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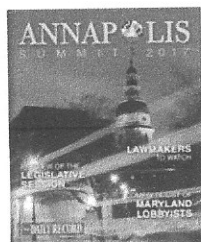
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Finding training program can be job in itself

By: Lizzy McLellan Daily Record Business Writer August 2, 2012

Baltimore has job training programs for men, for women, for youths, for fathers, for mothers, for ex-offenders, for the homeless, for recovering addicts.



Andrew Cornish (left) at his Christopher Place Employment Academy capstone ceremony with Case Manager Mike Hyde.

Some programs prepare trainees for specific occupations; others give instruction in job-readiness skills like interviewing, resume writing and general professional behavior.

Counting all of them — and finding the best-fitting program for a job seeker — isn't easy.

Lists from the state, the city and searches of the Internet led to more than 30 job training organizations in the area. And because there is no comprehensive list, there are surely more.

"I think it's difficult for people to know where they can find the program that's going to give them the best results," said Melanie Styles, a member of the Baltimore Workforce Investment

Board, a group of businesspeople appointed by the mayor that aims to improve workforce development in the city. Styles is also the workforce development program officer for the Abell Foundation, which funds several Baltimore job training programs.

"We need to do a better job ... of really identifying those programs that are most effective in getting those people where they need to go," Styles said.

The Job Opportunities Task Force, an organization that assists low-skill, low-income job seekers, is working on a project called Train Baltimore, a complete list of occupational training programs in the area.

The website should launch in the fall, said Jason Perkins-Cohen, executive director of the Job Opportunities Task Force.

"This is the kind of thing that you would think already exists, but it doesn't," Perkins-Cohen said. "People will spend a lot of time pursuing programs that don't fit their needs."

The Train Baltimore site will include all occupational programs, but will not include programs that focus on professional behavior alone, so-called "soft skills" such as interviewing, resume writing and communicating.

"In terms of numbers, there's just too many of them" to list, Perkins-Cohen said. "Most people aren't really looking for soft skills."

However there are enough individuals looking for these skills to keep multiple job-readiness programs alive, such as Maryland New Directions, Strive Baltimore and Christopher Place Employment Academy.

John Young, for instance, said he had the abilities and knowledge necessary to work, but he entered Christopher Place to gain the confidence to start a career.

"I always had the academic skills," said Young, 44, "but I never applied them."

Christopher Place is the most intense program in the Catholic Charities' Our Daily Bread Employment Center, with an 18-month progression that helps previously homeless men work toward independence.

Many of the men come from prison or from substance abuse treatment centers.

Christopher Place has a strictly structured class schedule modeled after a typical work schedule. After 16 weeks of classes, participants start an actual work schedule at an outside job.

The participants live in 30-man dorms at Our Daily Bread for the first 16 weeks, then move into semi-private apartments at the center and eventually into independent, but supported, community housing.

"It's a holistic program," said Sabree K. Akinyele, director of the Our Daily Bread Employment Center, adding that the academy has an 89 percent completion rate. "It's the last program you'll ever need ... if you work."

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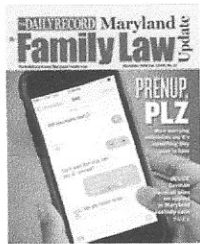
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For Andrew Cornish, a 25-year-old recovering alcoholic, becoming a part of Christopher Place Academy Class 51 provided "a major step."

Cornish recently completed a recovery program to confront his alcoholism, but Christopher Place allowed him to improve his entire life, instead of parts at a time. Aside from professionalism, he said he also learned how to manage his anger and enjoy sober life.

"I knew that I needed more than just to stop drinking," he said. "I learned discipline here, responsibility ... to think before I act."

Young, a classmate of Cornish, had been in prison for dealing cocaine before coming to Christopher Place. Now, he is studying in a five-year program to become a non-denominational Christian pastor.

"It was the opportunity to reinvent myself," he said.

Christopher Place does not focus on occupational skills, but the participants are able to get jobs after "dealing with the issues that have kept them back," said Akinyele. Employers that hire Christopher Place graduates include E-Structors, Dietz & Watson and Johns Hopkins University, she said.

Baltimore's job readiness programs differ in approach and attitude, and the latter sometimes defines the program.

Strive Baltimore, for example, has a three-week session with training from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Participants learn leadership, interviewing, computer skills, team building, public speaking and professionalism.

