

Christel Owen Recognized for 13 Years of Dedication



From left: M.J. Bruns; Director of Barry, Branch, Calhoun Michigan Works!/CISD, Christel Owen; Previous Finance Coordinator, Barry, Branch, Calhoun Michigan Works!/CISD, and Dr. Lynne Haley; Chairperson of the Barry, Branch, Calhoun Workforce Development Board.

Christel Owen, Previous Finance Coordinator for the Barry, Branch, Calhoun Michigan Works!/ Calhoun I.S.D., was recognized at the November 2008 Workforce Development Board Meeting for her hard work and dedication over the past 13 years. Christel retired December 31, 2008 and will be missed!

Christel was responsible for managing a budget of over 8 million dollars and 15 different Michigan Works! programs. One of her many accomplishments includes having zero questioned or disallowed costs during an annual audit!

Christel's plaque recognized her many years of dedication, teamwork, and outstanding work performance, which significantly contributed to the successes of our area's Michigan Works! programs.

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BUSINESS SERVICES TEAM AND KELLOGG COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNER TO PROVIDE TRAINING TO LOCAL COMPANY

The Business Services Team (BST) and Kellogg Community College staff presented at the Michigan Works! Conference in September 2008. The team talked about the success they had working with Tenneco Automotive and the welding training that was provided to over 60 individuals!

The approach that the Business Services Team used to work with Tenneco was designed after the Business Solutions Professional (BSP) Training at Michigan State University's School of Labor & Industrial Relations. Prior to this training, staff would have had to search the Michigan Talent Bank database for welders and referred these individuals to Tenneco. Since Tenneco needed specialized welders for this position, searching the Michigan Talent Bank would not have worked.

Using the BSP approach, the BST contacted the Kellogg Community College (KCC) Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTC) and the Branch Area Careers Center. KCC designed a customized curriculum for the welder training class. The MI Works! Business Services Team recruited and screened potential participants for the training and Tenneco made the final decision on who would be hired and trained.

By focusing on the employer's needs, it was a Win-Win situation for everyone and Tenneco's retention rate increased to approximately 85%!

The Business Services Team also kept busy this fall



From left: Kevin Johns, BSP MI Works!/HRDI, Laura DePompolo, Director of RMTC/KCC, George Bauer, BSP MI Works!/CISD, Roberta Gagnon, KCC Workforce Solutions, Will Slone, BSP MI Works!/HRDI

presenting about this project at the Trends Conference, which is an Association of Community Colleges and making a presentation to the Business Solutions Professionals class that was held at Michigan State University this fall.

The Business Services Team has most recently been assisting Firekeepers Casino with recruitment. Firekeepers will open in Battle Creek in the summer of 2009!

MICHIGAN WORKS! REMEMBERS ELAINE FURU-BAKER WITH THE RALPH LOESCHNER AWARD



At the Michigan Works! Conference in September of 2008, Elaine Furu-Baker, former Director of the Barry, Branch, Calhoun Michigan Works!, was remembered with the Ralph Loeschner Award. This award honors someone who is an advocate of the Michigan Works! system. Elaine's husband, sister and daughter accepted this award and are pictured along with the Workforce Development Team and Dr. Lynne Haley, Chairperson of the Barry, Branch, Calhoun Workforce Development Board.

Dr. Lynne Haley remarked that Elaine was a teacher and mentor that encouraged staff and colleagues to value workforce development. Elaine was passionate about this field of work, inspired achievement and creativity, invited collaboration and was generous with praise. Dr. Haley's closing remarks were that "Ralph Loeschner would be proud."

Diedra Hosek is Honored as Michigan Works! Alumnus of the Year

On February 2, 2009, Diedra Hosek was honored in Lansing as the Alumnus of the year for Barry, Branch, Calhoun Michigan Works!

Diedra Hosek came to Michigan Works! in February 2008. Diedra was working part-time at a Shell convenience store and was working less than 30 hours per week. Diedra needed help finding a full-time job with higher pay and benefits.

Diedra's application was submitted to Tenneco Automotive in Marshall as a candidate for the innovative specialized welding training program that the company had recently initiated in partnership with Michigan Works!, Kellogg Community College's Regional Manufacturing Technology Center and the Branch Area Careers Center.

Diedra was selected by Tenneco to attend the training program and the training was scheduled at a time that would not interfere with Diedra's part-time work schedule. As the sole income provider for her family, Diedra could not quit her part-time job until she successfully completed the welding program.

Diedra successfully completed the classroom portion of the training at the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center and was then able to go on to the on-the-job training part of the training at Tenneco on March 31, 2008. She successfully completed the on-the-job training on April 22, 2008 and has been employed at Tenneco Automotive since then.

Diedra's supervisor describes her as someone who is able to learn quickly and adds that she is a "go-to person" who can be counted on to work in cells other than welding. At her supervisor's recommendation, Diedra recently applied for a Line Leader position.

When asked about her experience with Michigan Works!, Diedra said: "Michigan Works! gave me the ability and opportunity to learn and advance my skills to improve myself financially and to be mentally prepared."

A representative from Tenneco says "There is no way that we could have accomplished our expansion without the help of Michigan Works!"



Diedra is honored at the Alumni of the Year Celebration that was held in Lansing on February 2, 2009. Pictured from left are: Will Slone, Michigan Works! HRDI; Dominic Salerno, Tenneco Automotive; Diedra Hosek; Dr. Lynne Haley, Barry, Branch, Calhoun Workforce Development Board Chairperson.



