

# TALENT TALK

June 2023 | Volume 6, Issue 4



GST MICHIGAN  
GENESEE  
SHIAWASSEE  
THUMB **WORKS!**™

Advancing Employers | Enhancing Talent



# REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

**729**  
Occupations

**8.1K**  
Employers

**2.4K**  
Locations

**Real Time Intelligence - Job Postings 01/01/2023 - 05/29/2023**

**# Active Job Ads**

Registered Nurses	3,996
Retail Salespersons	3,283
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3,030
Stockers and Order Fillers	2,526
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,783
Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,633
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,632
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,327
Nursing Assistants	1,282
Medical and Health Services Managers	1,195
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,155
Customer Service Representatives	1,091
Social and Human Service Assistants	1,043
Production Workers, All Other	985
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	963
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	948
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	879
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	877
Driver/Sales Workers	816
Cashiers	755
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	734
Personal Care Aides	663
Medical Assistants	624
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	620
Speech-Language Pathologists	617

 **9,737**  
Page Likes

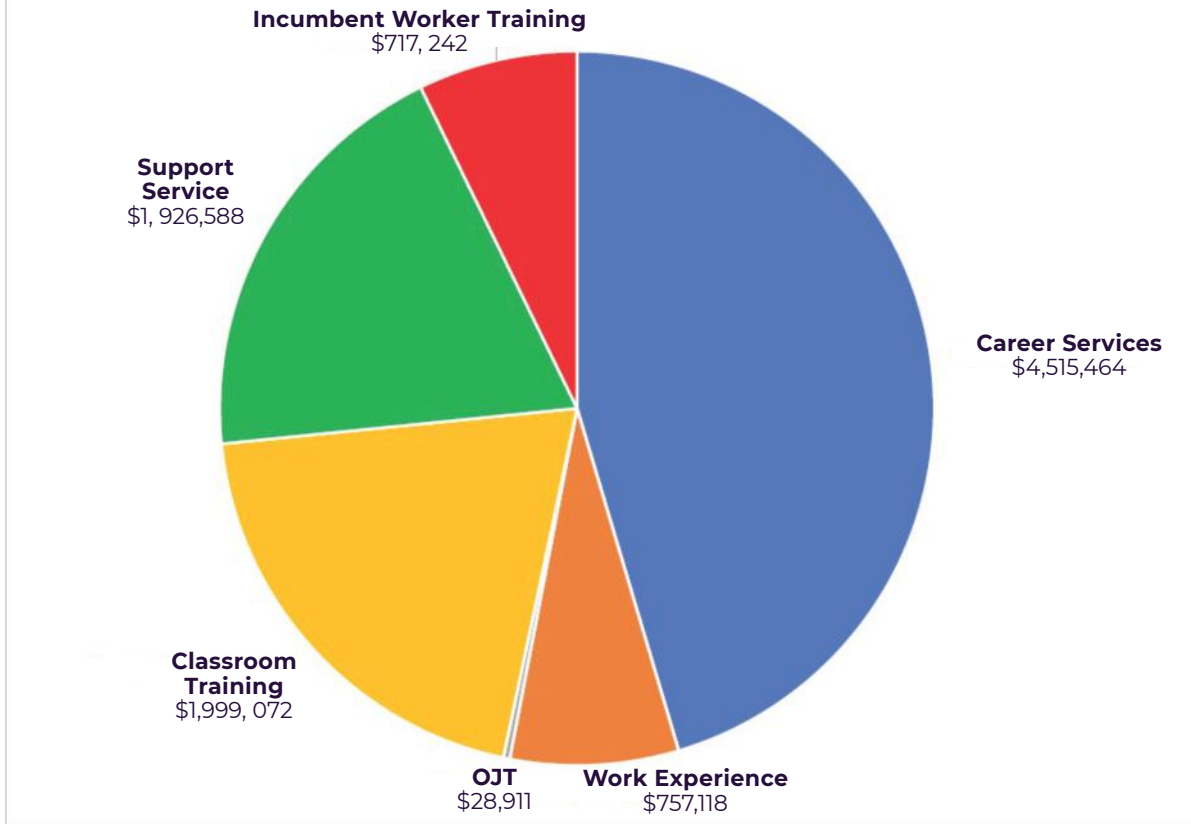
 **696**  
Followers

 **481**  
Followers

# DATA ANALYSIS

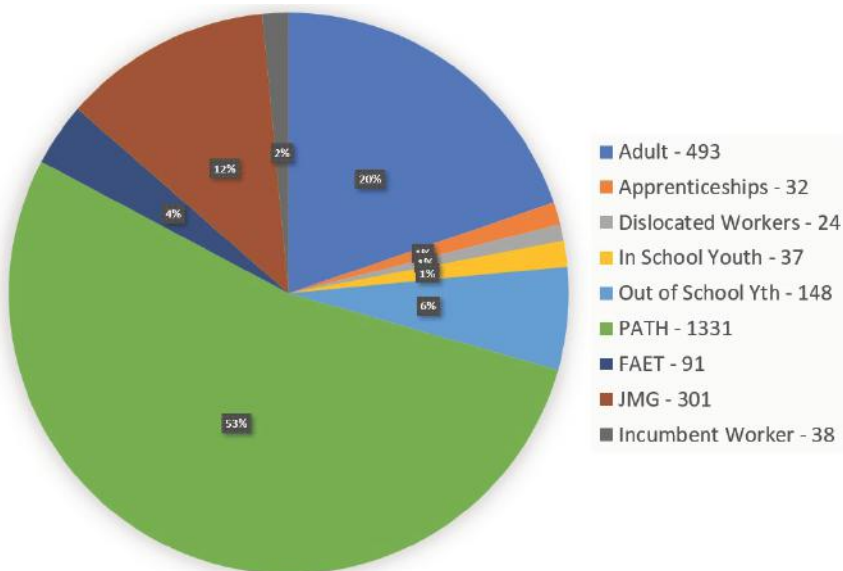
## Career Services & Participant Payments

