

### CONTENTS

<b>Joshua Project - Computer Soft Skills.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chicago Area Project.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>MCI Business and Career Services Recruitment Project May 2017 .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Youth Job-Readiness to On-The-Job Training Program.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Congratulations to our 2017 Program Graduates!.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Partnership Connection with the Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Partnership with North Chicago Counts Coalition .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>New Team Members .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Employment Education .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>To Our Partners.....</b>	<b>7</b>

**We're on the go with our programs  
and services...**



### **Employee Connections, Inc, NFP**

2504 Washington Street, Suite 602  
Waukegan, Illinois 60085  
847-360-7177

[www.myemployeeconnections.com](http://www.myemployeeconnections.com)

[employment@myemployeeconnections.com](mailto:employment@myemployeeconnections.com)

2017 has been an eventful year thus far. We are very excited about our programs that provide Lake County residents with the training and resources needed to help overcome barriers that have hindered them from becoming sustainable employees and productive citizens.

In this, our inaugural issue, we will highlight the year's projects and accomplishments, as well as projects, we are currently working on.

### **Joshua Project - Computer Soft Skills**

So far, this year 10 adults (six veterans) participated in our Computer Soft Skills program. Upon successful completion of the program, each participant received a Microsoft Office Productivity Training Certificate of Completion. This training prepared them to advance to the next level of acquiring their Microsoft certification. Our program has proven to be of particular value to our veterans. The Veterans Administration has reached out the Employee Connections to have more veterans enroll in this program.

### **Chicago Area Project**

32 youths, ages 15 to 24, participated in the Chicago Area Project from March 1 through June 30, 2017. As part of the project, we administered a community assessment focused on the North Chicago, Waukegan, and Zion communities. The assessment revealed a number of major barriers our youth are facing and key areas of major concerns.

- Truancy
- Delinquency
- Gang Involvement
- Academic Achievement
- Teen Pregnancy
- Unemployment
- Strengthening Families/Family Communication
- Teen Parenthood
- School Dropouts
- Mental Illness

In addition, this project led to the creation of two committees: the Community Committee and the Youth Committee.

### Connections Newsletter

September, 2017

#### The Youth Committee

32 youths from North Chicago, Waukegan and Zion participated in youth committee meetings from March through June 2017.

#### The Community Committee

The Community Committee is composed of 37 leading figures from various sectors of the community.

Indigenous leaders or other residents in the community	2
Parents/legal guardians (at least 2) Middle School/Jr. High	10
High School/Alternative	9
Media	1
School representatives (Middle, High, and Alternative)	1
Faith-based representatives	1
Healthcare representatives	1
Law enforcement	3
Business representatives	3
Local government officials	1
Human support (Social Service) agency representatives	5
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>37</b>

All 32 youths from the Chicago Area Project transitioned to our Youth Job-Readiness On-The-Job Training program.

#### MCI Business and Career Services Recruitment Project May 2017

Upon the recommendation of the Job Center of Lake County, the Business and Career Services, Inc. (BCS) contacted Employee Connections to recruit candidates for their internship program. The Manufacturing Careers Internship Program (MCIP) is designed to create a pipeline of young adults interested in starting a manufacturing career and at the same time, help area manufacturers identify and hire motivated young adults ages 18 – 24. This project was funded through the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act grant through the Illinois Department of Commerce to the Lake County Workforce Development Board. Employee Connections recruited nine candidates for this program.

#### A Great Success Story: Damarea Sims

Damarea, one of the MCIP candidates we recruited, also participated in our 2015 job placement program. Damarea successfully completed the MCI program and was hired as a full-time forklift operator at AzkoNobel. During his 8-week internship, Damarea walked to class and to his internship worksite every day, a 10 – 11 mile round trip walk. Damarea was considered an outstanding youth participant in the program and now is an outstanding employee. Damarea no longer has to walk to work. He now has a car and is making \$15.00 per hour.

### Connections Newsletter

September, 2017

#### Youth Job-Readiness to On-The-Job Training Program

In May of this year, we received funding from Community Action Partnership of Lake County, through their CSBG Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity grant, to operate a Youth Job-Readiness to On-the-Job Training program. This program ran from May 1, 2017, to June 30, 2017. 32 youth were enrolled in the program, 28 completed the job readiness training component of the program and 25 successfully completed the entire program. Several youths were offered jobs with their program employees at the conclusion of the program.