Instructors at Strive are strict, and for about 70 percent of participants it pays off, leading to a job after the three weeks, said Moses Hammett, director of workforce development at the Center for Urban Families.

Strive Baltimore was founded in 1998 by the Center for Urban Families. The program uses "a tough approach" with job seekers, said Hammett, describing it as intensive, rigorous and like a boot camp.

"Everyone may not need that approach," Hammett said. "We know upfront that Strive is not for everyone."

Whether their needs are in job readiness, occupational skills or both, Baltimore residents can look to the Mayor's Office of Employment Development. From there, they can consult counselors to define career goals, refine job-seeking skills, use computers for job searching and get tuition assistance for training programs from a state-approved list.

Even this list, approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, does not include all of the training programs in Baltimore. The commission has strict requirements for approval, said Karen Sitnick, director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development.

Programs with no tuition fees do not require tuition assistance, so they are not listed. Neither are programs that serve very specific audiences or demographics.

And the number of programs that serve specific audiences has grown over the years.

Baltimore-based Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake was one of the first in the state to be certified as a non-public vocational training facility, in 1955. The organization's training program had existed since 1948, primarily training people with disabilities, though it now serves a diverse population.

Maryland New Directions, founded in 1973, teaches job-readiness skills and gives career counseling. The organization originally aimed to help only women, but expanded its services as the workforce changed.

"Almost 40 years ago, women in the workforce was a very small percentage," said Maryland New Directions Executive Director W. Grace Lee. "Over the four decades, the core service stayed the same. ... We shifted [to] helping different populations."

The 1980s brought three youth-based programs — the Choice program, Living Classrooms and the city-run Futures Works program, a trend that Sitnick said may have been fueled by high school dropout rates.

Between 1996 and 1999, the city gained Christopher Place, Jump Start, Caroline Center, Strive Baltimore and the Biotechnical Institute, each with its own audience and purpose. Several more programs were started in the following decade.

"Over the years, we started to see a shift in the economic landscape. Job training programs are reflected in this," Sitnick said. For example, "Biotech Institute formed when Baltimore was trying to become a biotech center."

Caroline Center not only rose to address the city's needs, but also changed with those needs. When it opened in 1996, it trained women for clerical positions only, but it has transformed over the years to fit the job market, said its executive director, Sister Patricia McLaughlin.

Over the past 16 years, Caroline Center programs have included culinary arts, upholstery and daycare provider training, though it now focuses on pharmacy technician and nursing assistant training.

Felicia Brown-Watson trained at the Caroline Center to become a certified nursing assistant after working for 14 years as an administrative assistant. She chose this program, she said, not only because a family member recommended it, but also because it was tuition-free and taught both occupational and life skills.

The small size of Caroline Center, she said, added to the value of her experience.

"If we ever needed to talk to someone, they made the time to talk to you," Brown-Watson said. "That in itself is great, and it's something that you wouldn't get from another program."

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None of Baltimore's employment preparation and occupational training centers has a one-size-fits-all program, said Sitnick.

"I don't know anywhere in the country where you just go to one place," she said.

The choices are seemingly endless, but Lee said consolidating the programs would make them ineffective and would eliminate the specialty aspect of some.

"People receive the passion and the care from our staff, and that really motivated them, because they don't receive that in their life," Lee said. "When you are focused on individualizing, you cannot [help] thousands."

In organizations that grow too large, she said, "people just lose the passion."

Styles said large organizations can become bureaucratic, but serving many is not always ineffective.

At Goodwill, one of the city's largest organizations for job training and placement, 4,854 clients received skills training or placement services last year. Despite its size, President and CEO Lisa Rusyniak said the organization is still able to "get to know the clients."

The organization placed 2,364 clients in jobs in 2011, and its clients had a one-year job retention rate of 76 percent that year.

"As large as we are, we have a lot of people in the organization that will work to help," Rusyniak said.

Sitnick said customized training has become popular among job training programs. Many programs meet individually with trainees to define their goals and how they fit with employers' needs.

"I think there can be a lot of duplication [in job training], but it's all about fit and what the person needs," said McLaughlin, of Caroline Center. "You can't train everybody for everything, so we've been trying to focus."

Strive's Hammett said the number and variety of programs allow job seekers to choose the best-fitting career path and the best-fitting preparation. However, he said, an effective workforce development system needs standardized requirements for its training programs.

"I think it's important that as workforce development providers in the city, that we all be on the same sheet of music," he said. "For the city of Baltimore, we have to be on the same page and selling the same quality product."

