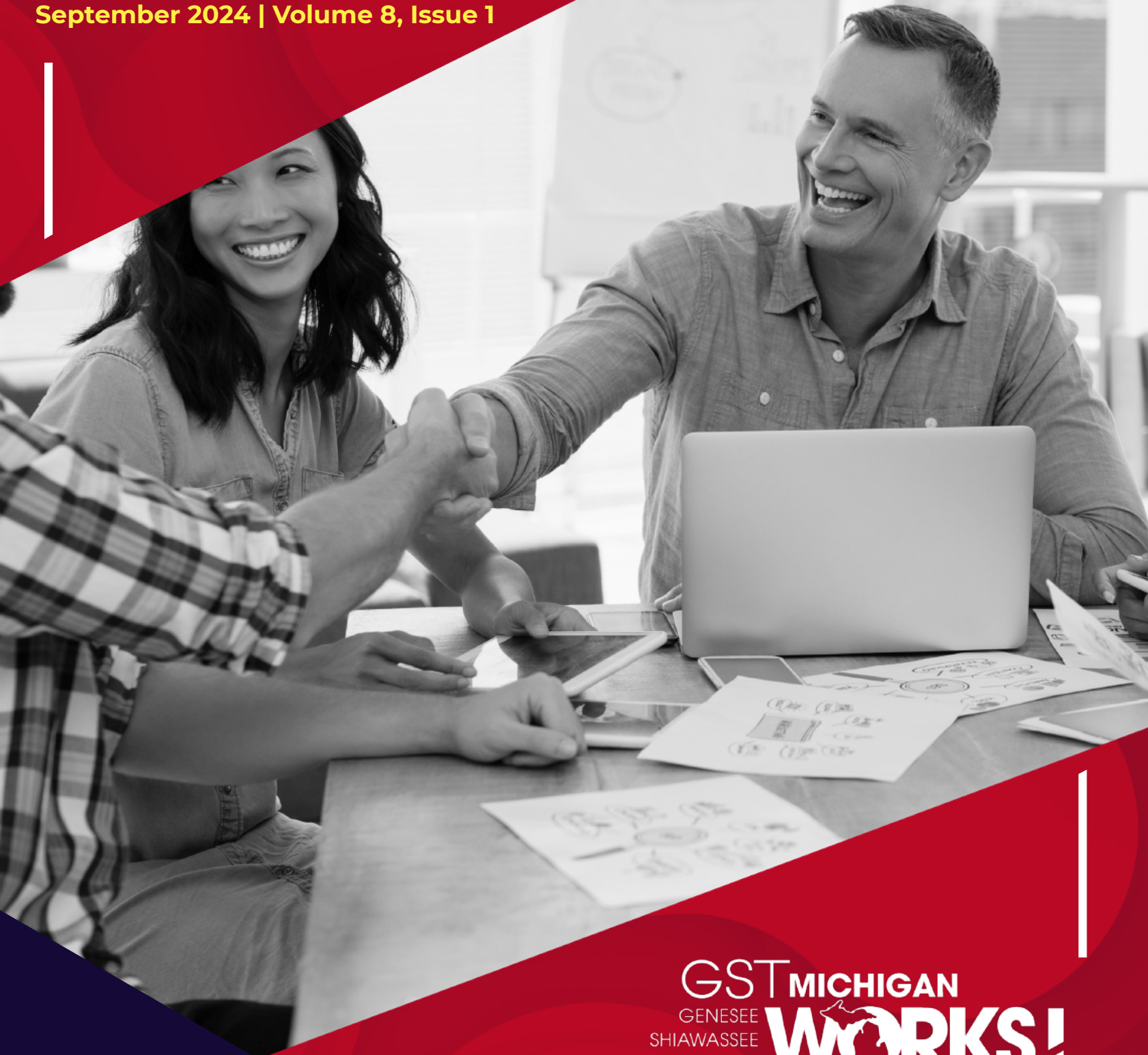


TALENT TALK

September 2024 | Volume 8, Issue 1



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

Advancing Employers | Enhancing Talent



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

55K
Job Postings

722
Occupations

8.1K
Employers

2.8K
Locations

76%
Employed at
Exit of Training

Real-Time Intelligence Report - Online Job Ads 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024

Active Job Ads

	# Active Job Ads
Registered Nurses	3,158
Retail Salespersons	2,625
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,324
Medical and Health Services Managers	1,212
Stockers and Order Fillers	1,184
Social and Human Service Assistants	1,157
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,000
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	922
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	876
Fast Food and Counter Workers	846
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	829
Nursing Assistants	810
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	701
Speech-Language Pathologists	699
Production Workers, All Other	693
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	684
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	655
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	598
Physical Therapists	595
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	565
Medical Assistants	562
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	555
Human Resources Specialists	554
Customer Service Representatives	553

