

The Alameda County Community Action Voice



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Successful Launch for ARRA-Funded CREW Program

Innovative ACAP Program Leads to Permanent Jobs for the Traditionally Hard to Employ

ACAP has just launched an innovative transitional jobs program intended to help address barriers to employment, especially for the formerly incarcerated. The exciting Community Reinvestment Employment Workcrew (CREW) program launched in June and has already placed two CREW members into permanent jobs. Program participants receive training and supportive services while working on various projects.

CREW members can receive assistance in areas such as transportation, housing, clothing and emergency food assistance, in addition to employment. Research has shown that instability in these areas is an indicator of a person's ability to obtain and maintain employment. The CREW allows participants the opportunity to address these issues while earning a living wage. Participants establish a work history, gain additional and personal competencies and increase their confidence; all of which will aid in their permanent employment search.

Dwayne Long and Derrick McFadden are two CREW early success stories.

Long joined the CREW program through ACAP's RESCUE program, which stands for Re-entry Service Center for



Dwayne Long is one of CREW's most successful clients.

Unemployed Ex-Offenders. In a mere three weeks of working with CREW, Long was successful in finding a job with a Fremont manufacturer of medical equipment.

Derrick McFadden was doing his job search at EDD when ACAP staff member James Brown approached him about attending a RESCUE orientation. He attended and was impressed with Brown, who told him about CREW. McFadden reports that CREW allows him to be himself, has taught him to be depend-

able, have integrity, and to work as part of a team. He came to be called "MacGyver" by the rest of the CREW due to his knack for problem-solving on the job. They joke that if he couldn't figure out how to do it, it couldn't be done.

He likes to share his knowledge with the other people on the CREW, and is so good at training others that ACAP hired him as a full-time Employment Training Specialist, to teach job skills to CREW members. McFadden says that he has been impressed with the CREW program, and is enjoying being able to give back as a staff member. He wants everyone to experience the kind of success he has had.

McFadden's words of wisdom for other formerly-incarcerated workers are to "Keep praying. There are programs that help ex-offenders get back on track and get their lives together. I would never have thought I would be an Employment Training Specialist.

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ACAP CREW Program Founded, continued from front page

Due to ACAP programs, I learned that anyone can make a change.”

There are 17 clients participating in CREW right now, but there are plans to expand the program as additional work contracts are secured. The CREW staff follow up on leads daily. ACAP currently has contracts with the Department of Public Works and the Alameda County General Services Agency, in addition to contracts with private citizens. The current crews are performing physical labor work, such as weed abatement, landscaping, home painting and the like.

The training curriculum for the program is also modified as the need arises and best practices are learned. Curriculum is taught in both classroom and on-the-job settings, all designed with a goal of eliminating

barriers to employment. Current modules of the curriculum include conflict management, teamwork and workplace safety.

CREW members are referred to ACAP both by our partner agencies, such as Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency and Women on the Way, as well as by ACAP's in-house programs.

For more information about the CREW program, please contact Jamir Dixon at (510) 690-8581.



Derrick McFadden is now an Employment Training Specialist for ACAP CREW.

Upcoming ACAP Events



ACAP has two graduation ceremonies happening in the next month.

August 27, 2010 - GED Graduation, Castro Valley Library, 3600 Norbridge Avenue, Castro Valley

August 27, 2010 - Deadline for Americorps Applications

September 13, 2010 - Launch of Blueprint for Success program in Alameda

September 15, 2010 - Community Action Board Meeting, 24100 Amador Street, Hayward

September 18 & 19, 2010 - Black Native American Association Pow Wow at Cal State East Bay

September 24, 2010 - Heart of Eden Americorps Graduation, 24100 Amador Street, Hayward

September 25, 2010 - Eden Area Fall Clean Up and Beautification, Meek Estate Park, Hayward

September 2010 - Asset Development Orientation in Hayward

October 2010 - New Blueprint for Success class begins at Bayfair Employment Training Academy

Upcoming Community Action Board Meeting

The next Community Action Board Meeting will be held Wednesday, September 15th at 6:00 PM in room Lupine A & B at 24100 Amador Street/ Hayward CA 94544. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

ACAP Savers Club Helps People Achieve their Financial Goals

The Savers Club is available to individuals who take part in the ACAP Individual Development Account (IDA) program. Savers Club classes cover topics such as saving and budgeting, setting financial goals, combating obstacles to financial stability, financial record-keeping, understanding credit, banks and lending, as well as investing.

Individual Development Accounts are available to those who complete the 10-week training session successfully. Intended to reward the monthly savings of low-income families, IDA funds are typically used to pay for first home purchases, post-secondary education, or as seed money for small businesses. Funds can also be

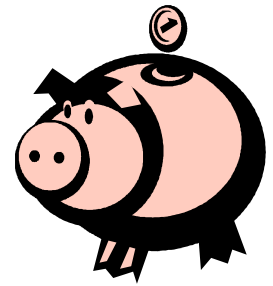
used to allow parents to save for private school education for their children.