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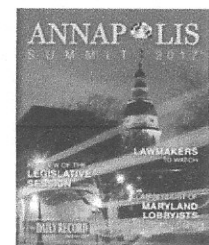
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It's a Second Chance for goods and people

By: Lizzy McLellan Daily Record Business Writer August 2, 2012

At first glance, Second Chance looks like a second-hand furniture and building materials shop. And it is.



But the nonprofit is not only a deconstruction company and a store, it's also an employment training program

The company recruits adults, mostly men, who are having trouble finding a job and often lack the skills to get a job. Many of the trainees that enroll in the program have criminal records, although Mark Foster, who founded Second Chance in 1998, said none of them has committed a violent crime.

"We often will say it's a second chance for people

and a second chance for materials," Foster said.

What he means is that the company's mission is two-fold: to preserve architecture and prevent waste by reclaiming unwanted materials and furniture and to add qualified individuals to the workforce with a hands-on job training program.

The company recently moved, thanks to the city's plans for a slots parlor right next to its old building. Second Chance owns its new Ridgley Street facility, where it can hold both the training programs and the retail store in the same building.

"Second Chance is ... very unique," said Karen Sitnick, director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, who works with many job training programs and employers in Baltimore and nearby areas. "They're an employer, and they're also a training vendor."

Another job training program, Living Classrooms, also provides hands-on job training, but targets at-risk youth and young adults. Jump Start, a program of the Job Opportunities Task Force, provides some hands-on training as well, but its focus is on construction rather than deconstruction.

Much of the material Second Chance reclaims comes from donated buildings that would have been demolished. Instead of destroying and disposing, the nonprofit deconstructs, takes what is useful and sells it.

"We universally want to save things from going to the landfill," Foster said, whether that means preserving valuable antiques or collecting lumber for resale.

Foster said he founded Second Chance primarily because "The old stuff is very cool ... I wanted to be a part of preserving that."

However, for him, creating a for-profit company to do this wasn't enough. After researching other deconstruction companies, Foster decided on a nonprofit model with an employment training element.

"I didn't really realize how rewarding that was really going to be," he said. "Changing lives, seeing people rise from basically oblivion to create a new life for themselves ... making that a reality has changed my life as well as theirs."

Candidates compiled by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development can interview with Second Chance for each training session, of which there are several each year, in no particular pattern.

"We're really able to utilize the opportunities through Second Chance for many people who come through our re-entry program" for ex-offenders, Sitnick said.

For Antonio Maultsby, that aspect of the program was especially helpful.

"I was getting in trouble, tried looking for a job, went back to getting in trouble, and I actually got fed up with it," said Maultsby, 35.

He had other jobs before Second Chance, but "I had never had a job where ... my record wasn't constantly the subject. ... No one [is] holding it over my head."

The organization chooses about 15 individuals to participate in a two-week "boot camp," where they are

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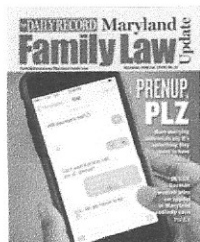
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evaluated while they begin to learn necessary skills. The Second Chance staff watches them to make sure they are dedicated to the program.

If they prove themselves, participants are invited to join the longer-term job training program. Typically, by this stage about 12 remain.

"When I first started, I thought it was going to be real grueling, tedious," Maultsby said, but "after a while, you just get it, it's like second nature."

In the 16-week job training program, participants receive training in the skills necessary to work for Second Chance or a similar company. They get occupational skills training needed to work in deconstruction, but they also learn job readiness skills such as interviewing, leadership, work ethic and time management.

By creating a 16-week customized training program, the organization uses the maximum time and budget allowed for support from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Foster said.

When the 16 weeks end, the trainees still get support from the company and are guaranteed jobs with Second Chance.

Maultsby just graduated from the training program, and will soon begin additional classes in home inspection. He said he will stay employed at Second Chance as long as he can, but "I'm just going to take and utilize every opportunity I get."

Graduates start out in deconstruction, and sometimes move up to positions as crew leaders and supervisors.

That's the path Tayvon Glenn chose. A former Second Chance trainee, he leads newer trainees in the program.

"It feels good to teach someone ... to see them in progress," Glenn said.

Most of the trainees stay employed with Second Chance for about eight months to one year, though a few stay longer, Foster said.