10,401
Page Likes

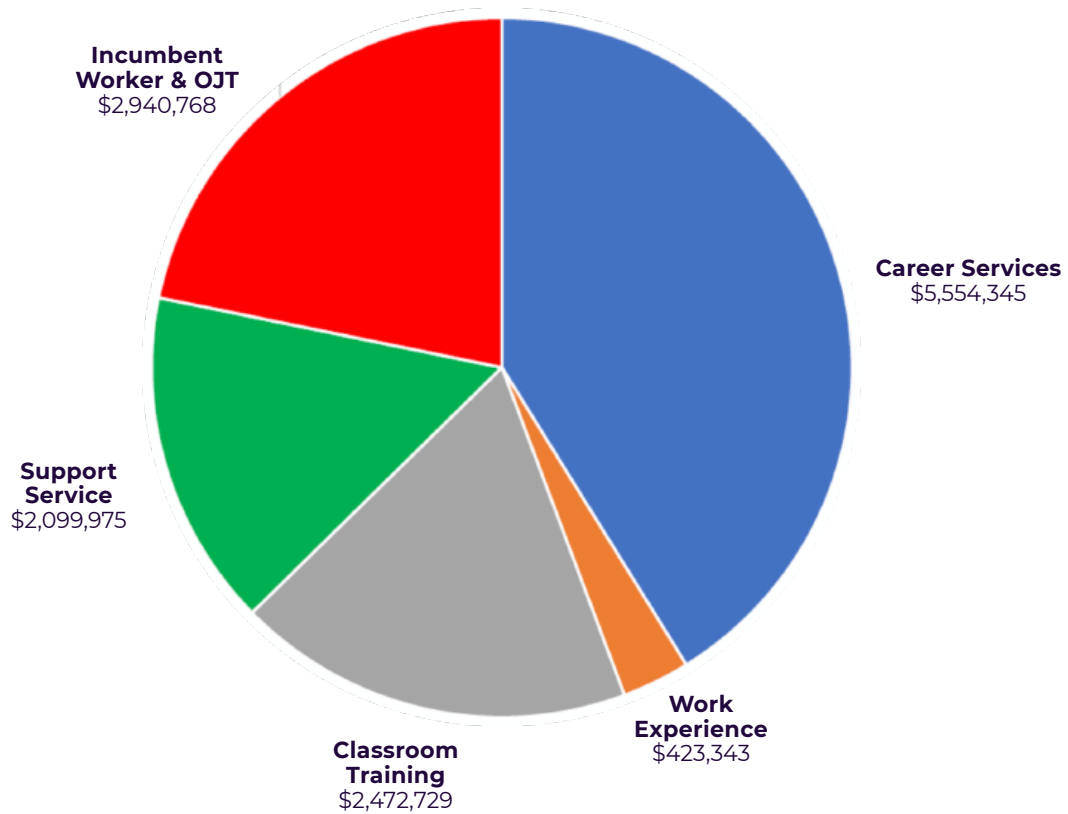
715
Followers

531
Followers

DATA ANALYSIS

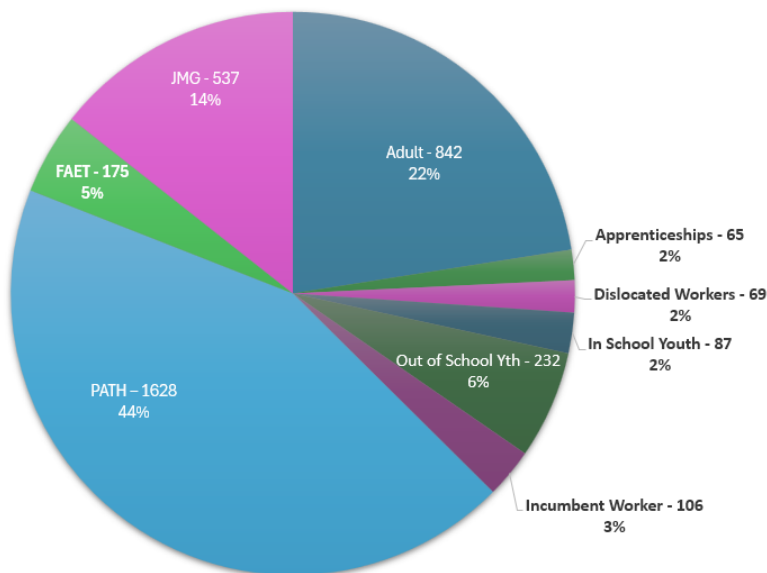
Career Services & Participant Payments

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024



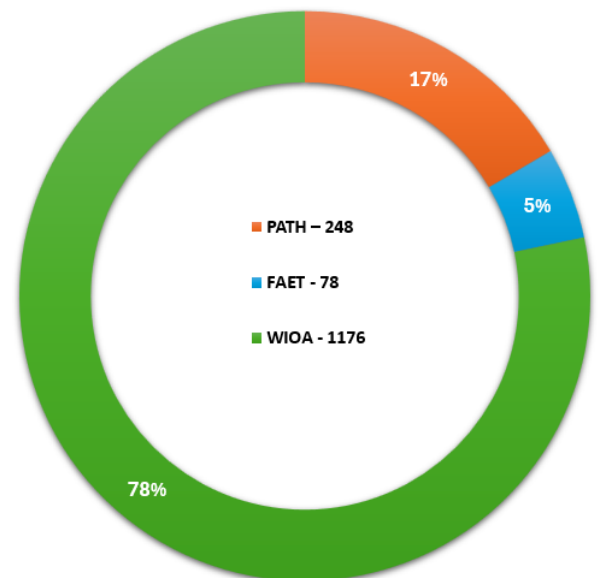
New Enrollments

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024



Entered Training

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024



EMPLOYEE SUCCESS STORIES

ADVANCING THROUGH **AMBITION**



Huron Co. - Sydney is currently thriving at JLH Construction, where she works as an Administrative Assistant. Eager to expand her role and responsibilities, she reached out to GST Michigan Works! for assistance pursuing her CDL Class B to become a driver, as well. Her dedication and passion for her job make her an invaluable member of the team, and she is enthusiastic about the prospect of adding driving to her skill set.

Thanks to the support from GST Michigan Works!, Sydney received the necessary funding for her CDL training at Thumb CDL, including coverage for tuition, physical exams, drug screens, and skills tests. Sydney expressed her gratitude, stating, "I am incredibly thankful for the program!"

Balancing a full-time job with her CDL training, Sydney continues to contribute 40 hours a week to JLH Construction. She is excited about her ability to contribute even more on the job by expanding her skillset in this way.

ON THE ROAD TO **REBUILDING SUCCESS**

Tuscola Co. - Leon first contacted GST Michigan Works! as a justice-involved citizen facing the struggles of finding employment as he transitioned back to society. Leon expressed his interest in obtaining a CDL certification and becoming a truck driver. After many discussions about his future, he enrolled in a CDL course to gain the education needed for his desired career in the transportation industry.

Finding himself eligible for assistance due to his background, Leon worked with his career coach to acquire the tools necessary to succeed and support his family. GST Michigan Works! supported him with mileage reimbursement, licensing fee reimbursement, and tuition assistance. Leon was an outstanding student. He successfully passed his CDL program, and secured full-time employment as a truck driver shortly after completing his training.

