What an awesome past two months we’ve had at REACH! Showcasing the program’s success this past quarter are two recent graduates: Crystal Velaquez and Camille Wallace.

When Ms. Crystal Velaquez entered the REACH program in July 2014, she was unsure where REACH would take her. Ms. Velaquez did know that she wanted to be connected to the legal field at either a law firm or a correctional facility. She would often express how she enjoyed working at her last position which was in that industry. As she pondered, Crystal began to share her passion for the effects of immigration on her family members and other people that she knew.

Realizing this, the Business Skills Instructor incorporated different modules of our legal training to specialize Crystal’s Administrative training and prepare her for an internship at a legal office. It all came together when Crystal was offered the opportunity to intern with Attorney Michael Brooks-Jiménez, a prominent lawyer in the Hispanic community that focuses on immigration law. While Crystal was excited at the opportunity, she did have jitters as would any other student beginning a new chapter and preparing for their future. She wondered such things as, “Will they like me?”, “How will I fit in?”, and “Will I catch on quickly?”

During her first week there, she stayed focused and completed any task that they asked her to do. This included filing immigration paperwork, preparing paperwork for client meetings for the other attorneys and assisting the office manager with daily office duties. Crystal’s hard work and dedication would pay off as the following week she was offered a full-time position with the firm! We can’t begin to say how proud we are of Crystal and all the hard work she put in to get to her current position!

Another graduate who had much success with us this past year was Ms. Camille Wallace. Ms. Wallace joined the REACH program July 2014. A “go getter” from the start, she was very motivated to improve her situation and obtain employment that would set her up for success in the future! In discussing, her career goals she would often mention that she was ready for a career change as she had more than 15 years of experience in Early Childhood Education.

Camille was ready for an office environment in which she could showcase her computer skills, writing ability, resilient work ethic and fun personality. The opportunity to do all of the above presented itself via an internship with the Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department. Camille was brought on to assist the agency with processing the large volume of subscriptions they receive during the holiday season and shortly thereafter. The staff that Camille worked with was so impressed by her, that they offered a position in their department! She was hired to work for Oklahoma Today Magazine as their Circulation Assistant. In this role, she assists the publication subscribers with questions they have about the magazine. She also provides administrative support to the staff.

We are beyond thrilled for Camille as she overcame many employment barriers to achieve her goal. She is a shining example of what REACH is all about.
**REACH4Work Employment Accomplishments**

**January through March 2015**

**Houy Herrada**

**Holly** was an enthusiastic, self-starter inside and outside the Reach4Work classroom. Her effective job search resulted in finding employment as an Office Clerical Worker for the Galt Foundation in two short weeks. In this new position, Holly is using her ample computer and office skills. She is a very fast learner who undoubtedly will be an asset to her employer. We at Reach4Work are very proud of you and wish you much success!

**Linda Prince**

**Linda** came to the Reach4Work program motivated to find employment quickly. Our staff was very impressed with her deep desire to succeed. In just 5 days, she overcame inclement weather to begin her new employment opportunity as a Telemarketer at RainSoft. With her leadership attitude and excellent employment history, the sky is the limit for Linda’s potential and success. Thank you for your effort and determination, Linda!

**Jasmine German**

**Jasmine** is one of the more perseverant students to recently complete Reach4Work. She was able to overcome some challenges to land an excellent position in the Customer Relations Department at the Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Park. Jasmine is providing excellent relational skills to children and adults of all ages. Keep striving to succeed, Jasmine. Thanks for all your hard work.

**Jennifer Hopson**

Motivated and hard-working describe **Jennifer**. After creating a new resume she began an effective job search. One week after starting Reach4Work, Jennifer began her new job as a Customer Service Representative at StaffMark. With her new job, Jennifer will use her unique people skills to resolve myriad customer service issues. Good job and congratulations, Jennifer!
REACH Training Accomplishments

Jan. 1st - March 31st REACH classroom accomplishments:

During this time period, 39 individual REACH course certifications were achieved.