July 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022



## New Enrollments

July 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022



## Entered Training

July 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022



# EMPLOYEE SUCCESS STORIES

## A PATH TOWARD

## FULL TIME, LUCRATIVE EMPLOYMENT!



**Lapeer** - Brian came to GST Michigan Works! in Lapeer as a single parent seeking truck driver training to increase his overall wage potential and employability. Brian was previously working as a driver/installer for a cemetery. He was told that if he obtained his CDL he would be eligible for a raise. Brian was given time off to take a four-week truck driver training class.

Brian chose to attend 160 Driving Academy and could not say enough great things about the training site! "The school was an excellent choice and I felt well-prepared for a driving position." Upon course completion, Brian went back to work and did not receive the raise he was promised by his employer.

One day, he ran into an old friend who shared a job lead at Coca-Cola in Flint. This opportunity provided a minimal commute, almost a \$10/hr. wage increase, benefits and was a Teamsters Union position. Brian applied and was hired! He shared that he is so grateful for GST Michigan Works! assistance with the truck driving training and moving into this new chapter will be life-changing for he and his family.

**Lapeer** - We initially met Abby at Lapeer Community High School. She completed 23 classes her senior year and graduated as "Senior of the Year" with a service award. She was immediately very interested in GST Michigan Works! programs - specifically the Summer Youth Program. She shared that her mother had recently been diagnosed with cancer. It was now her goal to become an EMT and for a job shadowing experience, she participated in some ride-alongs with Lapeer County EMS. Her family had been involved in foster care since she was a child, and this had also given her a passion to help others. Abby was enrolled in GST's Summer Youth Program upon graduating high school. She had one goal in mind – complete her work experience

with Lapeer County EMS! Treva Rambow, Business Services Representative, worked for months with Lapeer County EMS to develop a role specifically for Abby. She started the 90-day work experience program at the beginning of October 2022 and thrived! Lapeer County EMS was so impressed by Abby that they hired her to work part-time upon completion of the program.

Abby is now working at Lapeer County EMS, working 25 hours per week. She plans to continue her education and earn a certificate to become an EMT/Paramedic.



## FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO HERO

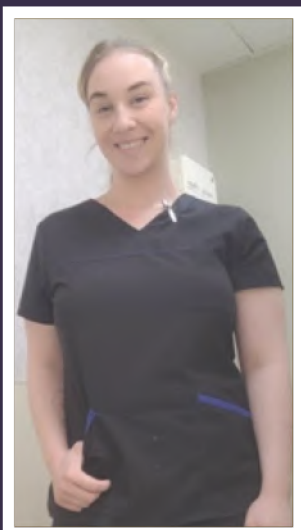
# UPGRADING SKILLS IN RURAL HEALTHCARE EMPLOYMENT

**Shiawassee** - Marc came into the program as a Home Health Aide making a little above minimum wage at HomeJoy of Mid-Michigan. As the main provider for his family, it became apparent that Marc would need to upgrade his skills to advance within his place of employment. With assistance from GST Michigan Works! WIOA program, Marc started training at Baker College in corporate training for their 10-week Nurse Aide program in February. GST Michigan Works! was also able to assist Marc with obtaining the required attire for the clinical portion of training at Durand Senior Care. After 58 hours of lecture, 40 hours of labs, and 30 hours of clinical training, all while maintaining a full-time work schedule, Marc successfully completed the Nurse Aide program in April! Marc then passed his knowledge & skills tests, and was

officially titled as a Certified Nurse Aide through the State of Michigan. Marc received a \$2.50/hr. promotion from HomeJoy of Mid-Michigan. He is now considered a mentor and maintains full-time employment status. Investing in your education and upgrading your skillset leads to better self-sufficiency and GST Michigan Works! is thrilled to add another successful, upskilled employee to its books!

Marc shares,

|| I really enjoyed working within the program and doing the CNA classes. Our teacher was very helpful, and having the cost of the classes and tests covered by GST Michigan Works! made it possible for me to do what I'm doing now. **I'm incredibly thankful for the opportunity that I've been afforded.**



## RESILIENCE REWARDED: A PARENT'S HEALTHCARE TRIUMPH

**Huron** - Nicole Kula is a single parent who suffered a job loss in November of 2021 when she was a CNA. She started working at Scheurer Hospital as a Patient Care Associate in December. In an effort to expand upon her healthcare employability, Nicole started a Medical Insurance Billing and Office Admin. program online with Ross Medical Education Center. She received the highest rating (4's) on her clinical externship evaluation in all areas: Professionalism, Technical and Administrative. GST Michigan Works! was able to help ease the financial burden with \$6,000 towards her tuition and Nicole successfully completed the program in August. She is currently still employed at Scheurer Hospital as a Patient Care Associate and is ready to apply for a Billing Personnel opportunity as soon as one becomes available.