With hard work, determination, and the support of GST Michigan Works!, Leon overcame all challenges on his path to his dream career in truck driving!



STRIVING TO **TEACH**



Sanilac Co. - Jean's journey with GST Michigan Works! in Sandusky began on November 8, 2023, after discovering our funding assistance for educational programs through social media. With a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Special Education but lacking certification, Jean faced a hurdle in advancing her career from paraprofessional to

elementary school teacher. She reached out to us, eager to see if she qualified for support.

Upon evaluation, we found Jean eligible for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, paving the way for her to pursue her Special Education

Certification. Jean began her online classes on December 1, 2023, initially aiming for a completion date of January 1, 2025. However, driven by her passion and determination, Jean impressively completed her certification in just four months, earning her Special Education Certificate well ahead of schedule.

When asked about her motivation for pursuing this path, Jean said,



I want to become a teacher because I love working with kids."

Currently, she is working as an instructional aide and actively exploring opportunities to advance to a teaching position in the upcoming school year. Her rapid progress and unwavering commitment highlight the impact of accessible educational resources and the incredible potential within every aspiring educator.



Shiawassee Co. - In April 2023, the owner of T&J Towing & Hauling visited GST Michigan Works! Owosso Service Center seeking assistance to upskill his employee, Larry, for a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to become a Wrecker Driver. Around the same time, Jordan, who had recently moved from Ohio to Michigan, came to us looking for help with tuition costs for a CDL-A program. Although Jordan already possessed a CDL-B, he needed support to take the next step in his career and connect with local employers.

Thanks to funding from a special CDL Demonstration grant, Larry and Jordan began their training together at Tri-Area Trucking on June 5, 2023. Remarkably, within four weeks, both completed their CDL-A training on June 30, 2023.