This exciting program makes it possible for people to get the extra help and finances they need to change their life, including expanding their education, taking advantage of job training, or saving to buy equipment for a new business.

ACAP has two varieties of IDAs. The first matches participant savings at a 2:1 rate and may be used for a home, job training/education, or a new business, while the other matches at a 3:1 rate (IDEA), but can only be used for first-time home purchases in partnership

with the Federal Home Loan Bank. The 2:1 IDA match is limited to those whose income is within 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines, while the IDEA allows for a higher income (80% of area median income).

47 new ACAP clients opened IDA accounts and 113 clients increased their savings by making deposits in the past year. Orientations for the program take place about every two months in either Emeryville, Fremont or Hayward. The next one will start in September in Hayward (exact date to be determined). For more information on the next orientation and eligibility, please call (510) 259-3819.



People who have savings are better prepared when life has disruptions, such as car repairs. Savers Club participants learn money management principles so they are not negatively impacted when crises hit.

FORTY-SEVEN

NEW ACAP CLIENTS OPENED IDA ACCOUNTS AND 113 CLIENTS INCREASED THEIR SAVINGS BY MAKING DEPOSITS IN THE PAST YEAR.

Blueprint for Success Graduates Pleased with Program

The newest class of Blueprint for Success graduates celebrated their accomplishments last month at ACAP's Tri-Cities Employment Training Academy in Newark.

Blueprint for Success participants are youth ages 14—24, who learn to write resumes and cover letters, practice interviewing, learn about networking, what employers are looking for, and the realities of the job market.

They were all pleased with the program, and many commented that they had become better public speakers through the program. They also had great things to say about their teacher, Americorps member Minyon Robinson, who will be completing her service year soon and will be greatly missed.

For more information on the Blueprint for Success program, call (510) 690-8578.



Re-Entry Services an Answered Prayer for ACAP Client

LaQuan Williams grew up in Oakland, the second of five children of a single mother. At 29, he is able to contribute to his family for the first time in his life, and says that ACAP's re-entry services represent an answered prayer for his family, and a dream come true.

Williams was seven months out of jail when he met ACAP staff member Tim Smith at the EDD office in Hayward, who was doing outreach for ACAP. Smith invited Williams to attend an orientation for ACAP's re-entry services. There Williams learned the basics about conducting a job search, such as the documents he needed to keep handy and the importance of having a stable residence and working phone number.

He recalls the orientation as being both inspirational and relieving. ACAP staff member James Brown told his story about being formerly incarcerated, which Williams said gave him hope that he too could find a job and the kind of success that Brown has had. Williams was chosen for ACAP's new CREW program, a transitional jobs program for people with patchy work histories and/or barriers to employment (see story on page 1).

His first day of work with CREW involved moving furniture to some new offices at ACAP. "I felt joyful the first day because I was working.

It was wonderful. I felt a sense of accomplishment and achievement. I was very thankful," said Williams.

In addition to work experience, Williams has also benefitted from classes offered by CREW on soft employment skills, like the importance of



LaQuan Williams has found work through ACAP's re-entry services.

listening carefully to instructions and planning your work in order to ensure safety, which he says are things that he has learned he needs to work a little harder on. He has also realized the qualities he already possesses that are going to be beneficial to him in the workplace. "I didn't realize how tenacious I am and how profitable that was in the workplace," said Williams.

Participants in the program are also advised of employment opportunities that they are encouraged to apply for.

When he moves on from the CREW program, Williams would like to have

a clerical job so that he can gain some of the skills he will need in the future. He says that he would recommend ACAP's re-entry services to anyone, because of the introduction it provides to working, as well as the realization that there are opportunities out there for the formerly incarcerated.

Williams says that the only thing he would change is the way that people perceive programs for the formerly incarcerated. "If people knew how uplifting it is, they would do anything they could to help this program. It has changed lives. My family is proud. I can help my mom with anything she needs," said Williams, smiling.

As far as his plans for the future, Williams reports that it seems more immediate now. "My future is a whole lot brighter and more definable now. It is more feasible, tangible, and plausible. It is happening right now." In addition to his work with CREW, Williams is in college these days, studying Business at Chabot and taking other steps to get him closer to his eventual goal of entrepreneurship and owning his own business. He is excited about ACAP's Asset Development programs like individual development accounts (matching funds for savings accounts) and Season of Sharing (assistance with deposits for housing) and plans to take advantage of them.

For information about ACAP's Re-Entry services, contact Everett Highbaugh at (510) 259-3501.