# A CUT ABOVE THE REST

**Genesee** - Daijon Prewitt discovered his interest in barbering after his uncle showed him how to cut hair in October of 2021. Daijon practiced on a couple of people and consequently decided he wanted a career as a Barber. The institution his uncle attended had closed, but after some exploration, he learned about Teach 2 Reach School of Cosmetology. However, the cost of tuition was \$9,200 and Daijon lacked the financial means to attend. The school recommended he speak with a Career Coach at GST Michigan Works! for tuition assistance. In the beginning of November, Daijon met with Angel, a Career Coach with GST Michigan Works! and expressed his enthusiasm for a new career. He was working full time in manufacturing and didn't want to make that his life's work. When he was able to take time off, he visited GST Michigan Works! and completed the requirements for the tuition assistance program.

In January of 2022, Daijon started Barber school. Maintaining both a work and school schedule proved to be a challenge. Daijon had to make a difficult decision. In order to make this dream come true, he would need to leave his current employment and find a job that would work around his school schedule. He ended up needing to find work multiple times in order to to

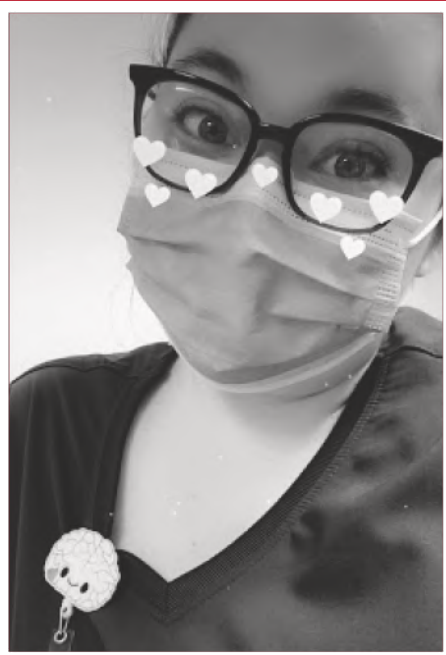
maintain the flexibility he needed to attend school. The school's curriculum also turned out to be harder than expected, but Daijon kept a positive attitude, persevered, and graduated from Barber school at the end of January, 2023! Daijon passed his state exam and began his new career as a Barber at Master's Barbershop on March 6, 2023.



***Energy and persistence conquer all things. I am thankful to GST Michigan Works! for the opportunity. I am going all in and ready to build my clientele."***

*– Daijon*

# STARTING OVER



**Lapeer** - Kayla came to GST Michigan Works! in Lapeer as a single mom who recently lost her job as a daycare director. She was seeking assistance on her path to a new career. Kayla wanted to make a positive impact on others so she was looking for an opportunity in human services or the medical field.

Kayla worked with a GSTMW Career Coach and found that she was eligible for our services. She also received help narrowing down her options for a career. In the end, she chose healthcare and enrolled in a Certified Nurse Aide training program. She received tuition assistance and mileage reimbursement while she attended classes. She successfully completed the program and began working with her Career Coach on job search strategies.

While job searching with her Career Coach, Kayla learned of an opportunity at Lapeer County Medical Care Facility – Suncrest. She applied and was hired! Because of her job offer, she was eligible for assistance with the purchase of uniforms to get her started, as well. She is currently working full time as a CNA with a wage increase of over \$5/hr. compared to her previous employment!

# NURSING ASSISTANTS, **NEVER GIVE UP!**



**Lapeer** - Joslyn had worked in healthcare for over 20 years as a CNA and nurtured a love for helping others. She often considered furthering her career, but it was never the right time and there always seemed to be obstacles in the way. The program was too expensive, there were waitlists for clinicals, and she couldn't afford to take the time off from work. With encouragement

from fellow colleagues and family, she saved and rearranged her world to attend Dorsey's one-year LPN program. Her employer worked around her school schedule. There were times when she wanted to quit, but continued working while in school and maintained a high GPA through all her courses.

Due to only working part-time, monthly school payments became difficult. That is where GST Michigan Works! stepped in to help! We were able to provide her with tuition assistance and work uniforms to ease that financial burden.

Joslyn's endurance and hard work paid off! When she completed her training, she was welcomed as a new nurse to the Maplewood Manor work family. She started the year as a CNA and will end this year with a new career as a Nursing Assistant and a \$10/hr. wage increase!

## MOVING ON **UP**

**Sanilac** - Troy Brown came into GST Michigan Works! looking for assistance with training to advance in his current employment with Kappen Tree Service. Troy wanted to obtain his CDL-A license. This would allow him the opportunity to make more money. Troy currently lives in Deckerville and decided he wanted to attend Thumb CDL, LLC.

Troy is an eligible Veteran. He followed through with the application process and started to attend training. He worked vigilantly and with determination to



complete his training quickly. He was able to finish his training within 3 months.

Since Troy completed his training, he has been given the opportunity to move up within Kappen Tree Service. He will now work as a truck driver and receive a significant wage increase. This career bump has helped his family and has given Troy job satisfaction.