Upon completion, Larry was promoted from a General Laborer to a Wrecker Driver at T&J Towing & Hauling, earning an increase in pay. Not only did his hourly wage increase, but with his increased skillset, he is now able to

work more hours than when he was only a general laborer. Meanwhile, Jordan secured employment with Emterra Environmental as a Driver, also earning a \$5 per hour increase!

Both Larry and Jordan obtained their CDL Class A licenses through the State of Michigan, leading to full-time employment in their respective fields.

Jordan expressed his gratitude, stating,



I would like to give a huge thank you to GST MI Works! for being able to provide the aid for me to further my driving career. The whole process was very easy, and Heather was always willing to answer any questions or concerns I had throughout the process.

CDL STUDENTS **TAKE TO THE ROAD**

PROVIDING STABILITY FOR YOUNG FAMILIES



Lapeer Co. - Hope had spent most of her career working in customer service and as a cashier, always putting the needs of her family first. As a single mother, she often struggled to find a job that offered the flexibility she needed to be there for her children. This often meant part-time employment, which came with limited resources and the constant challenge of balancing work and family life.

Initially, the idea of pursuing a healthcare career seemed daunting. It appeared too demanding to manage alongside her responsibilities as a young mother. However, after reaching a point where she knew something had to change, Hope discovered an opportunity that promised a better future. Ross offered an easy-to-follow program that introduced her to the field of Medical Assisting.

FROM FILL-IN AIDE TO FULL-TIME KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Sanilac Co. - Katie worked as a fill-in aide for the school district through willSub for two years. Passionate about education and eager to make a lasting impact, she decided it was time to step up and pursue her dream of becoming a full-time kindergarten teacher. To achieve this, Katie needed to get her teaching certification back.

She enrolled in a year-long program with Teach Inc., determined to complete her certification. Financial barriers could have stood in her way, but GST Michigan Works! stepped in and covered the tuition required for her program. With this support, Katie focused on her studies and worked tirelessly toward her goal.

Midway through her program, Katie faced a significant challenge: a family emergency. Despite this setback, she was granted an extension and remained steadfast in her commitment to completing her certification. Through perseverance and dedication, Katie pushed through and successfully finished her program. Today, Katie's hard work and resilience have paid off. She is now employed as a full-time kindergarten teacher, fulfilling her dream and making a positive impact on the lives of her students every day.

Hope embraced this new path, finding that she could balance her duties as a single mother while working as a Medical Assistant. Throughout her journey, Hope received invaluable support from various sources, including incentives through the Partnership Accountability Training Hope (PATH) program, employment support, tuition assistance, uniform purchases, and mileage support. These resources helped her overcome obstacles and achieve her goals. Her determination and resilience paid off! Hope's big break came during her externship at her child's doctor's office. Working alongside a team she had known for years, she felt supported and valued, forming close friendships and a sense of a second family.

When her externship ended, the team offered Hope a full-time position, allowing her to officially join the practice. This opportunity was a dream come true, providing her with a stable and fulfilling career in healthcare.

Reflecting on her experience, Hope shared, "I couldn't have done this alone!" Her story is a testament to the power of determination, community support, and the pursuit of a better life for herself and her family.

ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE



Genesee Co. - Jillian came into the PATH program ready for a restart, and a boost of motivation. She had taken many harsh roads to try to get to a destination of stability and now found herself lost with little hope. She knew she wanted better and was ready to commit to the challenge of gaining tools and resources.

Jillian entered the PATH program on August 10, 2023, with an abundance of challenges and obstacles. She met with her Career Coach and created an action plan to reach her goal of self-sufficiency. She began her journey by completing a reading and math assessment and creating a polished resume. She communicated every week with updates on the progress she was making with additional challenges. She shared her struggles, and the weight of a

fear that she would never reach her goals, but with assistance from her coach, giving up was not an option. She wanted better, not only for herself but for her children. She hoped to be an example to them of what you can achieve when you persevere.

Jillian utilized supportive services such as auto repair, mileage reimbursement, clothing, and transitional support. She actively participated in job search-related activities while navigating through challenges in her personal life. She then began unpaid work experience at Hill Creek Church and the women's center on December 12, 2023. Jillian stated the unpaid experience taught her responsibility, organization, consistency, responsibility, and stability which is what she lacked in her life, and it also enhanced her spirituality. With that, she continued the path to secure employment with New Paths, Inc. on May 13, 2024, where she was willing to tap into and understand her purpose to help others as a coach. She started her job working part-time with a good hourly wage and an opportunity for growth.