Highlights:
Crystal Velaquez - Completed Administrative Assistant Training
Ashley Edmonson - Excel, Access
Mary Mitchell - Outlook, Business Writing, Excel
Richa Villescas - Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint
Jessica Patterson - Windows 7, Alpha Indexing
Amanda King - Word, Keyboarding
Amber Burns - Word, Business Writing
Yvette Edwards - Reading Info 4 & 5
Nellie Ramirez - Locating Info 4, Applied Math 4
Seanahlisa Crewnshaw - Outlook, Windows 7, Alpha Indexing

Career Readiness Certificates:
Amanda King earned a Gold CRC
Seanahlisa Crenshaw achieved a Gold CRC
Nellie Ramirez completed a Silver CRC
Jessica Patterson achieved a Bronze CRC

“Vision without execution is just hallucination.”
– Henry Ford
Balancing Work, Education and Family

Going back to school for adult parents can be very intimidating at first. The REACH and REACH4Work students are making quality choices for their families by deciding to focus the next four weeks to one year on developing career and employment goals. Devoting the time and commitment needed to complete a training program while maintaining a household is a challenge. The training and education received through each program support each person’s employability plan to achieve greater outcomes for today and tomorrow’s life path.

Students learning to balance work, education, and family goals can lead to improved job performances, higher pay and family stability. Their learning activities include individualized training in various areas that qualify them to enter the workforce in entry-level and professional positions. Our students receive resume and interview coaching, short-term internship opportunities, nutrition and parenting guidance. Both the REACH and the REACH4work students develop interpersonal skills that will help them retain employment. Encouraging real-life experiences while in the program also helps students understand the realities of the workforce and what employers are seeking.

When the REACH or REACH4work student makes the commitment to start his or her career and/or job training courses, the common fear and intimidation of being in the classroom again is overcome through a supportive staff of instructors, career specialists and administrative personnel.

I congratulate each student for having the courage to take this exciting, and important step in life and encourage each to strive through to completion and design the lifestyle you want!

Sincerely,

Angela Barnes, Program Coordinator
REACH and REACH4Work

REACH4Work Program Welcomes New Job Coach

The REACH4Work program is happy to welcome Ms. TaKisha Lovelace as the new Job Coach.

Ms. Lovelace completed her undergraduate education at Southern Nazarene University, and has one semester to complete at the University of Oklahoma in order to become a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has been in the Social Service field since 2006, including work as a Behavioral Health Specialist/Case Manager.

She is the Founder of TK'S Total Wellness, Inc., a company geared toward improving the health and wellness of the total person. TaKisha's focus and passion is helping others achieve great results in multiple areas of their lives. She is known as "TK" because she “Takes Care of People.”

Correction: The October 2014 “Within Our REACH” newsletter errantly identified Ms. Martha Holland, the former REACH4Work Job Coach, as a graduate of the REACH program. Ms. Holland did not graduate from REACH, but was a graduate of OSU-OKC.
Gratitude List Excerpts

“I am grateful for being healthy enough to take care of my children.

My children are my world. They have given me the strength to strive to work and do what is right ... I am thankful to be attending the REACH program along with the other opportunities that the Oklahoma Department of Human Services has provided ... for being able to imagine ... a greater future for myself and my daughters ...” — Jessica Patterson

“I am grateful for my son, because when things get tough I just turn and look at him and it makes everything worthwhile. ... I am grateful for OSU-OKC and the REACH Program for giving me the opportunity for a better future! ... Today I am grateful for my struggles, trials, hardships, and tribulations. If it wasn’t for them, I would not have learned from them and be the person I am today. ... I am grateful for my determination and better future for me and my family!” — Ashley Edmonson

“I am thankful for everything that I am learning in the REACH Program. From computer skills to workshops, it is very helpful. I am thankful for Blake teaching me everything he can to get me where I want to be in life. ... for Chesley helping me with my professional appearance and etiquette. ... in the spring I will be able to start school and start working towards my A.A.S. degree in Graphic Design so I can pursue a career that I have always dreamed about ... many doors and paths that are going to open ... because of the REACH program. ...” — Damiesha Jones
During the month of February, REACH students were pleased to have two guest speakers from Alleve Hospice -- Ms. Christina Crutcher, RN, Director of Operations, and Ms. Jennifer Whisenhunt, RN, MSN, Director of Nursing -- come speak to them about employment opportunities in the Hospice field.