**GST MICHIGAN WORKS! IS PRIVILEGED TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ASSIST TROY IN MAKING THIS CAREER MOVE.**

# FROM SETBACK TO SUCCESS

**Huron** - Vincent Dolack came to GST Michigan Works! in Bad Axe on March 6th to register for work and seek new employment. Vincent is originally from Huron County, and he is a United States Army Veteran. He was most recently an On-Site Wind Technician Level III stationed in Harbor Beach. He was very happy to get this position and be able to purchase a house and move back to the area. Unfortunately, this site was eventually closed. He was left without a job and with a newly purchased home.



Vincent signed up for Unemployment Benefits and came into the Huron County office to register for work. The Career Coaches reviewed his resume and gave him suggestions to make improvements. He made those improvements and forwarded his resume to Business Services. They discussed various openings in the area and determined which positions he would like his resume shared with. Business Services shared his resume, and he was invited for several interviews. Vincent was quickly hired as a Maintenance Technician at Gemini Plastics and began this new chapter in the beginning of April.

Vincent shared, "...you'll be happy to know my employment at Gemini is going extremely well. They've been impressed with what I have to offer, and I've been enjoying my time working and meeting everyone here. I just started my solo shift this week, and I'd be lying if I said it wasn't intimidating, but I've tackled every obstacle thrown my way so far. ...fixing machines, I mean, the personnel here are great. Really looking forward to delving into their robotics department. Thank you again for your help and support!"



## OVERCOMING BARRIERS ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

**Genesee** - Mr. Torauss Johnson came into GST Michigan Works! in Flint last June seeking assistance with training. Mr. Johnson said that he recently lost his job as an assembly worker. He was currently looking for a new career and decided to utilize this downtime as an opportunity to research other opportunities. Mr. Johnson wanted to attend a truck driving school and obtain his CDL-A; however, he knew his existing barriers would prevent him from reaching his goals. Mr. Johnson shared that his vehicle needed mechanical repairs, he would need financial assistance getting to and from training, and appropriate clothing for the training.

After learning of Mr. Johnson's barriers, GSTMW Career Coaches were able to connect him to the Food Assistance, Employment and Training Program (FAE&T) for support. The program was able to meet Mr. Johnson's needs and remove all his existing barriers.

Mr. Johnson successfully completed truck driving school last September. He secured employment in February at Pepsi as a truck driver making \$27.50 an hour. Mr. Johnson recently expressed his gratitude to GSTMW... "Just wanted to say 'thank you' for the opportunity to begin a new career. I'm blessed to be able to say I successfully completed the program and appreciate all the help along the way."



# IMPROVING HEALTHCARE IN MY COMMUNITY

**Tuscola** - Elizabeth came to the Tuscola GST Michigan Works! service center in October of 2021. She was working occasionally as a tutor at Saginaw Valley State University while she was enrolled full-time in the Nursing program. She had 4 semesters remaining and lacked the funds to cover the tuition, books, and other added expenses. After applying for the MiReach grant and being approved, we were able to assist with payments towards 4 semesters of tuition, her NCLEX, Professional Licensing, and fingerprinting to become a Registered Nurse.



*Nursing school consisted of a strenuous and time-consuming curriculum. This allowed very little time for work to assist with my schooling. GST Michigan Works! helped me overcome the stress of my financial situation by providing me with a grant specifically for nursing students in Michigan in need of financial assistance. Without their help, I do not think I would have been able to show the academic success in nursing school due to the need to work overtime hours to assist with paying for my tuition."*

Elizabeth graduated in December of 2022 with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She graduated magna cum laude and with a 3.69 GPA.

Elizabeth began working at Hills and Dales General Hospital in Cass City, Michigan on February 20th of this year. She was offered full-time employment as a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Department and is making over \$30/hr. with benefits.

Elizabeth accomplished her goal of becoming a Nurse; but not just any nurse, a Nurse that was employed locally with the dream of improving healthcare in her own community.



**During my schooling I was able to complete a variety of courses and clinical experiences even including a study abroad for nursing in Zambia! Without the help of GSTMW, I may not have been able to complete my schooling or attend such life-changing experiences! I am excited to join the workforce as an RN."**

*- Elizabeth*



## ANONYMOUS SUCCESS STORIES

An Employee of a BRN participating Employer reached out to their GST Michigan Works! Success Coach in distress regarding his current living situation. This gentleman explained that while he was away from work and in the hospital, there was infidelity on the part of his spouse, and she depleted his short-term disability income as well as the family's savings account. This Employee was currently working through the challenges of a divorce and the home he resided in was being foreclosed on. Due to his ongoing mental health struggles, he was finding it challenging to process what the best, next steps were and feared becoming homeless due to the need to acquire funding for a security deposit on a new home. GSTMW Success Coach calmly worked through the process of helping him establish safe, affordable housing. Once he was approved for a rental property, he applied for assistance with the security deposit and was able to move into his new home!

In early fall, an individual had been working with their GST Michigan Works! Success Coach on navigating mental health issues and establishing independence without having been taught the proper skills and habits of adulthood. After many meetings, she shared that she was an expectant mother and had no idea where to begin on approaching that situation. She expressed many worries and struggles both with pregnancy and her future child. After talking with her Coach, the client felt significantly better than before-hand and now had a plan to work with and will continue to meet with their Coach to navigate her concerns.

## OPEN ROAD VICTORY

**Genesee** - Aaron Stinson is a success story in life and at GST Michigan Works! Mr. Stinson came to us in September 2022 and wanted to pursue CDLA training so he would have the opportunity to obtain stable, steady employment. He was working part-time at a local logistics company as a fork truck driver and felt that he was in a dead-end job. However, Mr. Stinson had some blemishes in his past that had hindered his employment options.