OJT | AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS

Genesee Co. - Jeremy came to GST Michigan Works! in Fenton after being unemployed long-term. Jeremy's challenge was being laid off from a landscaping company and not being eligible for unemployment benefits. He began trying to find suitable employment where he could get a decent wage, so he could support his family, which connected him with the Fenton office.

Through speaking to Fenton's Certified Business Solutions Professional Roy, Jeremy learned of an opportunity to gain the skills needed to work as an Asbestos and Abatement Technician utilizing the WIOA On-The-Job Training (OJT) training services through an employer, 1 Environmental, which could lead to full-time year-around employment.

Jeremy scheduled a meeting with a Career Coach and filled out all of the necessary paperwork to become eligible for funding. These actions began the process that would assist him with obtaining employment skills that

would lead to full-time employment.

Jeremy started his OJT at 1 Environmental LLC on 3/12/2024. During his first four weeks of employment, he received mileage reimbursement, which assisted him with traveling to and from the work sites. Jeremy learned through the process of his On-the-Job work experience, that it was a challenging job, yet he knew he wanted to continue working as an Asbestos and Abatement Technician with 1 Environmental.

Jeremy completed the OJT on 5/1/2024. On June 12, he received an increase in his hourly wages as he had successfully become an Asbestos and Abatement Technician with 1 Environmental, LLC.



FROM DEAD END TO DREAM

Huron Co. - We met Rachel when she approached the front desk at the Huron County office of GST Michigan Works! and asked for help finding a new job. She was currently at a job where she had been for 12 years with no hope for a promotion or salary increase. Rachel met with a career coach, who noted her work history, education, and skills. The coach created a tailored resume for jobs that Rachel was best suited for, discussing transferable skills between career sectors. The resume was shared with the office Business Solutions Professional and job leads were sent to Rachel over the next several weeks.

Four weeks later, Rachel returned to GST Michigan Works! and asked to see her career coach. She needed assistance with writing a cover letter. The coach worked with her and helped her attach it to an online application. Two weeks

later, Rachel had several interviews scheduled and this time needed help with preparing for the interviews. Again, her coach shared several sources of information, and key questions, and roleplayed in preparation.

Another three weeks passed, and Rachel came back to the GSTMW office to share an exciting update with her coach. She had been offered and accepted the job they were preparing for as a receptionist at a walk-in clinic in the healthcare industry! Rachel was so excited, relieved, and grateful for all the help, training, and advice she was given. The new job paid \$6/hour more than what she earned in the previous job and included benefits. Her patience, hard work, and follow-through led to a new beginning in a position where Rachel could thrive.

THE POWER OF PERSEVERANCE

Shiawassee Co. - Tyleena came to us as a single mom with very limited work experience. She had worked as a store clerk for only a few short months, earning \$13 an hour. With minimal support from family or friends, she faced significant challenges in finding childcare and stable employment. Determined to provide for herself and her son, Tyleena applied for assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) early in 2023. She was approved and entered the PATH program.

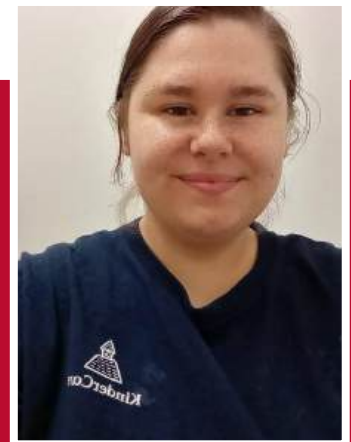
Although Tyleena participated diligently in the PATH program, she encountered a major hurdle: she needed childcare for her son before she could secure a job, but the program required her to have employment before providing childcare assistance. This catch-22 situation made her job search even more challenging.

Despite receiving coaching, attending workshops, and receiving mileage reimbursement through the PATH program, Tyleena was unable to find employment and

was eventually exited from the program. Undeterred, she sought assistance through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program on September 6, 2023, and continued her job search.

Working closely with her coach, Tyleena dedicated several hours to refining her resume. Without a computer at home, she relied on her flash drive and physical copies of her resume to apply for jobs. She attended individual and group activities through GST Michigan Works!, applied for numerous positions, and went on several interviews. However, securing childcare remained a significant obstacle.

Her coach suggested she follow up with the places she had interviewed, and Tyleena intensified her efforts. Finally, her perseverance paid off when she secured a full-time position at KinderCare as an assistant teacher. Remarkably, she could bring her son to work with her daily, resolving the childcare issue that had been such a barrier in her job search.



