Training is Key to CVC Jobs

The Transitional Subsidized Employment Program, or TSE Program, provides entry-level job training for individuals who are out of work and are in need of professional guidance. Serving communities in the Los Angeles Harbor Area, Pacific Gateway assists individuals seeking quality employment. Through Pacific Gateway, jobseekers become employed through the TSE Program. Rachel Kersey, coordinator of the TSE Program at Pacific Gateway, oversees the placement of program participants in local businesses and organizations like Century Villages at Cabrillo. The goal is to provide program participants the opportunity to "gain valuable work experience and contribute skills and labor to the worksite and the community."

In collaboration with Pacific Gateway, CVC serves as an employer in the TSE Program. According to Ken Stuart, Facilities Manager at CVC, “We commit to providing a safe, productive, and growth based work environment where the TSE employee has the opportunity to develop skills in the maintenance trade and professional arenas.” By the end of their training, Ken states that the employees “normally advance to being, at least, a competent Janitorial Technician...Some advance further into the Basic Technical repair stages of training.” Among the current maintenance staff at CVC, 6 of the 17 employees were hired after successfully completing the TSE Program. Among those employees, Ricky Meza, Gerardo Melendez, and Marvin Jones, have advanced to Maintenance Lead positions at the facility.

The impact that the TSE Program has on its participants can be seen by personal success stories. Marvin, a current Maintenance Lead at CVC, describes the TSE Program as a stepping-stone or “foot stool.” The program has led him to a permanent job, insurance, and the means to care for his family. Although Marvin credits the TSE Program in pushing him towards the right direction, he would be able to qualify to live at Cabrillo Gateway. With the help of his counselor he filled out the application and applied. At one point he figured he had been passed over because he did not hear anything. When he was contacted with the approval, he could not believe it and couldn’t stop smiling.

The first day at the brand new apartment was great. He loves the fact that he can watch the sunset from his window. He is appreciative for the things that are taken for granted, “the little things like taking a shower, sleeping on a bed, simply looking out a window, just reading a book, and staying sober, also getting mail feels good.” Living at Century Villages means a lot to him. He has friends and support here. Since he is an Alumni of Changing Spirits he can use the Sweat Lodge when he feels he needs to cleanse. His weekly AA meetings are held in the Social Hall only a few feet away from his new home, so he has no excuses to miss one.

He has plans for the future here at Century Villages. He wants to start a Changing Spirit Alumni association to reconnect with past program graduates. He has stayed in contact with some of the guys he met in the program and wants to share with others their success stories. He also feels the need to give back to where his sobriety started and volunteer at Changing Spirits and around the Century Villages campus.

More Stories Inside!
The Village Anchor     Fall 2015

The Village Anchor

School year with a brand new backpack

200 children living on-site will start off their school year with a brand new backpack and the very popular cool treat from Mustache featuring summer favorites like hot dogs, nachos and the very popular cool treat from Mustache.

On-the-spot eye glasses, live music, food, croquet and stage were fun for adults and children. They included haircuts, health checkups, eye exams with on-the-spot eye glasses, live music, food, croquet on the lawn, inflatable games and activities, and raffle giveaways. And of course there was food featuring summer favorites like hot dogs, nachos and the very popular cool treat from Mustache.

We want to thank our 25 exhibitors who shared resources, provided hands-on demonstrations and services, as well as free school supplies for all our students. The exhibits and activities on the lawn and stage were fun for adults and children. They included haircuts, health checkups, eye exams with on-the-spot eye glasses, live music, food, croquet on the lawn, inflatable games and activities, and raffle giveaways. And of course there was food featuring summer favorites like hot dogs, nachos and the very popular cool treat from Mustache.

Besides obtaining a job, the men have also gained meaningful experiences from their participation in the TSE Program. Responsibility, accountability, and punctuality are among the lessons and skills they have developed. Ricky shares how the program has increased his confidence in himself and his abilities. “Don’t be afraid to try something new. Try to do it and you’ll be surprised that you can actually do it. Don’t give up until you finish the job,” he says.