Also, two of our program youths, Adaria Taylor and Ebony Smith, applied for grants through Community Action Partnership of Lake County. These grants will be applied towards their college education costs.

At the program graduation ceremony, Waukegan mayor Sam Cunningham addressed the youth with words of encouragement.



*Program Graduates with Waukegan Mayor Sam Cunningham*

#### Instructors & Area of Training:

Yvette Ewing	Hospitality and Customer Service Training
Dwayne Lewis	OSHA 30 and Flagger Safety Training
Lydia Lewis	HIPPA Training and Certification
Ronnell Showell	CPR & Vital Signs Training
Terry Ward	Job Readiness Workforce Skills, Career and Personal Finance Training

#### Success Story: Adaria Taylor

Adaria was a participant in this year's Youth Job-Readiness program. Adaria received Job-Readiness, Career and Personal Finance, HIPPA, Hospitality and Customer Service, CPR, and Vital Signs training and the appropriate certifications, during the program. As a trainee-worker, Adaria's program worksite was MAVES Medical in Beach Park, IL. After the program ended, Adaria was hired by another program worksite partner, The Fuller Center for Housing, as a telemarketer and is doing great!

#### Success Story: Deonta McGee-Ray & Dominique Douglas

Deonta and Dominique were also participants in our 2017 Youth Job-Readiness Program. In addition to Job-Readiness and Career and Personal Finance certifications, both received OSHA 30 and Flagger Safety industry and nationally recognized certifications through our program. Both chose the Manufacturing and Construction career pathway. Their worksite was Dean Investments and Construction. Deonta and Dominique were hired after the program as crews workers for Dean Investments and Construction. We are very proud of the success achieved by these youths!

### Congratulations to our 2017 Program Graduates!

Graduate	Illinois Career Pathway	Work Site
Adaria Taylor	Healthcare	MAVES Medical
Amanda Ortiz	Healthcare	MAVES Medical & Fuller Center
Amania DuBose	Healthcare	MAVES Medical
Asia Douglas	Childcare	First Baptist Kids Club
Bianca M. Reyes	Hospitality	Elisa's Café
Brianna Bailey	Childcare	Lions Math & Science Christian Academy
Daisia Randle	Hospitality	Stretch's Bar & Grill
Dana DuBose	Healthcare	First Baptist Kids Club
Deonta McGee-Ray	Construction	Dean Investments & Construction
De'Quan Leonard	Construction	Dean Investments & Construction
Dominique Douglas	Construction	Dean Investments & Construction
Ebony Smith	Construction	Dean Investments & Construction
Fermin Castaneda	Construction	Dean Investments & Construction
Jacqueline Moore	Childcare	Alice Discovery Academy Daycare
Jakira Burden	Childcare	Lions Math & Science Christian Academy
Jameka Burden	Childcare	Lions Math & Science Christian Academy
Jasmine Garcia	Healthcare	MAVES Medical
Kwaeavian Taylor	Childcare	First Baptist Kids Club
Kwaeshawna Taylor	Healthcare	MAVES Medical
Kwantez Page	Construction	Dean Investments & Construction
Michael Gilmore	Hospitality	Stretch's Bar & Grill
Nathaniel Margerum	Hospitality	Holiday Inn Gurnee Convention Center & Ramada Inn
Nigel Douglas	Childcare	First Baptist Kids Club
Shaniyah Henderson	Childcare	First Baptist Kids Club
Sheryl Williams	Hospitality	Stretch's Bar & Grill



The logo for the Connections Newsletter features a stylized orange and blue graphic of two overlapping curved shapes, resembling a stylized 'C' or a pair of wings, positioned to the left of the text.

## Connections Newsletter

September, 2017

### **Partnership Connection with the Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center**

During the months of July and August, I've been in meetings and conversations with Jon Ashworth the Health Equity Coordinator and Angela Stefani Assistant Clinical Coordinator Child and Adolescent Behavioral Services for the Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center. The goal of our meetings is to determine the best approach to use in providing mental health services to our youth. Mental illness amongst our youth is a county-wide major concern and an underlying cause of youth being unable to function in school. This further leads to incarceration and is a major barrier to gaining and sustaining employment.

In working with the youth in our programs over the years, I and our case managers have observed signs of mental health issues with our youth. To better service our youth, I felt that it was important for everyone to become more knowledgeable about the effects of mental health in youth.