TWINS AND TRIUMPHS: A SINGLE MOM'S JOURNEY TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT



Tuscola Co. - Melonise came to the GST Michigan Works! Tuscola Co. Service Center in August of 2023 with dreams of leaving the small pizza place where she worked to become a truck driver. At the age of 27, Melonise had a lot of responsibilities as a single mother of twin toddlers. Her days were a whirlwind of diapers, playdates, and late shifts at the local pizza joint. Despite the demands of motherhood and her job, Melonise harbored a dream that seemed almost out of reach: she wanted to become a professional truck driver. GST Michigan Works! was more than happy to help Melonise achieve that goal. We were able to assist with paying tuition, gas reimbursement, and licensing fees when the time came.

The journey to this goal was far from simple. Melonise spent every spare moment studying for her Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Her determination was fueled by the desire to provide a better life for her children, one that went beyond the confines of her current job.

Passing the CDL exams was a significant milestone but

finding a job in the predominantly male-dominated trucking industry proved to be a formidable challenge. Melonise faced rejection, and her determination was tested repeatedly, as many trucking companies were hesitant to hire a young mother with limited experience.

Despite the obstacles, Melonise remained undeterred. Her relentless optimism and refusal to give up eventually led her to a unique opportunity. Saginaw Valley Seed Corn Producers hired Melonise immediately, needing a driver to transport workers to and from job sites. She finally found an employer willing to give her a chance.

Starting out, Melonise faced a steep learning curve. She had to navigate the complexities of transporting groups of workers and managing tight schedules while maintaining a positive and professional demeanor. Despite these challenges, Melonise's work ethic shone through. She arrived early, drove safely, and treated every worker with respect and kindness. Over time, Melonise proved her capabilities, earning the trust and respect of both the workers and her employer.

Today, Melonise continues to work full-time for Saginaw Valley Seed Corn Producers as a driver for workers. While she may not be driving an 18-wheeler, she is enjoying her newfound success. She is working full-time and provides stability for herself and her children. GST Michigan Works! is proud of you, Melonise, and can't wait to see where your future leads.

THE PATH TO TRUCKING

Sanilac Co. - Travis had worked in the construction field for many years, but he found himself at a dead end. He needed his CDL to advance his career, earn a higher wage, and open new opportunities. When Travis was laid off from A.Jax, he reached out to GST Michigan Works! in search of a new skill to better himself within the construction field.

On December 26, 2023, Travis began his training at Thumb CDL. With the support of GST Michigan Works!, which covered the cost of his training and reimbursed some related expenses, Travis breezed through his training program, completing it on March 2, 2024.

Immediately after finishing his training, Travis secured a full-time position with Ace-Saginaw Paving, earning almost \$12 more per hour! This significant advancement marks a major milestone in Travis' career journey. Together, we have paved the way for a brighter future for Travis.

CELEBRATE ENDINGS FOR THEY PRECEDE NEW BEGINNINGS

Genesee Co. - Patricia's first experience working with substance abuse clients was at a local substance abuse recovery center where she worked for three years as a Resident Advisor. Her engagement with the clients and seeing the positive work that was being done made her want to start her own company providing substance abuse counseling for women. In August of 2021, Patricia attended the Back-to-School outreach event at the University of Michigan-Flint and stopped at the GST Michigan Works! table. She spoke with Angel, a Career Coach, and inquired about the services GSTMW offered. She learned that GST had funding for short-term certificate programs and shared with GSTMW staff that she was looking to become a substance abuse counselor. To do so, she would need a certificate to work full-time, however did not have the money to go back to school. During this brief encounter, Patricia did not anticipate that this was the beginning of a vision coming true.

Within a month, Patricia was at GST Michigan Works! taking assessments and completing paperwork to receive funding for the Substance Abuse Certificate Program at Mott Community College. In January of 2022, Patricia started her first semester. GST MI Works! was able to pay for Patricia's books as well as provide a laptop for her schooling. Though the certificate program was supposed to take only one year, the classes Patricia needed were often cancelled due to low enrollment. Unfortunately, this delayed her progress. However, Patricia did not give up! She was informed in November of 2023 that her last class would be delayed until Winter of 2025, but she could not wait another year. Patricia knew she needed to advocate for herself, so she spoke with her advisor, and they were able to put her in another class to complete her program. On May 3, 2024, Patricia received her Substance Abuse Certificate from Mott Community College. Patricia was so elated and thankful, she visited GST MI Works! so her Career Coach could see her in her cap and gown.

