

Michigan Works! for Youth “Connecting with Careers Summer Institute” Scores Big with Youth in Calhoun County

During the month of July, the Michigan Works! Youth Program of Calhoun County hosted the “Connecting with Careers Summer Institute.” Twenty-eight high school juniors and seniors from all over Calhoun County attended work readiness/college preparation classes at the Calhoun Area Technology Center.

The youth had opportunities to create resumes and portfolios, complete career assessments, learn how to fill out a job application, go through the interview process and participate in mock interviews with area business people. Students toured the campuses of Western Michigan University, Michigan State University, Kellogg Community College and Miller College.

During these visits, participants learned about college life, the admissions process, financial aid (including grants and scholarships), etc. This experience also afforded them the opportunity to talk with current college students to gain perspective on college life.

Additionally, the youth toured Borgess Medical Center, Duncan Aviation and C.O. Brown Stadium to learn about the vastly different careers available in places they may not think of. The staff of Kellogg Community College’s Regional Manufacturing Technology Center also made a presentation. Other areas covered over the course of the month were proper nutrition, presented by the MSU Calhoun County Extension office, drug prevention, presented by the Substance Abuse Council and the National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program and financial literacy presented by Guardian Finance and Advocacy Services.

Upon successful completion of the financial literacy component, a bank account was opened in each student’s



Students participate in team building activities with the National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Program

name with an initial deposit of \$25. Over the course of the next year, Guardian Finance and Advocacy Services will match one dollar for every five dollars saved by the student up to a total savings of \$500.

Institute participants spent four hours a day, four days a week in the classroom or with related activities. For their participation, they received a stipend, the amount of which was based on the number of hours of attendance. Students also received a half of a high school credit for their participation in this program. Upon successful completion of high school, Institute graduates will also be eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship to the college/advanced training institution of their choosing.

Michigan Works! Youth Program staff will continue working with students throughout the school year. Staff will be available to assist participants with a wide variety of activities, including assistance with financial aid documents, college applications and job applications, as well as tutoring, mentoring, job shadowing and supportive services for high school completion.

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“What’s Your Game Plan for Your Life?” Barry County Summer Program Participants Plan for Their Future

Students in the Barry County W.I.A. Youth Summer Program worked very hard on figuring out a plan to get started thinking about their future.

The students followed the theme “Got Game?”. This curriculum is broken down into six different areas: Creating Your Game Plan for Life, Gonna Stay in the Game?, Got Skills for Your Game?, Where’s the Best Game?, How Does Your Game Plan Look on Paper?, and Are You Ready for Tryouts?

Students created a personal definition of what success in life and work is, developed a resume, practiced interviewing and networking skills, learned about secondary education and financial aid, and were taught soft skills. They learned that all of these skills are needed to create a successful game plan.

Along with “Got Game”, the students took the career they chose from their assessment and figured out a monthly salary. Every day they filled out a checkbook register. Each day was a different expense (e.g. insurance, child care, house, car, food, clothing, and taxes). They played the game as if they were 25 years old. Married, single, kids or not, the choice was theirs to see if their career could support the life they would like. In the middle of the month they had a “reality check.” Some of the different reality checks were: flat tire today - pay \$100, child needs a haircut - \$20, buy a gift for a co-worker - \$15, etc. There were a few “good” reality checks, but just like life, not many. This was a very worthwhile activity for them as half way through the month they realized they had more “wants”

than “needs.” Having to give your cell phone back and shut off satellite to pay your child care or car insurance was not a popular trade! Quite a few of the students said that this activity helped them realize how much stress their own parents experience.



Barry County Summer Program students plan for their future as they play “Got Game”

Calhoun County “Shopping for Your Future” Transition Fair a Big Success Michigan Works! One of Most Shopped Booths at Lakeview Square Mall!

On Saturday, May 13, 2006, the Calhoun County Transition Council hosted their annual Transition Fair at Lakeview Square Mall from 10am to 9pm. This year’s fair was entitled “Shopping for Your Future.” A variety of booths were arranged throughout the mall, which provided information targeted towards Calhoun County special education students and their parents. Participating organizations included schools, businesses, social service organizations, and workforce personnel who provide services to students transitioning from high school to the workforce.

Among those present were Michigan Rehabilitative Services, the Social Security Administration, the ARC of Calhoun County, Community Inclusive Recreation, Michigan Career and Technical Institute and Michigan Works! – just to name a few.

