Ring the Bell for Employment

Meet Andrew

At the OppInc. One-Stop Workforce Center, it’s tradition to have job seekers “ring the bell” to share the good news of a new job offer. Andrew Compton, a young military veteran, recently took part in this custom that spans several decades.

Compton visited the One-Stop Workforce Center seeking job opportunities and was given the option to enroll in short-term workforce training and/or receive on-the-job training (OJT). After conversations with Job-Driven National Dislocated Worker Grant Coordinator Paul Hughes, placement into an OJT program seemed appropriate. Compton began to look for work in a variety of industries including IT, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, logistics and transportation. He worked with a career coach to fine-tune his resume and cover letters, and strengthen his interview tactics and strategies.

Within a few weeks, Compton landed an interview with Hermes Abrasives, a local manufacturer, but did not receive a job offer. Putting his job search skills to work, he drafted a “thank you” letter after the job interview — a polite gesture that is frequently overlooked by job-seekers, but one that can make all the difference in a tight labor market. The letter prompted Hermes to revisit Compton’s application and ultimately make him a job offer, which he gladly accepted.

With the collaborative efforts of the OppInc. staff, Compton proudly rang the bell for employment to celebrate his new position.

For more information about the One-Stop’s programs and services, visit www.opp-inc.org.

Governor McAuliffe Unveils New Program to Support Small Businesses

Gov. Terry McAuliffe visited Tidewater Community College on April 13 to announce a new $1 million program to assist small businesses in improving the occupational and technical skills of their workers through workforce credentials that drive economic growth.

Gov. McAuliffe will seek the support of Virginia’s Community Colleges and local workforce development boards, such as Opportunity Inc., to collaborate on strategies and partnerships to expand training and credentialing across the Commonwealth. Current and incoming employees will be trained in high-demand areas, including manufacturing, energy, information technology, cybersecurity, healthcare, transportation and logistics.

OppInc. applied for this grant and was awarded $150,000 to serve 75 participants. The funding will allow TCC and OppInc. to develop customized training for individual businesses to help their incumbent workers.
Greetings! It is with great pleasure and excitement that we share with you new updates on behalf of the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board and Opportunity Inc. (OppInc). This quarter has been filled with strategic announcements that further solidify Opportunity Inc. as a thought leader in workforce development and its increased importance in the current labor market.

Since 1974, Opportunity Inc. through various iterations, has uniquely supported the region’s and Virginia’s economy by integrating workforce development and economic development activities. In March 2016, the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board — comprised of leaders in business and industry, economic development, community-based organizations and education institutions — adopted a resolution designating Opportunity Inc. as the Regional Workforce Development Convener for South and Western Hampton Roads.

As you will read in this issue, Opportunity Inc. has played an integral role in several new projects and initiatives aimed at strengthening the regional workforce.

As the regional convener for workforce development, OppInc. will continue leading strategic efforts to facilitate partner engagement, at all levels, to ensure meaningful employment and economic growth for the residents and businesses of Hampton Roads.

Sincerely,

William L. Nusbaum
Chair of the Board

Shawn Avery
President & CEO

OppInc. Offers Businesses a Competitive Advantage

In March, human resources firm Automatic Data Processing (ADP) announced its decision to open a customer service center that will bring 1,800 jobs to downtown Norfolk. The Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance (HREDA) and Norfolk’s Department of Development coordinated site visits for the project. Opportunity Inc. staff played an integral role in these meetings — educating the consultants and ADP staff about our regional capabilities to support such a large infusion of jobs and services, including recruitment of potential employees.

“We appreciate the opportunity to participate in these types of meetings and hope that our message resonates with employers looking to expand to the region” said Steve Cook, OppInc.’s Vice President for Workforce Innovation. "The process of onboarding 1,800 people for employment with ADP in Norfolk has begun, and OppInc. is pleased to offer support as the company navigates the hiring process."

On June 3, OppInc. hosted a hiring fair for ADP that drew 400 qualified prospective employees. While this project highlights the services we offer to companies looking to expand to the region, OppInc. staff’s primary focus is the existing business community and assisting with their workforce needs. One of our most recent success stories is the expansion of the Target warehouse — now known as an Upstream Distribution Center — in Suffolk. As part of our regular outreach to businesses in the region, staff learned that Target would need to hire over 700 people to accommodate the expansion of its Suffolk operations. The OppInc. team worked diligently with local and corporate HR personnel to facilitate the process for “On-the-Job Training” (OJT) funding opportunities as well as assist with local hiring events. We are pleased to report that as of May 13 we have 16 OJT participants at Target representing an estimated value of $80,000 in OppInc. training funds. As this is a 50/50 program, Target is also investing that amount in its employees' training. We anticipate that this number will increase over the next few months and look forward to assisting with their continued expansion requirements.

To find out more about how our Business Services Team can assist your business workforce needs, contact Steve Cook at scook@ohr.org.
LAUNCH Hampton Roads Supports More Than 90 New Businesses

It’s been a wonderful journey over the past three years—watching aspiring entrepreneurs learn, grow, and start their own businesses with the help of the LAUNCH Hampton Roads program! As part of a tri-regional U.S. Department of Labor grant program (Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium – VETEC), LAUNCH Hampton Roads is an OppInc program that provides no-cost training and support services to individuals interested in starting a business. Participants receive extensive training through the program with the assistance of our great partnerships with higher education institutions to include Old Dominion University, The College of William & Mary, and Tidewater Community College. From 2013 to 2016, the LAUNCH program served 343 participants, and as a result, more than 90 start-ups have "launched" right here in the Hampton Roads area.

