

The WorkPlace Mobilizer

»» Think it forward.

November, 2017

Puerto Rico Relief Center Provides Support to Families in Need



In response to the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Maria, The WorkPlace partnered with Bridgeport-area non-profits to open the Puerto Rico Relief Center headquartered at the Bridgeport American Job Center. The center will serve as a one-stop resource for families transitioning from Puerto Rico to Bridgeport, offering job assistance and referrals for housing support, health care, transportation, food and clothing. Bridgeport has one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the state, and officials estimate that another 70,000 people will transition to the area from Puerto Rico. Individuals in need can visit the American Job Center at 2 Lafayette Square from 8:30am until 4:30pm Tuesday through Thursday, or call 203-953-3272.

YouthBuild Bridgeport Graduates First Cohort

After an intensive seven month program, YouthBuild Bridgeport participants graduated in front of family and friends on November 8th. Collaborating agency representatives from Habitat for Humanity of Coastal Fairfield County, Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, RD Scinto and McBride Construction were on hand to congratulate the graduates as they celebrated their accomplishments and the new directions in their lives.

YouthBuild Bridgeport provides comprehensive training to young people ages 16 to 24 that meet low-income guidelines, are not in school, have not received a high school diploma or GED, and demonstrate a willingness to work hard for personal and community change.

The students received instruction on the High School Equivalency Test (GED) preparation, self-esteem, life, leadership and work readiness skills, community service opportunities, and hands-on construction skills training through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to help build quality affordable housing in Bridgeport. Upon graduation, 60% of participants had been placed in employment opportunities, and 100% are scheduled to take the GED exam. "I am very proud of our YouthBuild graduates who had to overcome many obstacles, said Program Manager Carmen Nieves. "Despite the challenges they faced, they came to class, worked hard, and grew and bonded as young men. I am confident that they each have a bright future ahead of them. *Congratulations, YouthBuild Bridgeport!*



The WorkPlace Advocates for Mature Workers in Pennsylvania



President & CEO Joseph Carbone of The WorkPlace traveled to Pennsylvania last month to raise awareness about the importance of workforce development programs that support older workers.

The WorkPlace gathered local elected officials, non-profit leaders and host agencies for a roundtable designed to solicit feedback and develop further programming for the Senior Community Service Employment Program, which is operated by The WorkPlace in Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties. The roundtable was an opportunity for legislators to learn first-hand from host agencies about the program and its impact on seniors who are overcoming barriers to get back to work. It was also an opportunity to show how host agencies can engage in advocacy and capacity building for the program. Carbone also attended the Philadelphia Mature Workers Taskforce Recognition Breakfast hosted by the Philadelphia Corporation on Aging. The former mayor of Philadelphia Dr. Reverend W. Wilson Goode Sr. and Carbone gave remarks highlighting the importance of continued funding for the program. Carbone remarked, "We need to band together and fight to keep this program funded, and expand it to serve more hardworking seniors striving to get back to work."

The WorkPlace Honors Veterans at the Service to Country and Community Awards

Cadet Petty Officer First Class Daphne Hernandez could barely see over the podium to gaze at the crowd who waited patiently to hear her speak. The fifteen year old student at Bridgeport Military Academy began reading her first place essay titled *What Veterans Day Means to Me*. "Veterans Day recognizes bravery, courage, honor and respect. It symbolizes the idea of service above self because our veterans lived by those core values."

Serving and honoring Connecticut's veterans is an essential initiative at The WorkPlace. In preparation of Veterans Day, The WorkPlace partnered with the Connecticut Department of Labor, Port 5 Naval Veterans, and Alpha Community Services to host the fifth annual "Service to Country and Community" Awards.

Veterans Patrick Henri of Ansonia and Salvatore Sena Sr. were selected to receive the Service to Country and Community Award. Also honored were Emil Senger Post 10, The American Legion, for the organization's ongoing initiative to "adopt" the eighth floor of the West Haven VA Hospital, and Sikorsky Aircraft, a Lockheed Martin Company, for their commitment to training and hiring veterans, and their support of veteran causes.

In an effort to include prospective military service members in the program, a Veterans Day Essay Contest was organized for students at Bridgeport Military Academy. Cadet Petty Officer First Class Daphne Hernandez was awarded with a plaque and a \$1000 college scholarship from Port 5 Naval Veterans.



Partner Highlight : CT League of Nursing



The Connecticut League of Nursing is a membership based organization committed to expanding educational access and opportunity for nurses, practitioners, and students. The organization partnered with the Health Career Academy (HCA) this year to provide Foundation Skills Workshops and a Caregiver School taught by working healthcare professionals. The six-module workshops provide HCA participants with the knowledge, skills, emotional and technical support to deliver basic medical care to seniors who are living independently, covering topics such as *Creating a Positive Environment for Patients with Dementia*, *Care Coordination*, *Body Mechanics*, and *Assisting with Activities of Daily Living*.

"The agency is a valuable partner to the Health Career Academy," said Joyce Gonzales, Assistant Director at HCA. "They regularly advise our staff and participants on healthcare industry trends, related events, and opportunities for further education. We are thankful to have them as a valuable resource to folks seeking a rewarding career in the healthcare industry."

Youth Participants Lead Community Service Project



In an effort to give back, participants of the Face Forward 3 program planned and hosted a successful duffel bag collection drive for children in the foster care system with Family & Children Agency in Norwalk, CT. With guidance

from the program's Mentor Coordinator, the group created flyers and donation boxes that were placed around Bridgeport to collect, organize and deliver duffel bags, toiletries, school supplies, blankets and other items that are essential to children who are placed in a new home.

Face Forward 3 provides employment and training services for youth who have been involved with the juvenile justice system. "This particular project meant a lot to those involved," said Melissa Joseph, the Mentor Coordinator assigned to the class. "Many of the participating youth have been through the DCF system at some point in time, and this project was a way for them to make a difference in someone else's life."

Visit Us

The WorkPlace

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Upcoming Events

December Board of Directors Meeting
December 15, 2017 from 8:15am to 9:30am
Beacon Hall, 2nd Floor, Housatonic Community College