ACAP's AmeriCorps Members Complete their Service Year

The Heart of Eden AmeriCorps Program works to support the services of ACAP with 30 AmeriCorps members at 12 sites within the ACAP service area. This is a key component that allows ACAP to serve the county.

Volunteers of this prestigious program play a variety of roles. Employment Facilitator Members (EFMs) at our Employment Training Academies (ETAs) support youth and young adults step-by-step in developing a plan for their education and/or careers, developing financial literacy skills, opening bank accounts, and linking them to support services like health care and financial aid.

EFMs also work intensively with high-need youth and young adults on an ongoing basis throughout the year. EFMs are trained in leading job search, job readiness, and life skills workshops for youth and young adults, ensuring that clients have the skills they need to find and retain a job and succeed in the workplace and at school. The workshops are spread out over six weeks and repeated throughout the year.

EFMs are also engaged in developing and implementing plans to bring more young people into ACAP's employment and training services. EFMs develop and make presentations directed at youth and at the staff of youth-serving agencies such as schools, community centers, and community-based agencies providing recreation, health, counseling, and other youth services. AmeriCorps members also do community outreach at community festivals, job fairs, and other events targeted at youth and their families.

Each of our two partner school districts (Hayward and San Lorenzo Unified), have EFMs on-site, who work with students during and after school hours. They provide students support in order to stay in school, finding part-time work or work experience opportunities (including internships, job shadowing, volunteering and service-learning), de-

veloping an education and life plan to overcome challenges, and referring students to solutions to problems that arise such as unstable housing situations, drug and alcohol issues, neighborhood crime and violence, and other issues that plague the Eden Area.

In addition to the services above, our Hayward-based EFMs collaborate with the Hayward Police Department (HPD), HUSD and HPD's Youth and Family Services Bureau (YFSB) implementing the Hayward Positive Alternatives for Youth Program (HPAY) program.

HPAY is a comprehensive gang prevention, intervention and reduction program for the city of Hayward that provides educational, career readiness, employment training and intensive support services to both in and out-of-school youth aged 10-18 who are already gang-involved or at risk.

AmeriCorps Members strive to increase youth participation in decision-making by acting as peer mentors who can relate more closely to the issues faced by youth.

Volunteer Recruitment and Community Involvement

ACAP and the Alameda County Deputy Sheriff's Activity League (DSAL), with the support of the Rotary Clubs of Castro Valley and Hayward, have launched the Heart of Ashland Volunteer Program to help build community and civic engagement there. Full-time Volunteer Recruitment Members (VRMs) work with the

DSAL Youth Program Director. The VRMs, the Sheriff's Department, the Ashland Community Association, business network representatives, and volunteers will create a Heart of Ashland Steering Committee, which will help to identify and coordinate future projects, publicize volunteer opportunities, recognize volunteers, and spread the word about volunteer accomplishments throughout the region.

The first year of the Heart of Eden AmeriCorps Program is coming to an end soon with graduation on Friday September 24th at 2 pm in the Shooting Star Room of the Eden MultiService Center. Soon afterward, on October 4, 2010 a new group of AmeriCorps members will be sworn in as our second year program year begins.



Recruitment for year two has already begun. Candidates must be willing to commit to serving a full year with our program, either full or part-time. The deadline for applications is August 27, 2010. If you or someone you know would like more information on how to become a Heart of Eden AmeriCorps member, please email our Member Coordinator, Susanna Chi, at susanna.chi@acap-beta.org or call (510) 783-0272.

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Summer Youth Employment Changing the Lives of Alameda County Youth

The Summer Youth Employment Program is underway! ACAP has 86 youth placed at various work-sites throughout the community. Sites include retail stores, maintenance and landscaping crews, summer camps, and even a computer clubhouse where youth train others in computer literacy skills.

Additionally, BETA has brought a group of Youth Leadership Council members on board as part of a

health and wellness in the community. The youth are vibrant, innovative, and eager to “earn as they learn,” which is what the SYEP is all about. One participant in particular, has emerged as a leader among her peers, Zemira Sabanovic.

Zemira’s family migrated from Bosnia during a period of genocide. She is the oldest of three children. At the young age of 16, she has overcome many obstacles that first-

Youth Leadership Council Public Relations Intern for the summer has brought out the leadership skills that life has provided her with. Along with acquiring new employment experience and skills, Zemira is also gaining confidence and hope for the future, as she put it, “this shows how the future may get better.” As a senior at her high school, Zemira prepares to face new challenges (such as applying to college) but is ready to take them on, and she feels this experience can only help boost her col-



Members of the Youth Leadership Council Peer Health Advocate Team at the Tri-CETA Open House

rigorous Public Relations Internship, while Tri-CETA is running its Peer Health Advocate Team (PHAT).