Mr. Stinson secured WIOA training funds and completed CDLA training at a local training facility. In January 2023, he accepted employment with USA Trucking, a fast-growing company. Before he could start his new career adventure, he needed tools to perform his career. GST Michigan Works! was able to assist him in obtaining the gear he needed to start fresh in his new profession.

In addition to being physically prepared, he also needed to make a conscious effort to remain mentally focused on the end goal despite any bumps in the road. At this company, all new graduates had to drive with an established team leader, to properly learn the ropes of OTR driving. This proved to bring some challenges because he was in close quarters with another driver that he did not know for 30 days. The idea of quitting crossed his mind, but he didn't do it! He knew that he had to get past this hurdle so he could be out on his own.

Today, Mr. Stinson is a solo OTR driver making more money than he ever thought possible. He gives all the praise to GST Michigan Works! and his Career Coach Danita Horcha, for having confidence in him when sometimes he did not have confidence in himself.



# Student SUCCESS STORIES



**Bryanna Williams** - Bryanna is an Out of School Youth participant from the FHEO Program. Bryanna shared that it has been her lifelong goal to have a career in healthcare and the FHEO Program gave her assistance to get started. Bryanna completed Medical Assistant training with Mott Workforce Development in January 2023. After training, she quickly gained employment at a gynecology office as a Medical Assistant. **Bryanna said she is "loving every minute of the job".**

**Shaneka Davis** - Shaneka is an Adult participant in the FHEO Program. Shaneka was working at a childcare facility when she heard a Facebook advertisement for the FHEO Program and decided it was time to expand her healthcare career. Shaneka completed Medical Assistant training with Mott Workforce Development in January 2023 and shortly after secured employment with Hurley Medical Center as a Medical Assistant. Shaneka shared, "I am so thankful for this experience and everyone who has helped me along the way".



Shaneka shared,

*I am so thankful for this experience and everyone who has helped me along the way".*

## FHEO Quarterly EMPLOYER & COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**Cohort 52 at Life Skills & Healthcare  
Career Exploration Training Graduation  
March 2023**

# CONGRATULATIONS, COHORT 52!



## SUMMER YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The FHEO Program is recruiting businesses in Genesee County to host students ages 18 - 24 for short-term summer work. Participants can successfully support the work of entry-level positions within your company.



# 2023

# MiCareer Quest™

EAST MICHIGAN

**FOCUS** areas:

Advanced Manufacturing • Construction Trades  
Health Sciences • In-Demand Industries



## EXPLORING MICHIGAN'S HIGH-DEMAND INDUSTRIES

From May 24th to 25th, we successfully hosted the second edition of MiCareerQuest™ East! This two-day event had a profound impact on thousands of young adults, thanks to the valuable experiences and knowledge shared by exhibitors.

MiCareerQuest™ East serves as an interactive platform, allowing the future workforce to explore various career options in health sciences, advanced manufacturing, construction, and other in-demand fields.

Throughout the event, industry professionals provided insights into a wide range of careers, including bricklaying, project management, law enforcement, cyber security, waste treatment, nursing, and many more. The presence of exhibitors greatly benefited the attendees, enabling them to make crucial decisions regarding their future career paths. We cannot overstate the importance of exhibitors' participation and express enough gratitude for their dedication to supporting our youth.

In addition to the exhibitors, we were fortunate to have the strong presence and support of our valued partnerships with industries across the region. These partnerships play a vital role in assisting the workforce of tomorrow as they explore different career paths. We deeply appreciate their involvement and recognize the significance of their expertise, as their contributions help shape policies that foster economic growth while addressing the needs of the workforce.

Together, we have laid a solid foundation for the workforce of tomorrow, equipping students with the necessary skills to succeed in their chosen careers. The impact of MiCareerQuest™ East and the collaborative efforts of exhibitors and industry partners will undoubtedly shape the future of the workforce, empowering students to flourish in their professional journeys.



# MI CAREER QUEST EAST 2023

# EMPLOYER SUCCESS STORIES

## SKYTOWER LLC



**Genesee** - SkyTower LLC is a telecommunications company servicing cell phone providers throughout the United States. Jennifer and Jake McDonald are the owners of SkyTower LLC and have worked with GST Michigan Works! to provide on-the-job training opportunities for their new hire Cell Phone Tower Technicians.

Jennifer said, “[We] exist to help clients exceed new heights in the telecommunication industry by meeting important deadlines and working with excellence in every job. Safety is our number one priority as all our employees have up-to-date certifications to maintain compliance with our industry standards. We have high-level policies and procedures, employee training, safety audits, committees, etc. that promote our safety culture. We know the value of

completing jobs in a timely manner, balancing expenses, and precise and accurate close-out packages in order to achieve a successful project. We strive to build our nation's top wireless infrastructure system for the future.”

SkyTower LLC continues to grow and offer quality service in the cell phone tower industry. They are constantly hiring for various positions, including Tower Inspector, Crew Lead/Foreman, Top Hand, and Tower Technician. GST Michigan Works! Business Solutions Professionals Gary Harrison and Roy Reynolds recently delivered a check for \$7,140! Jennifer shared that the funds were mainly used to provide training for Cell Phone Tower Technicians working in the field and on high towers. The job can be very dangerous and demanding in the colder seasons, so training is crucial for safety and retention purposes.