"We're not a lifetime employer; we need to make room," he said. "We're really helping you establish your employability."

Second Chance then helps its trained employees to find work with other companies that need skilled workers similar to those in deconstruction. If trainees are interested in entering a particular industry, Second Chance will also help them get training in that area, even if it is not in the Second Chance curriculum.

"They have a family of folks that ... embrace them," Foster said. "I can't overstate how important that is."

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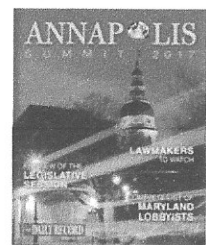
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New center fuels NCIA clients on road to employment

By: Lizzy McLellan Daily Record Business Writer August 2, 2012

Robert Hoffman, 60, enjoys writing poetry and going to church on Sundays, and his dream is to someday be called "Pastor Bob." Hoffman is intellectually disabled, according to the staff at the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, but he will still be able to work toward a career.

That's the case for many intellectually disabled individuals in Maryland who are finding opportunities to learn job skills and pursue careers, thanks to training programs that cater specifically to their circumstances.

"We have to encourage them to pursue their goals, whatever they are," said Walter Billips, director of operations at the NCIA Career Development Center, the newest addition to the organization's programs for intellectually disabled adults.

Even if an individual's goal is not realistic, he said, the center works to find the best "niche" for each person and then provides training in that niche.



David Mitchell, 58, works on a window at the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives' Career Development Center, where he is a member of the cleaning crew.

NCIA took the idea of hands-on job training to heart when creating the Career Development Center, which opened April 30. The intent of the new building in Woodlawn is to give clients a steppingstone into real-world employment.

"The center has allowed us to enhance our programmatic infrastructure," Billips said. "It allows us the capacity to set up more training for our individuals."

A similar training program exists at Chimes Maryland, where individuals can participate in vocational training and supported employment. However, unlike NCIA, Chimes works with people who have a variety of disabilities, not only intellectual disabilities.

Programs like Melwood in Upper Marlboro and Humanim in Columbia also provide customized job training for adults with developmental disabilities as a part of broader offerings for these individuals.

What sets NCIA apart from the other programs in the area is its new building, said Vanessa Bullock, deputy director of the Developmental Disabilities Administration's Central Maryland Region. The center allows for a more current job training program, she said, and more effective training for the individuals.

At the NCIA Career Development Center, services such as a barbershop and gift shop provide additional opportunities for in-house, hands-on training in these areas.

"We built it like a mall," said Herbert J. Hoelter, co-founder and CEO of NCIA. The stores in this "mall" provide goods and services to the individuals at the center and serve as on-the-job training sites.

The services available were chosen based on observations from NCIA staff on what the individuals in the residential and day programs had been lacking.

"We had a client that had significant weight issues. ... Once we were able to put in the exercise room, he's already dropped about 25 pounds," Hoelter said.

Another issue he and other staff had noticed was that many individuals in the NCIA programs were poorly groomed, so they built a barbershop into the plans for the new center.

"Those are the small changes in these individuals that really make a real difference," Hoelter said. "I think we've added a quality of life to many of these individuals that they really didn't have before."

Hoffman, a trainee at the Career Development Center, works in the cafeteria serving food, stocking the store and cleaning. He has been working there for one year and hopes to move into the supported employment division eventually.

"It keeps me out of trouble," Hoffman said about his work at the center, which functions as a training opportunity for future employment. "I'm going to try to get me another job, like cleaning up or working on

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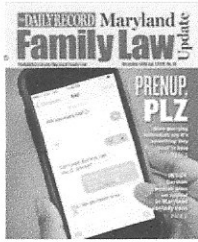
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landscaping.”

About 65 of the participants in NCIA's day program work in the Career Development Center's vocational division, where they get hands-on, paid job training.

About 65 more participants are a part of the supported employment division, to which successful members of the vocational program rise. In supported employment, clients are given the chance to work for pay outside of the center, with supervision.

“What we do is we take a vulnerable population, we do an initial assessment based on their goals ... [and] individualize a training program so they can attain their goals,” Billips said. “Our goal is to get as many out into the community as possible.”

Hoelter said: “Bringing them to that level from where they are now takes time and effort and a dedicated staff.”

And sometimes, he said, participants don't reach that level.

“Many of our individuals have aggressive behaviors,” Hoelter said, while others may have criminal backgrounds or other barriers to employment in the community. Some are simply unable to work, either in the center or the community.