PHAT is a program for youth to engage in work centered around

generation Americans often face, in pursuit of a well-rounded, balanced lifestyle. Nonetheless, Zemira shows nothing but maturity and resilience in all aspects of her life, and is always thinking of her family first. Getting hired as a BETA

lege applications.

This serves as an example of the SYEP’s far-reaching impact on our local and greater community. SYEP provides not only jobs, but opportunities for the youth of Alameda County’s unincorporated area to demonstrate growth and contribute to their families while becoming enriched and more marketable in the world of work. Some have been working for just over a month now, and Zemira Sebanovic is only the first of many success stories we will encounter this summer.

Tri-CETA Open House a Success

ACAP’s Tri-Cities employment training academy (Tri-CETA) in Newark held an open house Friday, July 23. Roughly 40 people attended to learn more about the services offered at Tri-CETA, including many of ACAP’s partners from the City of Fremont, Centro de Servicios and Hayward Adult School. ACAP will be doing open houses at its other ETAs in the coming months; stay tuned for details!



Left: Americorps member Minyon Robinson explains the Blueprint curriculum to a City of Fremont staffer.



Right: Americorps member Jeff Lin discusses Tri-CETA services with some partners from the Hayward Adult School

Assuring the Future of Alameda County Youth

ACAP Leads Youth Re-Entry Planning Process

The Youth Reentry Planning Process (YRPP) is an initiative aimed at addressing the gap in comprehensive youth reentry policy and services at a county-wide level.

The YRPP process was funded through the Department of Labor (DOL) and charged with developing a blueprint establishing a comprehensive juvenile justice reentry Blueprint in Alameda County for youth 14-24 years.

ACAP was one of only five sites nationwide selected for a planning grant, in part because of the unique opportunity to address recidivism rates in Alameda County.

There were six areas of focus under the grant: 1) employment; 2) education; 3) mentoring; 4) case management; 5) restorative justice; and 6) engaging faith and community based organizations in violence prevention.

Through the development of a Steering Committee, strategy groups, focus groups and site visits the YRPP gathered input from a diverse group of stakeholders. In addition, extensive

research was conducted on promising practices from across the country and local data was gathered and analyzed to better understand the status of juvenile justice in Alameda County. The YRPP Steering Committee came together monthly between January and June 2010 to collaboratively plan according to a shared vision of helping keep youth out of the juvenile justice system.

“I believe getting yourself out of the criminal way of thinking is the hardest part. Working is the complete opposite of being in the streets.”

- statement from a youth in the YRPP program.

The YRPP Steering Committee served as the primary advisory body for the planning process. Their charge was to set the project’s priorities, provide knowledge and insight on relevant topics and guide the overall direction of the project.

As a whole, the YRPP Steering Committee represents a variety of perspectives within the youth reentry system, including law enforcement such as the district attorney and probation, educators and organizations that focus on employment rights, job placement, civil rights, education, vo-

educational training, youth impacted by the juvenile justice system, health, mental health, reentry, and substance abuse treatment.

What was remarkable was that high level decision makers from diverse backgrounds were able to come together and agree on shared visions and collectively create a comprehensive plan for youth reentry in Alameda County.

The work of the Steering Committee resulted in a Blueprint plan submitted to the Department of Labor on June 30th. ACAP is in the process of working with partners to move the Blueprint forward and is applying for additional funding to support the implementation of the plan and reentry services for youth, particularly around employment.

For more information on the YRPP project, please contact:

Felicia Moore-Jordan,
(510) 265-8363
fmjordan@acgov.org

“In Alameda County it’s easier to get a gun than a job”

- statement from a youth in the YRPP Process



Strengthening communities. Changing lives.

ASSOCIATED COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

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The new ACAP web site is coming soon to WWW.ACAP-ACTION.ORG

Youth Leadership Council Takes End-of-Summer Trip to Six Flags



The Southland Employment Training Academy (SETA) Youth Leadership Council took an end-of-summer trip to Six Flags in late August to celebrate their summer of service.

Lakeshia White, an Americorps member who was in charge of the Youth Leadership Council, said the kids were thrilled to go and had a great time.

YLC youth complete an 8-module curriculum that includes lessons about attitude, time management, goal-setting, decision-making, leadership, and self-esteem. “The kids learned to communicate and work together. I liked seeing them taking on leadership of the program and planning activities for each other,” said White.

GED Graduation Scheduled for August 27th

ACAP is pleased to announce the graduation of our 2010 GED students.

The graduation ceremony will be held Friday, August 27, 2010 at 12:30 PM at the Castro Valley Public Library, 3600 Norbridge Avenue in Castro Valley, CA.

All are welcome to attend. If you have questions, please contact Cinnamon Zavala at cinnamon.zavala@acap-beta.org or (510) 794-2957.

Logan Ayuso will be graduating on August 27th