GST Michigan Works! continues to support SkyTower LLC and provides resources to assist them in being a leader and innovator in the cell phone tower industry.



## REGENCY PLASTICS

**Huron** - GST Michigan Works! met with Human Resources for the Gemini Group and determined that applying for a Going Pro Grant may be the best solution for their training needs. Regency Plastics applied for and were awarded a Going Pro Grant. They utilized this grant for Value Stream Mapping, Core Tools SPC, GD & T Fundamentals, AIAG/VDA FMEA, 8D Problem Solving, TPM, 5S Application, Financial and Manufacturing Skills Development Trainings.

Being in a rural area makes hiring new employees more difficult. By investing in training for current employees, the company can continue to manufacture quality parts and retain confident, knowledgeable employees. Training was needed for current employees to assist in observing and improving upon the current processes that are used in production, finance, and general organization of the workplace.

Employees gained skills that will help them keep their workspaces clean and organized and eliminate waste and reduce production costs. They also learned methods used to control processes to reduce variations and become more efficient in their processes. Managers gained knowledge of how the decisions they make daily can affect the finances of the business. By training employees, they become more aware of how production and quality processes can be improved to increase production without sacrificing quality parts. This helps employees become confident in their abilities and helps the company remain competitive so both the employees and the business can continue to thrive.

# JACE JELINEK JOINS THE FAMILY AT CENTURY TOOL & GAGE

**Genesee** - Jace Jelinek came into the GST Michigan Works! Fenton office November 17th of 2022 looking for some help. Jace was working at another machining company in Fenton as a temp CNC Operator for almost a year. He was looking to find a company where he would be hired as a full-time employee and not have to worry about employment instability as a temporary employee. Jace was hoping to find a local company that would help train him and he could start a career.

Jace didn't have a resume and wanted to be able to showcase his CNC Machining experience. Career Coach Mary Newell started helping Jace Jelinek with his resume shortly after he came into the office. That same week, Business Solutions Professional (BSP) Roy Reynolds had been working with the Human Resources Manager, Connie Lee at Century Tool & Gage, finding out she needed to fill a Benching Technician position. The day Jace came into the GST Michigan Works! Fenton office looking for help, the position at Century Tool had just been posted on the featured job board that morning. Once Mary and Jace completed the creation of his resume, BSP Roy Reynolds directed Jace to the job opening at Century Tool & Gage. Jace was very interested in this position! His dad was a current employee and his grandfather had been for years, as well. Roy emailed Jace's resume to Century Tool, hoping he would be a good fit for the Benching Technician position.

Jace was offered the position on December 8th, 2022. He started at Century Tool & Gage on January 3rd of 2023. Once he was hired, GST Michigan Works! was able to help with supportive services to pay for new work clothes for his new position. GST Michigan Works! was also able to offer the opportunity of an "OJT" (on-the-job training) at Century Tool & Gage to help train him in some of the skills he was lacking.

Jace continues to do well on the job, following in his family's footsteps. He is gaining more knowledge and experience on Century Tool's machines every day. He is currently making well-above minimum wage and will see his first wage increase when he hits six months of employment.

"I'm very happy here at Century Tool & Gage! I'm so happy I came into GST Michigan Works! that day. They are training me in everything and it's a process, but I'm not going anywhere. Century Tool is going to be home for me."



**CONNIE LEE STATED, "WE REALLY APPRECIATE OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH GST MICHIGAN WORKS!"**

# THUMB PLASTICS



**Huron** - Thumb Plastics needed GD&T, PLC, Minitab and Management Skills for their new supervisors. Training was needed to ensure that employees were confident and efficient in their jobs, quality products could continue to be manufactured, and new supervisors know how to communicate with their staff.

GST Michigan Works! met with Human Resources at the Gemini Group to discuss what program funding they may be able to use to fill these needs. Thumb Plastics applied for and was awarded a 2022 Going Pro Funding Grant. They utilized this grant to provide GD&T, PLC, Process Improvement, and Supervisor training to their current employees.



Thumb Plastics was granted \$10,340.00 to assist in sending 10 employees to New Supervisor, GD&T, PLC and Improving Products and Processes training. The new supervisors were able to learn planning, monitoring, organizing and communication skills and techniques to help them better manage, understand, and communicate the needs of the employees they are supervising. Having better trained supervisors will lead to reduced turnover. GD&T is essential to controlling variances in the manufacturing process, so it continues to be very important to remain competitive and produce quality products.

It is challenging to hire new employees so having properly trained employees and promoting from within improves employee retention and gives employees the skills they need to be confident in their performance and build quality parts consistently.



## INVESTED IN TRAINING

**Shiawassee** - Midwest Bus Corporation which started in 1980 is the largest transit bus remanufacturer in the United States. Based in Owosso, they do everything from accident repair to complete refurbishment. The company has ongoing contracts with Boston Mass Transit as well as airport shuttle bus services which include both regular and matriculated buses.

Being a 2022 Going Pro Talent Fund awardee allowed Midwest Bus to use \$26,916 to train their personnel in new technology and manufacturing trends. One example is the training in the BAE hybrid driving system. This training was a pre-requisite to win a large contract with a transit authority. Midwest Bus had no previous experience with this hybrid system. As more and more mass transit systems are changing to hybrid, this training will be transferable to those systems as well.