For those who are declared ineligible for job training after their initial assessments, the Career Development Center serves as a day habilitation facility, offering other educational and recreational activities such as art, music and dance. Thirty-seven individuals attend the center for day habilitation.

The building's capacity is 225, and it hosts about 165 individuals in all three programs combined.

In addition to the applied job training, the center provides computer classes, so that individuals in the vocational and supported employment programs can learn to search for jobs and fill out online applications.

Most of the participants who make it through the vocational program go on to get jobs in fast food, retail, custodial work and painting. But the center's training program provides more for the future than a paycheck, Billips said.

“It allows our individuals to become productive members of society,” Billips said. “It allows them to shed some of that stigma that surrounds this population.”

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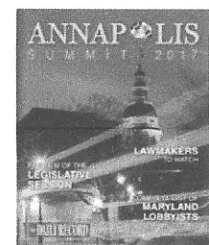
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Foster kids benefit from teen's lemonade stand success

By: Lizzy McLellan Daily Record Business Writer August 6, 2012

Nylah Burton isn't the first teenager to start a lemonade stand with friends. But unlike many other lemonade entrepreneurs, she spent the profits on other teens and children whom she had never met before.

As a home-schooled student, Burton received an assignment from her mother in 11th grade to propose a community service project. She had many ideas for large, complicated problems she would like to solve, but she wanted to take on a cause that she could affect herself.

"My mom had said something about foster kids, and she said something about seeing them with black trash bags," said Burton. "I thought that was really sad."

When she looked into the issue, Burton found that when social services responds to a call about a child in need of foster care, social workers are rarely able to provide any necessities for the children on the first night of care. The children have to resort to their own belongings, which usually amount to very little, and often do not include a suitcase or bag.

Many have been neglected, as well, so they are hungry.

"They pick up the kids in the middle of the night and a lot of times they're injured, they're starving ... they just need so much," said Burton.

So she decided, "I could make a bag for that first night they're picked up."

She came up with this idea just in time for her home school deadline, naming her organization Traveling Grace. With donations from her mother and other family members, she started to create care packages in January and made her first donation to the Prince George's County Department of Social Services on March 8.

She then worked with friends to start a lemonade stand at school, raising more than \$200 for Traveling Grace to create more care packages. She has donated about 30 bags to social services in Maryland, each containing toiletries, a non-perishable meal, clothing, a towel, a Bible, a journal and a few notes of encouragement from children and adults in the area.

Burton said she started her first business about four years ago, when she was 13 years old and in ninth grade.

One of Burton's ninth-grade assignments was to create a business plan. She came up with Jerk Mania, a catering company serving homemade jerk chicken and side dishes, and she put it into action.

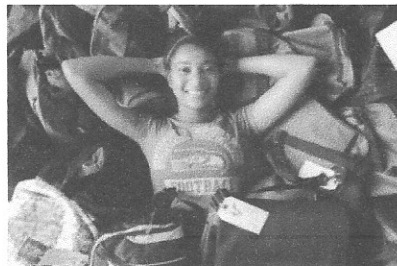
"It got really popular and people really loved it," said Burton, who would cater events for members of her large extended family as well as family friends. She has continued to work on Jerk Mania, but has decreased her event load to focus on Traveling Grace, catering only three events in her junior year.

Burton has been working toward raising money and collecting items from the community so that she can keep her project going. She is in the process of working with friends to come up with a campaign on crowd funding site IndieGoGo.

Burton has not been allowed to follow up with the recipients of her bags due to social services rules.

"I would love to talk to someone who received one to see how they liked it," she said. "I'm not exactly sure how they would react to it because I've never been in that situation before."

Her goal, she said, is to give the recipients the same quality of items that she would appreciate. Eventually, she may begin creating different bags for foster children transitioning into college or the work force, as well as bag for teen mothers in the foster system.



Nylah Burton, owner of Traveling Grace, made her and her first donation to the Prince George's County Department of Social Services on March 8.

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Family - Unknown Fr
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Notices - Godoy, Et Al.

As for her own dreams, Burton will be a senior in the fall, and is planning to apply to colleges. She said her first choice is the University of Maryland, College Park, where she would like to work toward her goal of becoming a lawyer.

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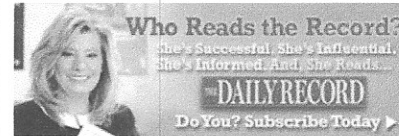
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