Despite struggling to find a job, the men have all worked hard to be where they are at today. When asked if they have any advice for others who may be in a similar situation as they were before, the men had a lot to say. First, they recommend that the individual participate in the TSE Program. However, just participating in the program is not enough. One must also be prepared to take on the tasks of the job. Marvin emphasizes, “Be sincere and the fact that you want the job. If you’re not ready for the job, don’t waste the time of the TSE Program and supervisors. It shows that you are not responsible and accountable.” Other words of advice come from Luis who says, “Follow all the resources that are given to you. You will succeed at the end.” A lot of the guys here were TSE employees and are now continuing their training and learning new skills as part of CVC’s professional development emphasis.

“Century Villages at Cabrillo has provided a career pathway for participants for the TSE Program to be trained and prove themselves in a full-time career and be eligible for permanent employment. The partnership between Pacific Gateway and Century Villages through the TSE Program has changed lives and continues to do so as new participating residents continue to be referred to the opportunity to be trained and work full-time.”

– Rachel Kersey
Family Commons Artist & CVC Maintenance Receive Awards

When you set your eyes on Nursharafina Muhammad, you cannot help but smile and see her kind hearted disposition. This young girl entered an art contest with the theme “Reach Out and Be a Good Neighbor” through the National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA). In the process of creating her artwork, she stated she imagined residents being friendly to one another, building a sense of community. While being at Summer camp, Nursharafina was surprised when her mother informed her that her artwork received the 3rd place award! As recognition, she was given a Target gift card along with a thank you letter. She would definitely like to enter the contest again next year.

Also at the NAHMA convention, CVC’s Maintenance Team had the opportunity to compete in their very first facilities/maintenance competition. The team consisted of Alex Sosa, Gerry Melendez, George Melendez and Marvin Jones. Appliance repair, plumbing, flooring and programming a key fob were the exercises in the competition. The events were judged for quality and timeliness and our great group worked hard and smart and achieved a 2nd place finish. They have already set their sights on a 1st Place finish next year! Congratulations to Ms. Muhammad and to our Maintenance Team!

Gateway Resident Spotlight

Vanessa Jordan’s Story

Before getting an apartment at Cabrillo Gateway, Vanessa Jordan did not have a place to stay. She lost her apartment and when she was unable to pay the storage fees for her belongings, she also lost all of her possessions. She spent time at two different family shelters while looking for housing. During her staying at the second shelter, she heard about Cabrillo Gateway at the Villages at Cabrillo. She worked with her case manager at the MSC to complete her application in May, and then began the long and stressful wait. She said she was “anxious and praying every day” and checking with the housing authority all the time. When she received the call letting her know she had been accepted she was “overwhelmed and so happy.”

When Vanessa received her keys she felt like she was in “seventh heaven.” It had been a long time since she had a place of her own. What made it even more special was that the apartment was furnished, and move in ready. The first thing she did on move in day was nap on her new bed. She said it was so calm and quiet, she finally felt “comfortable and at peace.”

Being at Century Villages is a big convenience for Vanessa for many reasons. Her daughter lives at Family Commons and can come by and keep an eye on her and help her with cooking. Vanessa doesn’t drive and likes the fact that she can see a doctor at the clinic down stairs and take a short walk to the Canteen store. She likes the feeling of “belonging.”

Bruce Magee’s Story

Bruce Magee had been working diligently with his case worker to overcome barriers and get back on his feet. Before having his own apartment Bruce was literally sleeping on the street. He had been homeless for the last three years, sleeping at the bus stop by St. Mary’s hospital. A big barrier was financial hardship and not being able to afford the cost of living in the city of Long Beach. For Bruce, applying for an apartment at Cabrillo Gateway took a lot of determination and not giving up when the odds seemed against him. He came in to submit his application but was turned away because it was incomplete. He needed additional documents and because he did not have transportation, getting them was a challenge. The second time he tried to submit his application he found out he still did not have a verification form and was turned away once more. He was on the bus to get the last form and left his application packet on the bus seat. The packet had all his personal information and original documents including his ID, birth certificate and Social Security card. He felt like he had lost all hope of getting his application submitted. Thanks to the kindness of a good samaritan, all of his documents were returned to him. It turned out that someone found the packet and turned it in to the bus driver. He was finally able to submit his full application.