Meet Jim

Jim Samples, a 2015 LAUNCH graduate and President of JNS Enterprises, Inc., decided to revisit his dream of owning a business after 22 years in the finance industry. Though knowledgeable about banking and mortgage lending, he knew little about the requirements for starting a business.

“I have always wanted to run my own business so I decided it was time for me to take what I had learned in the business world and build something of my own,” said Samples. “I also wanted to start my own business to become more integrated into the community.”

Jim looked to franchising as his route to entrepreneurship, and after extensive research, he decided to pursue opportunities with 1000 Degrees Neapolitan Pizzeria — a New Jersey-based fast, casual pizza franchise — because of their streamlined, easy to follow process and consistent quality product. And of course, in the words of Samples, “Who doesn’t love pizza?”

LAUNCH, Samples notes, taught him how to present his business and the importance of building a great team. He took away meaningful information and insight that proved valuable — helping him to avoid some of the common pitfalls of new business owners.

Jim will host the Grand Opening of his pizzeria this summer at 237 South Battlefield Boulevard in Chesapeake — the first 1000 Degrees location in Hampton Roads.

We congratulate Jim on the launch of his new business, and wish him all the best!

Workforce Development: An Anti-Poverty Solution

Helping low income families achieve self-sufficiency is an enormous challenge in Hampton Roads and around the country. Part of that challenge is helping such job seekers find well-paying careers, with advancement potential, that do not require a four-year degree. A recent report by Mathematica Research sheds some light on “good jobs” that are achievable with relatively short-term preparation and/or certifications.

The report includes a state-by-state listing of these jobs that also have strong employer demand. The Virginia report includes 21 occupations for which Opportunity Inc. will fund training in the upcoming 2016-2017 program year. “We are extremely proud that Opportunity Inc. is in the forefront of what current research says works to lift families out of poverty,” said Shawn Avery, President; CEO, OppInc. “It’s another way the organization serves to improve the local economy.”

Opportunity Inc. historically spends more than $3 million dollars a year to train unemployed and underemployed individuals to meet employer demand for workers.

The jobs listed in Mathematica’s report for which training will be available are:

- Computer network support specialists
- Computer user support specialists
- Dental assistants
- Dental hygienists
- Electrical and electronics engineering technicians
- EMTs and paramedics
- Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists
- Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers
- HVAC mechanics and installers
- Licensed Practical Nurses
- Medical and clinical laboratory technicians
- Medical assistants
- Medical records and health IT
- Nursing assistants
- Paralegals and legal assistants
- Preschool teachers
- Radiologic technologists
- Registered nurses
- Teacher assistants
- Telecom equipment installers and repairers
- Web developers
Franchise Summit Introduces Unique Career Paths to Youth in Hampton Roads

Opplnc and the Youth Career Center of Hampton Roads hosted the inaugural Youth Franchise Summit to provide a free opportunity for teens and young adults, ages 16-24, to hear from local franchise owners and gain meaningful insight on entrepreneurship. Sponsored by SunTrust Foundation, the summit took place on April 9 on the Virginia Beach campus of Tidewater Community College with 30 registered attendees.

Speakers, presenters, and panelists included, Dr. Edna Baehre-Kolovani, TCC President; Mark Johnson, SunTrust Bank Vice President and Community Development Manager; Gilbert Bland, Chairman of the GilJoy Group and owner of more than 70 franchises; Norman Williams, McDonald’s franchisee; Marc Steiner, Principal and Consultant with FranNet of Southeastern Virginia; and representatives from Sprint PCS, Zoup!, Jersey Mike’s, and Liberty Tax.

In addition to gaining a wealth of knowledge from local franchisees and business owners in Hampton Roads, two students received a $1000 scholarship provided by the SunTrust Foundation.

Teen Summer Opportunity Fair Attendee Lands New Job!

The Youth Career Center of Hampton congratulates Bradd Mejorada on his new job with Dave & Buster’s! After attending the Teen Summer Opportunity Fair, Bradd received an invitation for an interview with the restaurant and entertainment chain where he applied tips and tools offered by the YCCHR.

“I believe that the Youth Career Center really motivated me and helped me feel more confident in myself,” said Mejorada. “With their help in resume building and teaching me how to get out there and be myself with the vendors, I felt very confident.”

The Teen Summer Opportunity Fair, which took place March 3 at Pembroke Mall, allowed several hundred students like Mejorada to interact with 55 participating businesses and colleges regarding employment and post-secondary education opportunities.

As important, employers look forward to the fair each year, as it provides them with the opportunity to promote summer job opportunities and interface with youth who are engaged and well-prepared to enter the workforce.

For more information about youth programs and initiatives, visit www.myouthcareercenter.org.

About Opportunity Inc.

Established by the Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board, Opportunity Inc. oversees workforce development programs for South and Western Hampton Roads. Opplnc provides strategic workforce development solutions designed to assist businesses in accessing qualified workers and jobseekers in search of suitable job openings and training opportunities to bolster their earning potential.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Opportunity Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Stay Connected!  
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