Throughout the day, staff from the Michigan Works! Service Center (Kellogg Community College – Employment Services) and Michigan Works! Youth Program (Calhoun Area Technology Center) provided information to those who stopped at their booth regarding both youth and adult services offered throughout the Michigan Works! system.

The event was enjoyed by a great turnout of students and parents alike. Guests at the event filled out surveys, which helped to track which vendors were visited most frequently. A final tally of the surveys showed Michigan Works! to be one of the most visited booths at the event!

Barry ISD/Michigan Works! Students Donate 100 Hours to Habitat House

It wasn't only the Cosme family that felt lucky to be involved with the Habitat House. Eight Delton High School students from Michigan Works! participated for two days at the Habitat Blitz Build. The students had been anxiously awaiting the project for months. This was a very big part of their summer, and about which they felt a great sense of accomplishment and pride. The students worked hand in hand with Jim James and his helper Henry. Jim is the owner of Artisan Outdoor Landscaping out of Hastings. The students met with Jim and Henry on Tuesday morning and it was a perfect match. Both Jim and Henry were outstanding role models for the students. They talked about employability skills and work ethic, as well as taught them quite a few landscaping skills. Some of their landscaping duties were to rake and re-rake the "dirt" yard until all of the rocks were out and it was smooth, prepare the front yard for sod, and plant flowers in the front of the house.

The 16-18 year old students are working on writing stories about their community based on the story "The Circle of Giving." Along with the community projects that they are doing in Delton, they now have a very good sense of their valuable contributions to other communities as well.

Participants that donated their time are: Kristina Andrews, Ashley Barringer, Ryan MacBeth, Heather White-more, Laura Knight, Ben Stenger, Andy Spaulding, and Adam Calkins.



Barry ISD/Michigan Works! students who donated about 100 hours of work to the Delton area Habitat for Humanity home recently.

The Instructors for the Delton summer program are Kristy NeSmith and Kelly Yoder. The program is supervised by youth case manager Jill Carter. Michigan Works! Programs are directed by Valerie Eavey, under the direction of Barry Intermediate School District Superintendent James Hund.

Barry, Branch, and Calhoun Counties Participating in Michigan SHARE Network

CISD Michigan Works! staff attended training in July to help implement the SHARE (**Sharing How Access to Resources Empowers**) Network in Michigan. SHARE Network was developed through a partnership between the Division of Employment & Training, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

The purpose of the SHARE Network is to improve the effectiveness of the Michigan Works! One-Stop system by building linkages between faith-based and community organizations. There are two components of the SHARE Network. The first component is an **Online Resource Directory** consisting of various service providers, faith-based and community based organizations, businesses and government agencies. This resource directory will be composed of a comprehensive listing of services relevant to job seekers. Once the customer is shown the website, they can

use the directory to access resources. Organizations that are members of this directory will be able to maintain current information in the directory by responding to an email once per quarter.

The second component is **Access Points**. Access Points are faith-based or community organizations where people can go in their own neighborhood or community to look for jobs or resources. They are assisted by trained individuals who connect them to Michigan Works! Service Centers or other service providers via computer or by direct referral. The benefits of the Access Points are to create access to nontraditional hours, enhance community awareness of Michigan Works! services, and provide outreach to targeted communities for "non-traditional" customers lacking computer literacy.

Michigan Works! Partners with HR Calling Center



Team members work together to build a tower. This exercise demonstrates how to work in a team with deadlines.

The Work First job club in Albion is partnering with HR Calling Center, a collection agency in Jackson. Together they are preparing job applicants to better handle this stressful job. Each job club participant has the opportunity to attend two training sessions. If the individual attends and participates in both sessions, they are guaranteed an interview with HR Calling Center.

The purpose of session one is to better understand the HR Calling Center. The following questions are asked of participants:
What is HRs' mission? What are the job duties at HR? How fast paced is the work? How much control do I have over the workplace? What skills do I need to survive in this job?

Participants are then given employment tools that can help to answer these questions. For example, how does a customer service representative avoid emotional leakage when a customer uses profanity or how to avoid leaking anger from one situation to another? Typical customer service problems are given and participants are asked what they would do in each situation.