When Bruce received the call letting him know he was accepted he said, “I almost passed out.” He was able to move in to his new apartment and is enjoying everything about it. Having a kitchen of his own has been new for him and he is still learning how use all the appliances. He now gets to cook his own meals; he finally “got to make a cheese burger” and will be making tacos. He is still in disbelief and grateful to finally have his own place.

The Village Anchor Fall 2015
Rumbling Ground

The ground is rumbling at the Villages at Cabrillo. It first started one Wednesday night in March 2015 and it has been growing ever since. Something new has begun, and it isn’t going away.

What’s got the ground shaking? The first ever, Alumni Association of U.S.VETS-Long Beach, formed by Veterans, for Veterans. We are the “next step.” We are the first site to establish an Alumni Association. Therefore, our formulation and growth will be a template to spread grassroots to inspire the graduating Veterans at other sites, expanding Chapter Alumni Associations across our Nation.

The heart of our Association is you, the Veteran. Our actions are embedded in three synergistic committees: Activities Committee, Outreach Committee, and Public Relations Committee. We need members to jump on and dig in. We need your thoughts and ideas. We are Veterans for Veterans. Check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AlumniAssociationOfUSVetsLongBeachCA

Please join us at our next meeting to meet our newly elected Officers and see our newly designed logo. Spread the word. Help us shake the ground. We are The Alumni Association of U.S.VETS-Long Beach.

HOLIDAY FUN

ANNUAL HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL
Thur., October 29th, 3:30–5:30pm
More details to follow, look out for flyers!

HEALTHY HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL!
Saturday, October 24, 2pm–5pm
Natural and Holistic Baby Expo. Bixby Park at 130 Cherry Avenue Long Beach, CA 90802.

TRICK OR TREAT ON SECOND STREET
Sat, October 31, 4pm - 6pm
Belmont Shore, Long Beach, CA 90803

15TH ANNUAL HAUTE DOG HOWL’OWEEN PARADE
Sat., Oct. 31, 2015, 2:30 p.m.
Marina Vista Park, 5355 E. Elliot St. Long Beach, 90803. www.hautedogs.org/howloween.html

LONG BEACH DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET
Fridays, 10am–3pm
Long Beach Downtown Farmer's Market has a new location at 3rd and Pacific, with lots of parking.

ADMIRAL KIDD FARMER’S MARKET
9am–2pm Saturdays
2125 Santa Fe Ave., Long Beach, CA 90810

VETERANS RECEIVE FREE ADMISSION TO AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC
November 11, 9am—6pm
Veteran’s Day Only.100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, CA 90802

19TH ANNUAL LONG BEACH VETERAN’S DAY PARADE
Saturday, November 7, 10am
Parade Route: Atlantic Avenue Harding to 56th street

DARK HARBOR
October 1–November 1
Queen Mary’s Dark Harbor returns to give you thrills and chills in mazes so daunting you’ll sell your soul for a chance to survive. www.queenmary.com/events/calendar-of-events/

THE QUEEN MARY CHILL
November 20–January 10
A deep freeze will take over the Queen Mary this holiday season as CHILL returns in 2015. Enjoy Ice Skating, Ice Tubing and the incredible Ice Kingdom as a cold front overtakes Southern California. www.queenmary.com/events/calendar-of-events/

FIRST FRIDAYS IN LONG BEACH
October 2, November 6, and December 4, 6-10pm
Every first Friday night of the month, participating Bixby Knolls businesses unite to promote local artists and musicians. Atlantic Ave. b/n San Antonio Dr. & Bixby Rd.
Be B.O.L.D. Camp a Success

With the help of student interns from CSULB and CSUDH the Oasis Community Center was able to provide a free, four week summer camp for children residing in emergency and temporary shelters at Century Villages at Cabrillo. The Be B.O.L.D (Becoming Outstanding Leaders and Dreamers) camp focused on four weekly themes that encouraged the development of social skills.