The leadership at Midwest Bus has stated that acquiring the training has set their employees, both incumbent and new, on successful career paths both within the company and in their futures. By taking the time and investing in focused training, Midwest Bus has also benefited by being able to field a more knowledgeable and better trained team. This allows them to bid on future contracts and continue to grow more competitively.



# ROLLS MECHANICAL

**Genesee** - Rolls Mechanical is a woman-owned business based in Fenton, Michigan. For over 27 years, they've been providing commercial and industrial facilities with expert HVAC, refrigeration, controls and plumbing services. Rolls Mechanical provides 24-7-365 service and new construction services. They strive to provide high quality work, accompanied by awesome customer service and honesty.

Karly Rolls understands the trades are suffering from labor shortages and lack of qualified/skilled talent. People are retiring and Rolls Mechanical is finding it hard to locate new and experienced tradespeople to fill those positions. Karly and Rolls Mechanical are looking for new ways to train their incoming new hires and apprentices. Without properly training new plumbers and HVAC technicians, they are limited in the amount of work they can do, their profitability will suffer, and there are huge safety concerns. They also want to be able to upskill their current employees that have been with them for years. Upskilling their current employees in training focused on leadership and other certifications could benefit the company by providing new ways for current employees to train new hires. 2022 Going PRO was a way to help offset the cost of training new hires/apprentices and upskilling the current employees at Rolls Mechanical by training them to be new team leads or future managers.

Rolls Mechanical was able to use the Going PRO Talent Fund to aid in the cost of upskilling select current employees in trainings such as: Leadership Training, Refrigeration Advancements, Refrigerant Handling – EPA License, OSHA 10, Boiler Training, and Med Gas Certification. The Going PRO Talent Fund also aided in the training costs of their new hires for trainings such as: on-the-job Training (OJT), OSHA 10, and refrigeration advancements.

GST Michigan Works! helped Karly and her team at Rolls Mechanical throughout the 2022 Going PRO Award year and aided with the registration & application process when needed. The total amount of Going PRO Talent Fund Award reimbursement for training completed in 2022 was \$26,230.00!

I understand how important these trainings are for the future of Rolls Mechanical's current and future employees. **The Going PRO Talent Fund has been a great program for us!**  
– Karly Rolls



# LAUNCH OF THE THUMB AREA BUSINESS & COMMUNITY LEADERS FORUM

**Sanilac** - Even before the onset of COVID there was a growing sense within the business community that something was beginning to change regarding our regional workforce. It was becoming more difficult to recruit talent across all industries and skill levels, and employee retention was also beginning to suffer. This evolution within our regional workforce seems to have accelerated in the aftermath of COVID but has not settled into a new normal. The number of applicants is increasing, but the number of unfilled jobs across all industries is still high, and employee retention is a challenge. There is a resurgence of entrepreneurial energy, and regional tourism is trending toward a very strong season. Manufacturing orders remain high, and unemployment remains low, despite poor economic indicators. There are a lot of mixed signals within our workforce and economy, but there is a strong positive energy and entrepreneurial resurgence as well. With the forced isolation of COVID in the past, people are ready to gather in person, and many business and community leaders are inspired to move forward and bring positive change.

In the last ten to fifteen years, GST has hosted a successful Thumb Area Human Resource Association, and a Thumb Area Manufacturing Forum, which COVID brought to an abrupt end. With things opening back up on most fronts, and the rising positive energy, the timing is right to begin another regional working group. These forums have led to strong relationships with new partners, several industry led collaboratives, incumbent worker training projects, etc. We do not want to re-create the past, but tap into this new positive, yet unsettled energy. To that end, the first Thumb Area Business & Community Leaders Forum convened on March 28th, with a follow up gathering on May 16th.

The objective of this new working group is to bring together leaders from all sectors and industries to determine how we may begin to move our communities forward... together. Representatives from manufacturing, healthcare, services, entrepreneurs, consultants, city government, and economic development, are meeting together to brainstorm and discuss both the challenges and the assets within our communities, and where the opportunities are to innovate. At this stage, three areas of interest have emerged: attracting and retaining a younger workforce, availability of transportation across county lines, and marketing and promotion of our communities. As a work in progress, these focus areas will change and adapt, leading to some form of action. A small but diverse group of participants has volunteered to join a steering committee to move this initiative forward. All involved are eager to see what develops from the new Thumb Area Business & Community Leaders Forum.



# AUTOKINITON - MAINTAINING THE MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE

**Huron** - In manufacturing, you continually need to decrease downtime and increase production to remain profitable. Without properly trained employees, manufacturers would not be able to accomplish this. There are many employees in the skilled trades who are close to retirement, so we need to have new journeymen trained and ready to fill those shoes. Manufacturers need apprentices to work with current journeymen so they can share the vast amount of knowledge they have learned over the years.



GST Michigan Works! completed a Fact Finding with Peggy Rogers – Human Resource Generalist at Autokiniton (Formerly Tower International). They have several Apprenticeship Programs that will have first year apprentices attending training. In addition, they will need to hire more apprentices to fill openings. It was determined that Going Pro would be a good fit to assist in paying for the cost of some of the classroom training and on-the-job training.

Autokiniton applied for and was awarded \$12,000 through the GPTF 2022. This award assisted them in training two new Tool & Die Maker Apprentices, one Maintenance Technician Apprentice and one Electrician Apprentice! Autokiniton utilizes Delta College for their classroom apprenticeship training. We must continue to train our existing and new apprentices to maintain the business that we have, as well as give us the ability to take on new projects.