While in school, Patricia purchased a 5-bedroom home and started an LLC. She is in the process of trying to obtain more funding to complete her own substance abuse recovery home for women. Her social worker colleagues are anxiously awaiting the completion as they are ready to

send clients to Patricia. Patricia boasted, **"GST Michigan Works! was always there when I needed them. There were never delays in my requests, specifically when I needed a laptop for class. At 27, I had a neurological disorder that caused me to be in a coma and I came out with short-term memory loss. This caused me to get on disability assistance, but I wanted a full life and a career. There was a time when my memory didn't work and now it does, and it allowed me to get an education so I can pursue my career goals."**



ELIZABETH'S JOURNEY TO A NEW CAREER

Tuscola Co. - Elizabeth faced a significant setback when she was permanently laid off from her position at Walbro on February 8, 2024, due to the elimination of her entire department. Earning \$49 per hour, she struggled to find new engineering jobs in her area and was bombarded with mailers and scam calls from various job sites.

Despite these challenges, Elizabeth's determination and resourcefulness led her to seek help. During a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program orientation, she was introduced to the statewide job search platform, MiTalent.org. Reflecting on this, Elizabeth shared, "By accessing Pure Mi Talent Connect, I was able to seek employment throughout the state without any spam calls. I never realized how much information was available on MiTalent."

Elizabeth's persistence paid off. On April 15, 2024, she secured a full-time position at General Dynamics as a System Test Engineer, with an increased hourly wage that she never thought possible! Elizabeth's story is a testament to the power of utilizing the resources right in front of you and never giving up in the face of adversity.

INTERPOWER INDUCTION HOSTS "YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PARTICIPANT"



Lapeer Co. - Interpower Induction, located in Almont, is a world leader in induction heating systems. Their systems are integral to various industries, including aerospace, automotive, heavy machinery, railroad, construction, technology, food and beverage, and medical devices.

In a recent partnership, Interpower Induction served as a host mentoring site for Robert, a participant in the "Young Professionals" program. Robert was eager to learn electronics and expand his career in the mechatronics program at Mott Community College. When an opportunity at Interpower Induction was introduced, Robert had no previous work experience in advanced manufacturing but had a strong desire to learn and explore employment opportunities related to his career goals in robotics and electronics.

GST Michigan Works! provided funding for 12 weeks, covering Robert's entire wages. This support enabled Interpower Induction to invest time in training and mentoring Robert, equipping him with the skills necessary to produce a quality and precise product.

Additionally, the Lapeer Family Literacy agency played a crucial role by assisting Robert in completing his GED and enrolling him in the "Jobs for Michigan Graduates" Young Professionals program, which helps youth aged 18-24 find meaningful work experiences.

One of the highlights of working with Interpower Induction is their commitment to mentoring the next generation of workers in advanced manufacturing. The most significant achievement is that Robert, who earned a generous hourly wage during his work experience, was offered and accepted full-time employment at the end of

his work experience. Robert's success aligns perfectly with our agency's goal of providing quality talent to employers and meaningful employment opportunities to job seekers.

"Working with GST Michigan Works! has been such a pleasant experience right from the beginning. Treva goes out of her way to communicate with me and make sure every question or concern is answered. Their partnership has provided us with the opportunity to work with Robert and it has been nothing short of amazing. We love what the program is doing for individuals, and we love the opportunity to support it and even benefit from it. We look forward to seeing where Robert's future takes him, and we are happy to be a part of it along the way!" Madison Gutierrez, Human Resources and Marketing Assistant Manager at Interpower Induction.



FROM HOME HEALTH AIDE TO CERTIFIED NURSE AIDE

Sanilac Co. - Ashley has always had a passion for helping others. Since 2016, she was dedicated to working as a home health aide, finding joy in caring for people and making a difference in their lives. However, Ashley dreamed of advancing in her career to better support her family and increase her earnings. She believed that becoming a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) would not only enhance her skills but also provide the financial stability she needed.

Ashley learned about GST Michigan Works! through social media and discovered that they could potentially help fund her CNA training. Determined to pursue this opportunity, she reached out to the Sanilac County Service Center and was thrilled to learn she was eligible for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This funding was a critical step towards achieving her goal.

In January 2024, Ashley began her CNA program at the Sanilac Career Center. GST Michigan Works! supported her throughout her journey, providing additional resources such as scrubs required for her classes and reimbursing her for mileage to ensure she could attend her training sessions. Ashley's dedication was evident in her hard work and determination. During one of her monthly check-ins with her Career Coach, she proudly shared her success in acing a challenging chapter, showcasing her commitment to her studies.

While still in training, Ashley proactively sought employment opportunities at medical facilities where she could apply her new skills as a CNA. Her efforts paid off. After four months of rigorous training and studying, Ashley completed her CNA program and earned her certification. She soon secured a full-time position at Stonegate Assisted Living, starting at \$2.00 higher per hour than her previous job as a home health aide!



