



**Kalamazoo-St. Joseph
Workforce Development Board**

***A Celebration of
Successes***

Thursday, February 4, 2010

**2010 Recipient of the Michigan Works! Association
Annual Alumni Award representing the Kalamazoo-St.
Joseph Michigan Works! Area**

Mr. Lavern "Ed" Schlabach

Program: Workforce Investment Act Adult Program

Nominated by: Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), a division of KRESA

Employer: Bronson Methodist Hospital



After being laid off from the tool and die industry, Lavern "Ed" Schlabach was determined to make a significant career change into the field of nursing. He contacted the Michigan Works! Service Center in Three Rivers for assistance with support services in order to return to school. Ed was registered in the Workforce Investment Act Adult Program and began his educational journey by enrolling at Glen Oaks Community College where he successfully completed the LPN Program. With a strong desire to further his training, Ed was interested in becoming a Registered Nurse. Michigan Works! provided tuition assistance and in May 2007 he enrolled in the RN Program at Glen Oaks. Ed graduated with his Associate Degree of Applied Science as a RN in May 2008. Through the WIA Adult Program, Ed received assistance with his tuition, training materials, fees, and books throughout his training. Ed states, "Michigan Works! assisted me to get my

education without going into serious debt and that training has been extremely beneficial." Following the completion of training, Ed was hired as a registered nurse by Bronson Healthcare in July 2008 and exited from the WIA Program the following September. He continues his full-time employment with Bronson as an RN in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Ed's supervisor, Tina Sullivan, speaks very highly of him. She believes that, "Ed's compassion for families has helped to promote the successful discharge of high risk babies back into the home." She went on to say that Ed is a great asset to the nursing department at Bronson. Ed recently returned to school at Goshen College with an end goal of earning a Bachelor's degree in Nursing. With ten children at home, four biological and six adopted, Ed hopes to set an example of hard work and determination for his family.

Other Nominees

Ms. Devin Holder

Program: Workforce Investment Act Youth Program

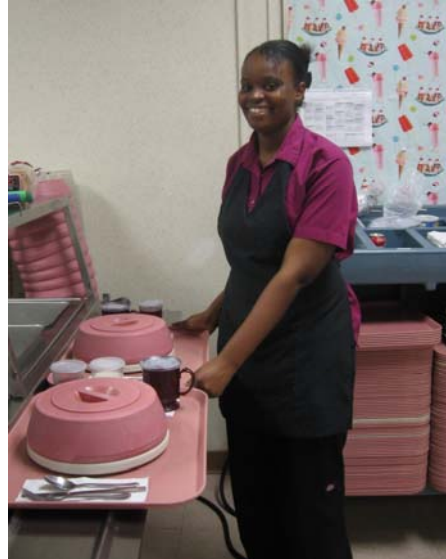
Nominated by: Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), a division of KRESA

Employer: Heritage Upjohn Community Care Center

Devin Holder contacted Michigan Works! seeking assistance with her job search. She had very little work history and also needed assistance with transportation, training, time and money management. Devin was enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Services Program in June 2006 and immediately began participating in program activities. In addition to facing multiple barriers, the lack of confidence prohibited her from moving forward.

Devin participated in job search workshops and also received tutoring to improve her math skills. She successfully completed American Red Cross CPR training in February 2007 and as she progressed and attained her established goals, her self esteem began to grow. Devin also participated in a paid work experience and was placed at the Lincoln YMCA where she provided leadership and instruction to first

through sixth graders. During the seven months of work experience Devin gained both self-confidence and self-discipline. She stated, "Through the training I have received, Y.O.U. [staff] were pulling the best out of me instead of pushing me away. Michigan Works! gave me a chance to build my confidence." Devin was subsequently hired by Kalamazoo Communities in Schools as an after school classroom aide and exited from the Youth Program in April 2008. In June 2008, she changed her employment to Heritage Community Care Center where she continues to be employed as a dietary aide. Devin's supervisor, Terri VanDeraa, expressed that she is impressed with Devin's work demeanor and stated, "Devin has got the brightest smile. I have seen her work under pressure and she does not lose her cool. She is a wonderful worker."



Ms. Antelene Longstreet

Program: Jobs Education and Training (JET) Program

Nominated by: Lake Michigan College

Employer: Lake Michigan College

Antelene Longstreet was first referred to the Michigan Works! Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program in November of 2007. At the time, she was enrolled in the Law Enforcement Program at Glen Oaks Community College. Due to numerous factors, Antelene was unable to finish her studies; however, she did not let this discourage her. She took full advantage of the job search tips and techniques she learned and eventually found a position in Grand Rapids working 40 hours a week for Kelly Services.



Antelene realized that commuting to Grand Rapids would be a challenge with high gas prices, caring for a young child and balancing a work schedule. She made the decision to relocate and acted quickly, utilizing the Internet service available at Michigan Works! to find apartment complexes near her new place of employment. The JET Program assisted with her relocation by providing coverage of her first month's rent and security deposit. She also received supportive services for work clothing for her new position. Upon moving to Grand Rapids, Antelene was exited from the JET program due to her transferring out of the county.

Misfortune happened and Antelene was laid off from Kelly Services in June 2009. She decided to relocate back to Three Rivers and eventually was referred back to the JET Program. This time, she was also enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program and was placed in a summer work experience opportunity with another Michigan Works! service provider, Human Resources Development, Inc. (HRDI). It was during her summer work experience activity that she found something she loved. Antelene showed others that she was a very people oriented person with excellent communication skills and a strong desire to help others. During her work experience placement, Antelene made tremendous strides in making the office environment collaborative and fun. Over time, partner agencies noticed Antelene's great work ethic and when a position became available with the JET Program, she was encouraged to apply. Her positive attitude and dedication stood out and she was unanimously selected from a pool of applicants for a position as Assistant Coordinator with the JET Program. Her co-workers feel that there is no doubt that Antelene has a very bright future ahead of her. JET Program staff are proud of Antelene's accomplishments and are excited to have her as a member of their staff.

Ms. Lawanda Miller

Program: Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Program

Nominated by: Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan

Employer: Sonic America's Drive-In

Lawanda Miller was referred to the Michigan Works! Jobs Education and Training (JET) Program at Goodwill Industries in November 2008. Her referral to the JET Program resulted from being unemployed for more than a year due to caring for a child with special needs and her desire to support her other two daughters as well as live on her own. As a participant of the JET Program she joined the daily job club activities where she updated her interviewing skills, learned about networking, created a successful resume and learned the importance of dressing for success. In addition, she created a road map of daily job "targets" where she would submit applications and resumes. Lawanda said the expectation of completing the targeted job searches helped her get into a routine of applying for jobs. As a result of her determination, she was hired by Sonic as a crew member in late December 2008. Because of her work ethic, her commitment to her job and her personal goal of self sufficiency, she was recommended for additional assistance through another program called "Making It Work." This short term housing assistance program provided rent subsidies and helped her to stabilize her finances. Lawanda stated "Getting back to work and living independently increased my self confidence and life skills and modeled to my three daughters the value of responsibility." Kim, Lawanda's supervisor at Sonic, said that "Lawanda has been a great crew member and I love having her on my crew." Lawanda is being considered for increased job responsibilities due to her quality work and attendance. Lawanda's success on the job led to her being exited from the JET Program in June 2009.





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