Peggy shared, “Through the training with Delta College and our mentoring program, we have decreased downtime and increased production which positively affects our profitability! The training is also helping to secure the future for new business and building the skills needed to maintain our workforce.” Logan Briesmiester stated that, ***“I didn’t know what I wanted to do as a career. Delta and Autokiniton have provided me with an opportunity that I didn’t think was possible! I knew I didn’t want to be weighed down by thousands of dollars in student loan debt. Delta provided me with the tools I needed to succeed and Autokiniton has given me a career that I can grow in as an Industrial Electrician.”***



# GOYETTE MECHANICAL



**Genesee** - Goyette Mechanical specializes in industrial, municipal, government, military, residential and institutional work in the areas of heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical. In 2021, Goyette Mechanical will accumulate approximately \$121 million in annual sales. Approximately 70% of the sales are service work, negotiated and/or design build projects. The company looks for opportunities in Michigan and select locations around the U.S.

Goyette has been partnering with GST Michigan Works! for almost 5 years, taking advantage of various programs the agency has to offer. As they continue to grow with the market demand, that partnership and support will grow, as well. The Going PRO Talent Fund is one program that Goyette has found to be a great asset. Goyette Mechanical was awarded the GPTF in 2022 and successfully trained new and existing employees with the award.

The industry is highly competitive, and they strive to stay ahead of competitors in the market. To do so, they provide Goyette employees with access to all the necessary training to make them the best and most valuable they can be. Retention is key! Keeping employees trained and paying competitive wages is

extremely important to retaining all their quality employees and attracting new hires. This grant will alleviate some of the training expenses and allow Goyette Mechanical to provide more training opportunities to more employees. The expectation is that this grant will promote job growth, employee retention and help create new opportunities within the company.

Training is a large expense for Goyette, but it is worth the investment when you have trained employees who are keeping the company competitive and the best in the industry! When awarded funding from this grant, Goyette was able to open additional training opportunities to more employees that will make them and the company more competitive. The Going Pro funds will directly impact the ability to promote employees, and bring in new employees to back-fill positions due to these promotions. It will also make the company more competitive when bidding for projects because they will have employees that are more trained and skilled than their competitors.

Goyette Mechanical completed all training for the Going PRO Talent Fund in 2022 and a check was delivered for \$91,445.

# SUPPORTING GROWTH IN OUR REGION

**We are excited** that businesses are seeing the attraction of the Genesee, Shiawassee & Thumb regions both from a talent perspective as well as an economic growth opportunity and to help support this growth, we have several on-site job fairs planned to recruit the talent that these organizations will need.



## Check Out Our EVENTS PAGE:

[GSTMIIWORKS.ORG/EVENTS](http://GSTMIIWORKS.ORG/EVENTS)



# LEARN & EARN

## Spring Training

The WIOA program held its Spring Training at the Shiawassee RESD on March 14th. Julianne Ackerson from LAFCU shared valuable financial information with the students and covered topics related to banking, loans, interest and saving for the future. Next, Amy Smith from Michigan Rehabilitation Services talked about the career services they provide, as well as their trade school, MCTI. Students also learned more about the services at GST Michigan Works! They navigated an online job search and learned how to apply for jobs on the Michigan Talent Connect website at [www.mitalent.org](http://www.mitalent.org). The rest of the evening was spent on interviewing skills. Students learned the 5 parts of an interview practiced common interview questions, and identified good questions to ask an employer. They also showed off their employability skills while posing at a selfie booth.

## CONGRATS TO OUR 2023 WIOA GRADUATES!



*We are very proud of your accomplishments and wish you all the best with your future plans!*



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# STUDENTS AT WORK



Maylea Edwards (Corunna)



Paige Brown (New Lothrop)



Bailey Miller (Owosso)



Payton Willey (Owosso) doing data entry at the Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce.



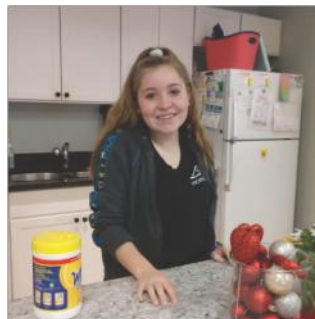
Lyndsey Hatfield (Byron) working with children at the Eagle's Nest Child Care.



Ian Klein (Owosso) cleaning the shop at Lunghamer Ford.



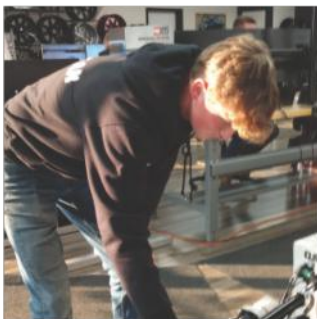
McKenzy Cobb (Laingsburg) helping preschoolers learn new skills at the Laingsburg ECEC.



Alexis Kimmel (Owosso) helping senior citizens at HomeJoy.



Anton English (Owosso) front facing products at Walgreens.



Evan Keelean (New Lothrop) assisting the technicians at 4 Wheel Buy.



Elizha Martin (Corunna) working in the body shop at Young Chevrolet Cadillac.



Sophia Yonker (Corunna) organizing displays at a Time for Flowers.



Bella Shelton (Corunna) washing dishes at Greg and Lou's Family Restaurant.

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