During Week One, Wellness Week, campers learned the importance of physical health and mental health. Children were divided into teams and allowed to participate in athletic competitions, gardening, nutrition jeopardy, and healthy cooking. The second week was Dream Week, and children learned about leadership, goal-setting, and responsibility. They were able to participate in yoga class as well as creative projects, and ended the week with a talent show. Our third week’s theme was Community and the children learned about the importance of community involvement. Campers played games that focused on teamwork, trust, and communication. The third week was ended with a bake sale fundraiser. The fourth and final week was titled Fantasy Week. The children conducted science experiments and played water games. The week ended with a field trip to Boomers! In Fountain Valley.

Occupational Therapy student Kate Davis provided services for an hour a day during camp to focus on the promotion of emotional regulation and social participation. Campers participated in activities that were novel and motivating which promoted the ability to listen, the discovery of new skills, problem solving and fostering communication with peers. Many of the activities were hands-on crafts or projects. Activities included: a relay race and obstacle course, making birdhouses, painting garden rocks, marble painting, and making “cloud dough.” Educational content included zones of regulation booklets, identifying triggers, sensory bins, zen table coloring, and making emotional regulation tools such as fidgets and glitter bottles.

“After attending the Be B.O.L.D. camp, my daughter and I have improved our communication and now we have a better relationship.”

– Parent of Camper

Yoga comes to the Villages

Yoga is for everyone! From school children to athletes to senior citizens, this ancient form of exercise and breathing has been used for strengthening, flexibility and balance. It is a series of movements that work the entire body. There are different types of yoga but the one we teach at the Villages is “gentle” hatha style, meant for a wide range of students.

We all live with stress—some more than others. It has been found yoga is a great stress reliever. A lot of people think that it is only for young people, but that just isn’t true. Here is what Chris, a U.S. VETS resident and Air Force veteran has to say about the classes at the VVRC:

“I want to take this opportunity to tell you and others how much the Thursday Yoga class taught by John has meant to me. It has been great to me both mentally and physically.”

Prior to coming to Cabrillo I was trying to resolve some major health issues. First off, just looking forward to Yoga class has helped lower my stress. It has helped me find balance and a healthy outlet for my unresolved anger and frustration. It is a key component in my mental well-being.

I cannot say enough for what it has done for me physically. Flexibility, strength and balance has been greatly improved. My present job requires me to drive long distances. The Yoga exercises I have learned helps me on long drives. When I started Yoga back pain and lack of balance troubled me. I now feel better and work out more effectively.”

Luz M. Machado, OTR/L, who is responsible for Healthy Life Styles and Coping Skills groups at the VVRC introduced a gentle yoga class to the veterans in 2012 and then again in 2014. John Oppenheim, a certified yoga instructor came to join the VVRC team recommended by the Long Beach VA yoga therapist Pam Pence.

Recently, Hacienda for Hope, teaming with John and former Villages resident, Diana Pinder-...
Breakfast Burrito $3.00
*Egg, bacon or sausage, Hash Browns, Cheese, Flour Tortilla*

Breakfast Croissant $3.50
*Egg, cheese, sausage in a warm Croissant*

Chicken Wings $3.99 (6 pack)
*Hot Wings, BBQ Wings, Sweet & Sour*

Fried Chicken $3.00/$5.00/$6.00
*Rickey’s Secret recipe—Different size packs*

Salad Bar $4.50/lb
*A wide variety of greens, meats, and dressings*

**FRESH MADE PIZZA**
*(Daily 11am to close)*
$2.00 Cheese Slice; $2.50 Pepperoni Slice

**HOT DOGS $1.50; HOT LINKS $2.00; BRATWURST $2.00**

**GRAB and GO Menu**

- Roast Beef Sub $5.50
- Turkey Sub $5.00
- Ham and Cheese $5.00
- Fresh Fruit Cups $3.00/lb
- Pasta Salad $3.00/lb
- Cheese Snack Pack $2.50
- Nachos w/cheese $3.00

OPEN Monday thru Saturday 9:30 am to 4:30 pm