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NURSE AIDE TRAINING PROGRAM FINDS SUCCESS IN FAYETTE COUNTY

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County Community Action Agency is offering locals a unique opportunity to break into the lucrative medical field through its Community Training Institute.

Founded in 2000, the Community Training Institute is a privately-licensed school approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Community Action's Nurse Aide Training Program, which began that same year, has had significant success, with approximately 90 percent of its graduates finding employment.

Approved by the state Department of Health, the course runs four times annually, with a maximum of 10 students per cycle completing the rigorous curriculum through 120 hours of classroom and hands-on instruction.

Nurse Aide Training Program Coordinator Susan Wagner said the course, led by instructor Gail Dennis, gives students the skills and experience necessary to not only pass state certification tests but succeed in the medical field.

"Everything is done in-house, so there's a lot of comfort in that," Wagner said. "Our curriculum covers everything the state requires and the labs in our classroom offer a very large, hospital-type setting, complete with all the equipment we need."

Community Action's Nurse Aide Program partners with Mt. Macrina Manor of Uniontown for its clinicals, allowing students to gain first-hand experience in a real work setting.

"We have an extremely successful pass rate when it comes to the class and certification testing, and we're very fortunate that the people who want to work have no problem finding jobs - some upwards of \$14 or \$15 an hour," Wagner said.

Both the program and Dennis receive "rave reviews" from students, she added.



“Gail is a registered nurse with a wealth of experience from the ground up and we’re very lucky to have her,” Wagner said. “By the time they graduate, she has them so well-prepared with skills and the confidence that they’re going to do a great job when they start working.”

Wagner said Fayette County residents, ages 18-24 with their high school diplomas, have the unique opportunity to potentially take the course for free, thanks to tuition assistance through the Westmoreland/Fayette Workforce Investment Board.

“What we see in Fayette County is a high percentage of that age bracket that don’t have the skills and experience to move on to a more lucrative job, but we can tap all of Community Action’s resources for them,” she said.

In addition to traditional training, Community Action’s training institute helps students build resumes, practice interview techniques and holds workshops on basic life skills including budgeting, opening checking accounts and more.

“It becomes a big, full package with a lot of intense services for them,” Wagner said.

Many students who complete the program go on to become registered nurses and nurse practitioners.

“The program really is a wonderful opportunity for anyone who puts their mind to it, because the demand for health care employment is there, so the job placement will always be there,” Wagner said. “Over the next 10 to 15 years, those opportunities will only continue to grow and grow and grow.”

Fayette County Commissioner Angela Zimmerlink said the program offers “very good job opportunities in the health-related field.”

“So to not take advantage of these training opportunities would be a shame,” Zimmerlink said.

Commissioner Vince Vicites said medical training will enable Fayette County residents to meet many others’ needs.

“Those seeking training in specific areas, such as nurse aide programs and others, will give these participants steady jobs that are in high-demand,” Vicites said.

The Nurse Aide Training Program is currently enrolling for its fall session. For more information on the admissions process, call 724-430-3027 or stop by Community Training Institute at 140 North Beeson Ave. in Uniontown.

Fayette County, Wagner said, is home to a lot of low-income residents who sometimes feel there’s “no hope and no opportunities” for them - but that’s completely false.



“This is one of the opportunities that really is there for them to take advantage of,” she said. “We can really make a difference in their lives.”

For more information on the Fayette County Community Action Agency, visit www.fccaa.org.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettcountypa.info.

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