Diedra Hosek busy at work at Tenneco Automotive

Workforce Development Board Recognizes JET Participant

On January 20, 2009, the Barry, Branch, Calhoun Workforce Development Board recognized Rhonda Phillips for her hard work and perseverance in completing training and find employment.

Rhonda Phillips is a single mother of a one year old son and a thirteen year old daughter. Rhonda completed her GED at Miller-Stone in 1998 and in 2007 started at Everest Institute in Kalamazoo and completed the Medical Assistant program and graduated on May 30, 2008.

Rhonda completed her externship at DaVita Dialysis in the summer of 2008. After graduation from Everest Institute, Rhonda diligently and consistently pounded the streets searching for employment, daily coming to the Michigan Works! Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Service Center updating her information and searching out new leads. Rhonda was not one to let adversity deter her in her quest. Rhonda has had to overcome many obstacles during her life and she has not let that get her down.

Rhonda has always strived to do well and has been open to suggestions concerning her employment outlook. Rhonda is an outgoing individual who always is upbeat and positive.



Pictured from left: Rose Campbell, Diane Sexton, Rhonda Phillips, and Ebony Thomas.

Rhonda stated in a letter that the JET program helped her look for employment by helping her keep her confidence up, making sure she had a professional resume to give to employers, a nice interview outfit, and encouraged her not to give up and to keep looking for employment. Rhonda searched for employment for 4 1/2 months with many interviews. She finally received a call for a position in a medical office in Bronson Hospital. Once she was at the interview, she was asked to come and job shadow for 4 hours to see if she liked it. She loved it and was offered the position. She credits her success to Jim Wick, Ebony Thomas, Diane Sexton and Rose Campbell of Michigan Works!/Foundation for Behavioral Resources JET Program.

WFD DIRECTOR'S COLUMN-M.J. BRUNS

Happy Spring! I am pleased to provide an update on a few of the new and exciting activities in our Michigan Works! area.

Program operators in Barry, Branch and Calhoun counties are currently operating a Summer Youth Employment Program for low-income youth ages 14 through 24. With funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), these youth will be able to develop their work readiness skills and earn an income over the summer as they work at selected worksites throughout our Barry, Branch and Calhoun county region. More information can be found by visiting www.michpartners.org or by contacting Lisa Larson at 269-789-2446.

A total of 89 individuals representing businesses, education, service providers and other community members chose to participate in the Community Employment Readiness Forum in Battle Creek on Friday, February 27th. The Forum's purpose was to discuss and develop action strategies to help individuals become work ready and competent as a marketable workforce to meet the needs of business and industry. Attendees were asked to complete individual Action Plans, which outline specific actions they will take in their community to address issues related to workforce preparedness. We look forward to assisting these individuals as they implement these action strategies in our region!

With an increase in the number of unemployed persons in our region, customer traffic at our Michigan Works! Service Centers has continued to climb. Partner Agency staff and Board members met in February to strategize changes that might help staff continue to provide quality services for this increased number of customers. A few changes that have taken place or are in the process include adding staff and volunteers to assist customers, upgrading the phone system in the Coldwater office, developing visual and other informational aids to help customers understand and navigate the programs, and making better use of office space. I was very pleased to note that, despite this increase in customers, our Michigan Works! area had four Partner Agency staff recognized for their "excellent" customer service in a recent state Mystery Shopper report. A sincere appreciation is extended to the staff in all of our Michigan Works! programs who provide excellent customer service every day!

Our Michigan Works! Area remains committed to providing high quality services to business, industry and job seeker customers in order to move Michigan forward on the path to economic recovery. Please feel free to contact me at 269-789-2423 or brunsm@calhounisd.org if you have questions, comments or concerns about Michigan Works!

Albion Service Center 101 North Albion Street
Albion, MI 49224
Battle Creek Service Center 135 Hamblin Avenue
Battle Creek, MI 49017
Coldwater Service Center 210 Vista Drive
Coldwater, MI 49036
Hastings Service Center 535 West Woodlawn Ave.
Hastings, MI 49058

Calhoun Intermediate School District
Workforce Development
17111 G Drive North
Marshall, MI 49068
Phone: (800)-285-WORKS (9675)
Fax: (269) 781-8792
Email: larsonl@calhounisd.org
www.michpartners.org



UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

June 5, 2009 9:00-10:00 a.m.
WDB Membership Committee Conference Call

June 9, 2009 10:00-11:30 a.m.
MPRI Steering Team Meeting
Calhoun ISD 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

June 12, 2009 12:00 p.m.
Monitoring & Evaluation Committee
Calhoun ISD 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

June 24, 2009
Branch County Work Readiness and MPRI
Workforce Development Program Proposals
due at Calhoun ISD by noon.

July 14, 2009 10:00-11:30 a.m.
MPRI Steering Team Meeting
Calhoun ISD 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

July 17, 2009 12:00-3:00 p.m.
WDB Planning & Development Committee Meeting
Calhoun ISD 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

July 21, 2009 8:00-10:00 a.m.
WDB/CEOB Meeting
Hastings Michigan Works! Service Center
535 W. Woodlawn Ave-Hastings

August 11, 2009 10:00-11:30 a.m.
MPRI Steering Team Meeting
Location to be determined

August 14, 2009 1:30-2:30 p.m.
WDB Membership Committee Meeting
Calhoun ISD 17111 G Drive North-Marshall

September 4, 2009 12:00-3:00 p.m.
Planning & Development Committee Meeting
Calhoun ISD 17111 G Drive North-Marshall