The purpose of session two is to hone the individual's adaptability to the work environment and people in it. A team building activity and situational leadership assessment is given to accomplish this goal. The final step is to do mock interviews preparing each client for their interview at HR, sometimes the next day. In addition to completing the training, requirements for the job include a typing speed of 20 WPM and a high school diploma or GED. Since May, 10 individuals have been hired by HR Calling Center!



Participants hold up posters that show their "future story"



WFD DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS—ELAINE FURU-BAKER

The Barry/Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board kicked off Program Year 2006 with updated Strategic Goals to guide our efforts to serve employers and job seekers. The following goals were adopted by the Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Officials Board in July:

GOAL ONE: WORK TO IMPROVE AND/OR RAISE THE SKILLS OF THE WORKFORCE BY:

- Increasing the number of customers enrolled in occupational skills training activities
- Increasing the participation in workplace readiness skills by 5% each year
- Designing a job readiness certification system to increase the “soft” skills of job seekers
- Engaging Michigan Works! job seekers in technology training to increase computer/technology literacy of the workforce
- Expanding customized training options under Incumbent Worker Training Program to strengthen the skills of the incumbent workforce
- Adding PLATO Learning Lab availability for all Michigan Works! customers to enhance basic skill/adult education through the use of competency based instruction

GOAL TWO: STRENGTHEN ENTREPRENEURIAL & INTRAPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES BY:

- Educating participants in entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship training programs
- Informing dislocated workers who indicate an interest in entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship opportunities and connect them with appropriate resources

Also, I am pleased to report that the MWA secured a competitive grant to serve as the fiduciary for the Calhoun County Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI). This grant brings \$625,000 to Calhoun County to address the needs of parolees who are returning to Calhoun County from state prison. The Calhoun Comprehensive Plan, developed by the MPRI Steering Team, focuses on several areas of need with workforce development and education receiving the highest priority for funding.

The MWA is engaged in a partnership with the Kalamazoo Michigan Works! Agency to implement the Regional 21st Century Workforce initiative. Funded with two grants, totaling \$203,500, the two MWAs will be developing a plan for the implementation of a comprehensive regional strategy that will:

- Create a unified approach to working with employers by incorporating the 21st Century Job Training Program and utilization of the “University of Michigan Skill Information” model with regional enhancements;
- Develop a well-defined rapid response process that incorporates a lay-off aversion component with the intent of minimizing plant closings and layoffs;
- Focus on developing, attracting and retaining talent to build and support the 21st Century economy; and
- Include a comprehensive regional communication plan that also coordinates with state communication activities.

Battle Creek Unlimited, Southwest Michigan First, Kellogg Community College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College are assisting in the development of this plan and a Summit to be held on September 14th. I will be sharing more information about this important initiative throughout the year.

Our MWA will be introducing a new employer service later this fall. Stay tuned to learn more about “Interviewing USA” – a web-based system that will record applicant interviews at the Service Centers and e-mail them directly to the employer! This service will be available in the Michigan Works! Centers throughout the entire state.

With our budget in place for the upcoming twelve months, it appears that it will be another challenging and exciting year in the world of workforce development. Please feel free to contact our office for more information about any of the articles in the newsletter. Our toll free number is 1-800-285-WORKS.

Albion Service Center 112 East Erie Street Albion, MI 49224	Battle Creek Service Center 135 Hamblin Avenue Battle Creek, MI 49017	Coldwater Service Center 210 Vista Drive Coldwater, MI 49036	Hastings Service Center 535 West Woodlawn Ave. Hastings, MI 49058
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UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

September 28, 2006 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Education Advisory Group Meeting
Calhoun I.S.D. 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

November 3, 2006 12:00 p.m.
Planning and Development Committee Meeting
Calhoun I.S.D. 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

November 16, 2006 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Job Market/Employer Involvement Committee
Calhoun I.S.D. 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

November 21, 2006 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Workforce Development Board/CEOB Meeting

December 13, 2006 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Education Advisory Group Meeting
Calhoun I.S.D. 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

December 14, 2006
Bidder's Training Day
Calhoun I.S.D. 17111 G Drive North-Marshall



During the month of September, the Michigan Works! Service Center in Albion will be moving to a new, larger location to better serve customers. The new location is at 101 N. Albion Street. Services provided in the Albion satellite office are Work First, Employment Services, and Adult Services. Veterans Services and Michigan Rehabilitation Services are also available one day per week.

In addition, Employment Service staff is now able to serve the public 5 days per week from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. in the Albion Service Center.