

# The WorkPlace Mobilizer

»» Think it forward.

## Creation of WP Ventures Approved at December Board Meeting



Leon Bailey, WorkPlace Board Chairman, addresses the gathering at the December 2014 Board of Directors meeting.

“Think it forward” is not just a tagline on the The WorkPlace logo – it’s truly a state of mind. Among the important business matters and information presented at the 2014 Board of Directors meeting in December was a resolution to create a wholly owned, for-profit subsidiary of The WorkPlace. The ensuing discussion and Q & A period resulted in unanimous approval of the resolution, and thus was born **WP Ventures**. This distinct corporate entity will operate under the umbrella of The WorkPlace and will house all fee-for-service operations, in particular Engage Staffing and the bluegreen Research Institute.

Engage Staffing is the full-service general staffing agency of The WorkPlace and is Southwestern Connecticut’s regional leader in cost-effective and customized solutions for its clients. It offers a complete line of services, such as temporary, temp-to-hire, seasonal and direct hire options. Engage Staffing recruiters work one-on-one with job seekers and employers alike to ensure the best possible match for both parties.

The bluegreen Research Institute works nationally to help clients develop the industry-specific and strategic intelligence needed to compete effectively in the market. Its clients consist of start-ups and existing businesses, industry associations and school districts, as well as economic and community development and workforce agencies. Bluegreen offers a comprehensive array of services that include but are not limited to grant writing, identifying funding sources for new initiatives, economic research, and strategic and implementation plans. The work of bluegreen has a direct and positive impact on job creation and business growth.

Jana Rahrig, Manager, Engage Staffing and Mike McCarthy, V.P. National Initiatives and Manager of the bluegreen Research Institute.



## Platform to Employment Holds Statewide Graduation Ceremony

Graduation ceremonies were held in New Haven on January 13th for the second statewide class to complete the Platform to Employment preparatory program. The 97 graduates represented five regions throughout the state – Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Haven, Hartford, and Norwich – and by the time the graduation took place 30% of participants had already secured jobs. Graduates were joined by several state and local officials who shared stories about how the recent recession effected them personally and offered encouragement for a more hopeful future. Present at the event were House Speaker Brendan Sharkey who delivered the commencement address; New Haven Mayor Toni Harp; and State Representatives Larry Butler, Linda Gentile and Toni Walker. The room was filled to capacity and could barely contain the high energy and excitement of all who attended. Special thanks to the United Way of Greater New Haven for providing the space and hospitality for the event.



Clockwise from top: House Speaker Brendan Sharkey delivers keynote address; program graduates; WorkPlace President and CEO Joe Carbone speaking with class.

## Veterans Programs

The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) received funding from Newman's Own Foundation, making possible the creation of The Daring Way™ as an added support to Veterans. The Daring Way™ is a highly interactive workshop based on the research of Dr. Brené Brown, whose work has been featured on the Oprah Winfrey Network. The workshop curriculum will be used to help homeless Veterans



learn how to show up, be seen, and live braver lives. Certified Daring Way facilitators deliver these workshops which

help Veterans explore topics such as vulnerability, courage, shame, and worthiness. They will examine the thoughts and behaviors that hold them back and identify new choices and practices to move toward independent living. HVRP's goal is to co-enroll 40 participants into The Daring Way™ program. Implementation will begin in March 2015.



HVRP is a WorkPlace project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and serves male and female chronically homeless veterans in the Greater Bridgeport and New Haven areas.

The program delivers employment services in coordination with the Connecticut DOL Office for Veteran Workforce Development; local American Job Centers; and a host of local occupational skills training providers. Each veteran receives job-driven employment and training services, counseling, supportive services, job placement and retention services and is also assisted in developing an Individual Employment Plan based on literacy, numeracy and work readiness assessments, educational background inventory and work history. In addition, community referrals are made to assist veterans with mental health and substance abuse issues. For further information, contact Nicole at 203-610-8566.

## The WorkPlace Mobilizer

*Workforce development highlights from  
The WorkPlace*

**Editors /** *Melanie Blanco and Joann Coviello*  
**Contributors /** *WorkPlace staff and partners*

If you have a story you'd like to share, call (203) 610-8596.

Visit us online at [www.workplace.org](http://www.workplace.org)

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**The WorkPlace**

## YouthWorks

### Preparing Youth for the World of Work



**Woo-bery Hilarion** entered the YouthWorks program as an in-school participant and obtained her National Professional Certification in Customer Service within five weeks. One month later she received a Certificate of Achievement for completion of the Dale Carnegie Youth Edge Program. Upon graduating from high school she enrolled in the Summer Youth Earn and Learn employment program and was placed in a part-time job at Fruta Juice in Bridgeport. With these accomplishments under her belt, Woo-bery did not stop there. She subsequently enrolled at the University of Bridgeport with the intention of majoring in Criminal Justice, and at the conclusion of the Fall 2014 semester, Woo-bery made the Dean's List.

**Shaquille Moise** graduated high school at the age of nineteen and entered the YouthWorks year-round program to improve his skills and build his confidence. Working with YouthWorks provider FSW, Shaquille successfully completed the Customer Service class obtaining his Professional Certification in Customer Service by passing the Connecticut State exam. With building confidence he enrolled at Housatonic Community College, but needed to find a job to cover his expenses. When churning out resumes and knocking on doors didn't produce any results, Shaquille began working with a workforce specialist to revise his resume and polish his interviewing techniques, eventually landing a sales position with Target. Upon completion of training Shaquille will be working 35 hours per week. His future looks bright.



## Upcoming Events

### **The WorkPlace Board of Directors Meeting**

Friday, March 20th, 8:15-9:30am at the Bridgeport Holiday Inn. All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Lauren at 203-610-8580.

### **P2E Cohort 3 Graduation Ceremony**

Wednesday, March 25th, 9am at the Capitol Building, Hartford, CT

### **Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program (MCJTP) Resource Clinic**

Thursday, March 12th, 3:00-7:00pm, Ansonia High School.

### **Save the Date:**

### **Dress For Success Annual Fundraiser**

Tuesday, May 19th, 5:30-7:30pm at the Westport Arts Center.

### **2015 Annual Awards Ceremony**

Tuesday, June 23rd, 6pm at the Downtown Cabaret Theatre, Bridgeport