Ms. Whisenhunt shared that she’s been in the nursing field more than 20 years. In her current role, she oversees the Nurses and Home Health Aides for the agency. Ms. Whisenhunt began her Nursing career working in an intensive care unit (ICU); then she transitioned into Hospice. She explained that most people can begin their career in this field as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and emphasized that being knowledgeable about infectious diseases is key. Hospice nurses are on call 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Ms. Whisenhunt went on to share the qualities she looks for in candidates when she is interviewing: servanthood, teamwork, compassion, and the ability to follow directions. All these qualities are imperative when providing the utmost care for a patient.

Next, the Director of Operations, Ms. Christina Crutcher, shared her story about how she became involved in the hospice field and the many non-medical employment opportunities that are available. Ms. Crutcher is a Registered Nurse and has over 15 years’ experience in the medical field. She began her career as a Nurse Aid and progressed through various positions at various facilities. This all changed when a visiting Hospice Executive took note of her at one of those facilities and asked if she thought about pursuing a career in the hospice field. She took that chance and has enjoyed working in the field ever since. Ms. Crutcher shared that in addition to the medical positions, hospice agencies are always in need of receptionists, office managers, volunteer coordinators and volunteers. It takes a lot of individuals working together to ensure the comfort of others.

Moreover, Ms. Crutcher echoed the sentiments of Ms. Whisenhunt when looking to hire individuals. She looks for someone who has a pleasant attitude, works well with others, can follow directions, and who brings the best part of themself to the job every day.
1. Set clocks ahead one hour
   A. rain  B. Daylight savings  C. tulip  D. kite

2. Precipitation
   A. flowers  B. April Fools Day  C. umbrella  D. rain

3. A flower often associated with Holland
   A. puddles  B. tulip  C. kite  D. spring

4. A day for pranks
   A. Daylight savings  B. tulip  C. flowers  D. April Fools Day

5. A small pool of water
   A. spring  B. puddles  C. Daylight savings  D. rain

6. A season of the year
   A. kite  B. puddles  C. rain  D. spring

7. Works best on a windy day
   A. spring  B. kite  C. tulip  D. Daylight savings

8. April showers bring these
   A. daffodil  B. kite  C. April Fools Day  D. flowers

9. A yellow flower with a trumpet-shaped center
   A. tulip  B. daffodil  C. Daylight savings  D. April Fools Day

10. Used to keep dry
    A. spring  B. April Fools Day  C. umbrella  D. puddles
The REACH and REACH4Work programs collaborate with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to enhance employment and training opportunities for unemployed adults.

REACH provides educational and short-term career skills training in various areas that qualify students to enter the workforce in professional positions. REACH orientations are held Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.

REACH4Work students are empowered to gain employment and exhibit life skills necessary to compete in the labor market. REACH4Work holds orientation each Monday at 8:30 a.m.

Program participants are accepted through a referral-based system only.

Contact program staff for more information.

http://www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/tanf

REACH and REACH4Work are located on the 2nd floor of the Learning Resource Center on the OSU-Oklahoma City campus. The campus is west of the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds and is easily accessible from I-44. The Oklahoma City Metro Transit has a bus stop across the street from campus.

Angela Barnes, Project Coordinator, REACH and REACH4Work
Phone: (405)-945-8636 | Fax: 405-945-9123
www.osuokc.edu/reach

Kenna Davis, Secretary, REACH, 405-945-8683