In September, our entire staff took the Mental Health First Aid USA training class provided by the Lake County Health Department. The training was an eye-opener. The entire Employee Connections' staff received their certificates of completion. We are now registered with the USA National Council for Behavioral Health as Youth Mental Health First Aid responders. We have been trained to provide initial help to young people experiencing problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, and substance use disorders.

### **Partnership with North Chicago Counts Coalition**

Effective July 26, 2017, Employee Connections became a member of the North Chicago Counts coalition. The coalition's mission is "Empowering our community to prevent and reduce youth substance abuse".

It's vision: An environment where youth and community collaborate through education and prevention in order to achieve their highest potential.

The coalition is working to acquire a multi-year grant to provide education and resources to educate the youth in North Chicago's school district on substance abuse. The grant money will also be used to put preventative measures in place to reduce the use of drugs and alcohol amongst the youth. As a member of the NCC coalition, Employee Connections will be working diligently with the coalition to help achieve this goal.

### **New Team Members**

#### **Marketing Communication Specialist - Pamela Jones**

Pamela joined our team as a Marketing Communications Specialist. She was formerly a Technical Marketing Specialist for Teradyne, Inc. and a Marketing Professional for Eagle Acoustics Manufacturing. Pamela has an MBA in Marketing from the University of Phoenix as well as a Marketing degree from the University of Houston. We are excited to have Pamela onboard. With her marketing skills, we are looking to heighten the awareness of Employee Connections through various marketing communications channels.

#### **Director of Technology and Training – In-kind Service – Terry Ward**

Terry has been with our team as an IT consultant, trainer and program designer since 2012. He is now coming on board and will be volunteering his services in providing IT support and maintenance for the website and our agency. Terry has a Bachelor of Science Degree Information Technology Management from the University of Phoenix.



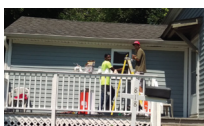
## Employment Education is a “Bridge out of Poverty” ...



**Thank you for helping us make a difference and transform lives today!**

**The Services We Offer and Those We Serve...**

- *Youth Job-Readiness and On-The-Job Training Programs. Helping youth overcome barriers and preparing them for the future.*
- *Pre-employment and Life Skills Training for Youth & Adults*
- *Illinois workNet® Work Readiness training with Certificate of Completion*
- *Training and certifications in Illinois Career Pathways Industries*
- *Program Applicant Recruitment and Enrollment*
- *Job Placement Opportunities*
- *Computer Skills and Office Productivity Training for our Veterans and Lake County Residents*



**How can YOU help us transform a life?"**  
**Visit [www.myemployeeconnections.com](http://www.myemployeeconnections.com) to make a donation today!**

*All gifts are tax deductible.*

---

The logo for Connections Newsletter features the word "Connections" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "Newsletter" in a smaller font below it. A stylized orange and blue arrow graphic is positioned to the left of the text.

## Connections Newsletter

September, 2017

---

### To Our Partners...

Thank you so much for helping us achieve these successes thus far this year:

- Alice Discovery Academy Daycare
- Associated Bank, Illinois
- Black Chamber of Commerce of Lake County, Illinois
- City of North Chicago, Illinois
- City of Waukegan, Illinois
- College of Lake County, Illinois
- Community Action Partnership of Lake County, Illinois
- First Baptist Church, Waukegan, Illinois
- Dean Investments & Construction
- Elisa's Café
- Fuller Center
- Holiday Inn Gurnee Convention Center
- Job Center of Lake County
- Lake County Housing Authority
- MAVES Medical
- North Chicago School District 187, North Chicago, Illinois
- Lions Math & Science Christian Academy
- Ramada Inn
- Stretch's Bar & Grill
- Waukegan Township of Lake County, Illinois
- Waukegan Township High School, Waukegan, Illinois
- Way Through The Word Ministry, Gurnee, Illinois
- Workforce Development Center of Lake County, Illinois
- WorkforceSkills™ of Lake County, Illinois

Each quarter, we will be bringing you news updates on our programs and services that connect to our Community and the heartbeat of our Mission...

**"To prepare low income and at risk individuals with opportunities to connect with compassionate employers."**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia R. Harris".

*Cynthia R. Harris*

Cynthia R. Harris  
Executive Director