

Mayor Ganim Keynotes at WorkPlace Board of Directors Meeting

Over 150 people attended the December meeting of the Board of Directors of The WorkPlace. Bridgeport's newly elected mayor, Joseph Ganim spoke of economic challenges and opportunities before the city during his keynote address. He also thanked The WorkPlace, its Board and "all of you who participated in the decades of success that this organization has had and the positive impact that it has made on so many individuals".

Joe Carbone, President and CEO of The WorkPlace noted that it has been "an impressive year" as the organization remained committed to leadership and action in the community. He listed extraordinary results of WorkPlace programs developing a well-educated, competitive workforce. His remarks outlined that the future of the job market remains uncertain and The WorkPlace must strive to produce programs that facilitate career pathways. He stressed the need for innovative workforce programs, thanking Governor Malloy and the Connecticut General Assembly for their continued support.



Bridgeport Mayor Joseph Ganim

Platform to Employment Holds Statewide Graduation



State Reps Mary Mushinsky, Toni Walker, Joe Carbone and Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman (L to R) congratulate P2E graduate Nachell Doctor

During the December graduation of Platform to Employment (P2E), participants from across Connecticut gathered to celebrate their completion of a preparatory program that will lead them back to work. Remarkably 47% of participants found employment prior to graduation. Empty chairs (pictured at bottom right) represented the participants who could not attend because they were working at their new jobs.

The WorkPlace was honored to have Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman, State Representatives Toni Walker and Mary Mushinsky join the celebration as guest speakers. Their remarks provided encouragement to graduates to apply their new skills and refocus their efforts to find employment. Rep. Walker called the graduates "champions" and "heroes" for their efforts to get back into the workforce. At the conclusion of the ceremony, proud graduates displayed their certificates (bottom left).

P2E has placed over 80% of the graduates into employment. Classes are held in 5 towns across the state and applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. To learn more, call 203-610-8492 or visit the website at www.platformtoemployment.com.



Employer Spotlight: Coastal Mechanical Services



Bob Ganser, Controller and CFO (l) with Dave Besterfield, (r) President

Stratford-based Coastal Mechanical is a commercial HVAC company that has been in business for 19 years. President and Founder Dave Besterfield attended a networking event in early 2015 when he met Bob Ganser, who at the time was doing financial consulting work. Having years of experience, Bob thought he would be a good fit for an open CFO position at Coastal but a program offered through The WorkPlace provided him a distinct advantage — he was enrolled in the Step-Up For Vets.

Step-Up offers companies that hire qualified veterans a six-month wage subsidy. “The Step Up program was something that made it advantageous to hire Bob”, said Besterfield. “He integrated quickly into the office, the company and its procedures”. After six-months, Besterfield hired Ganser and he has stayed in touch with Step Up Program Manager Carmen Nieves because he believes Step-Up will be a valuable resources to support future expansions of his business. Ganser added that it’s “a great program with a driven staff that’s always willing to help out”. To learn more about the program visit www.workplace.org or call 203-610-8478.

YouthWorks Grads Headed for Success



Channell Osario

A select group of YouthWorks graduates advanced into a program developed using the most compelling concepts of Platform to Employment. P2EY incorporates a proven curriculum of self-assessment, effective communication skills and provides youth with a sound work-readiness foundation.



Quinton Campbell

The five week program develops interviewing skill, teaches goal setting and incorporating technology and social media in the job search. P2EY includes a strong emphasis on financial literacy. Financial education enables young people to start positive habits, such as saving money, at an early age. P2EY has been made possible with the generous support of the Wells Fargo and People’s United Community Foundations. For more information call 203-930-1637.



Andrea Rhodes

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Re-Entry Programs Launch in 2016



Re-Entry staff (L to R): Viviana Stevens; Eric Providence; Lori Burgos; Bruce Trammell; Don Robinson with Program Director Debra Keel (seated)

The WorkPlace has received three new grants to launch programs in support of ex-offender and re-entry populations. The **Training to Work (T2W)** program will serve those 18 and older who reside in a work release program at the time of enrollment. Candidates must be within 9 months of release and have been convicted as an adult. The program will enroll 85 people in both Bridgeport and New Haven from January 2016 through December 2017. **Face Forward** is for youth ages 14-24 residing in Southwestern Connecticut who are or have been involved with the juvenile justice system and have never been convicted as an adult. In addition, the **Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP)** serves veterans who are 18 years or older, live in Southwestern Connecticut and have been honorably discharged. All three programs offer a variety of employment, trainings and support services. To learn more about eligibility requirements and to apply, call 203-489-5048.

Upcoming Events

The WorkPlace Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, March 18th, 8:15-9:30 a.m.
NEW LOCATION: Housatonic Community College, Beacon Hall
All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Lauren at 203-610-8580.

Platform to Employment Graduation
Wednesday, February 24th, 9:00 a.m.
The Judiciary Room, State Capitol Building, Hartford