positive aspect of the program is "the great quality of workers" he has. "The program is a natural fit. The youth show more motivation and determination than the average volunteer," he explained.

McClimans, who also helps at Wyalusing, is normally at the Woodman Boat Launch. The 21-year-old Boscobel High graduate will be starting at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College this fall.

He also recently landed a factory job in Boscobel to help provide for his family, which includes two sons—three years and three-weeks old. But he says the largest impact is not the money but rather getting to meet new people. "It's nice work near water and the state park. I'd rather be out on the water, but this is still a lot of fun," he smiled.

Johnson, who works at Muscoda, attends UW-Richland working toward a degree in retail merchandising management. The 20-year-old says he's had past jobs, but none like this. "This isn't as fast-paced or stressful as past

jobs," he said. He says he's learned how to be more personable, talking to and meeting various types of people. He's used the earnings to catch up on bills, especially rent. He said if he didn't have the job, he's be looking because he needs to have a means to pay for school.

All three say the program is excellent. "It's one of the best-run programs I've ever been a part of," McClimans said. Bode said the program is a natural fit for his type of work. "This is a great program, where I can make a difference in the local wildlife," Haskins added, saying he wants to learn more about the DNR.

About the SWWDB..

The Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB) serves a six-county area in the Southwest corner of Wisconsin. We are a dynamic collaboration of private and

public leaders working together to promote innovation and quality in local workforce development activities.

The Board meets on a quarterly schedule to address workforce

development issues and provide oversight to the eight Southwest Job Center offices located in the area. Committee members meet on an as-needed basis to provide guidance and direction on topical issues.

CORD CONTINUES WORK TO HELP DISLOCATED

The Collaborative Organizations Responding to Dislocation (CORD) Steering Team continues in its efforts to assist the unemployed through any means possible. The group has been centering its efforts around five main areas of emphasis: communication, employment/career services and resources, financial services and resources, family/health services and resources, and other areas such as community development, building organizations' capacities, promoting small business development, and economic development.

For more detailed information, see a "Blueprint for Transition: Action Matrix," by going to their website at www.swwdb.org and click on the CORD icon. The Matrix is near the bottom of that page. The Steering Team has been meeting every two weeks to continue progressive action on their goals.