CHECKING OUT TO THE MEDICAL FIELD

Sanilac Co. - Crystal, a determined single mother of four, was working as a manager and cashier at a local party store. Despite her hard work, she struggled to make ends meet and sought a better future for her family. Crystal aspired to become a Clinical Medical Assistant, hoping to gain the necessary skills and training for a more stable and rewarding career.

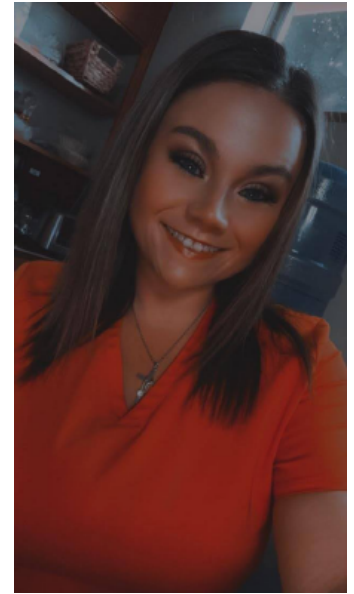
Her journey began when she approached the GST Michigan Works! staff in Sanilac County, seeking assistance to fund her training. During her visit, she learned about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program and was delighted to find out she was eligible for funding. This opportunity was the first step towards achieving her goal.

In February 2024, Crystal embarked on her new education journey, enrolling in the Clinical Medical Assistant certification program at the Sanilac Career Center. Balancing her responsibilities as a single mom and a student, Crystal demonstrated remarkable dedication and perseverance. Her hard work paid off when she completed

the course and passed her skills exam on May 14, 2024.

With her certification in hand, Crystal was determined to find a job that would provide financial stability and benefits for her family. Her efforts bore fruit quickly. On July 1, 2024, she started working full-time as a Medical Assistant at Aspire Rural Health Clinic in Deckerville. This new role not only provided her with a significant hourly wage increase of \$3.75 but also came with valuable benefits.

With the assistance of GST Michigan Works! and her unwavering commitment, she successfully transitioned from a store manager to a Medical Assistant, securing a better future for her family.



PUTTING FAMILY FIRST

Lapeer Co. - Ashley had spent two years working in the restaurant and food service industry. Despite her hard work and dedication, she found herself yearning for greater growth and employment opportunities. The healthcare sector, with its promise of stability and career advancement, began to catch her eye. Deciding to transition into healthcare was not easy, especially given her role as the sole provider for her family. However, the potential for a more secure and fulfilling future made the challenge worthwhile.

Determined to pursue a career in nursing, Ashley faced the daunting task of balancing full-time studies with part-time work. Financial strains were ever-present, but she sought assistance through a grant from GST Michigan Works!. She vividly recalls the tough times, juggling her responsibilities while attending school and caring for her family.

With great determination, Ashley enrolled in Mott Community College's nursing program. Despite the hurdles, her commitment to her family and her future

kept her motivated. The relentless effort paid off when she earned her Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN).

Upon completion of her program, Ashley transitioned from relying on tips to enjoying the security of a higher hourly wage! She is so glad she put in the work! The healthcare field, especially nursing, opened doors she had never imagined. Both the restaurant and healthcare industries are in demand, but nursing offered her unprecedented opportunities for professional and personal growth. Balancing work, studies, and single parenthood was incredibly challenging. Yet, Ashley's family was her inspiration and driving force. Their support and her unwavering resolve led her to a rewarding career where the sacrifices proved to be worth it. Her journey from the restaurant industry to a promising career in nursing stands as a testament to her perseverance and dedication.



JOURNEY TO A NEW CAREER IN THE MEDICAL FIELD

Huron Co. - Jessica, a devoted single mother, was determined to enhance her career prospects and provide a better future for herself and her child. With a strong desire to transition into a full-time role in the medical field, she sought assistance to make this goal a reality. Her previous job as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) paid between \$15.15 and \$15.35 per hour, but she aspired to advance in her career and improve her financial stability.

In early 2023, Jessica applied for support through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. Recognizing her commitment and potential, the program provided essential assistance for her journey. This support included funding for tuition, scrubs, shoes, mileage to her training site, and the cost of the Phlebotomy Exam. This comprehensive aid allowed Jessica to concentrate on her studies without the burden of financial constraints. Jessica embarked on her Phlebotomy training at Mid-Michigan Community College

from June 12 - August 10, 2023. Throughout her training, she exhibited remarkable dedication and determination. On November 28, 2023, she completed her Phlebotomy Technician Certification.

Armed with her new certification, Jessica began her new career path. By April 11, 2024, she had secured positions as a Rehab Aide/Clerk Aide and a Secretary. She also received a significant raise in pay. This advancement not only improved her earnings but also provided her with greater career opportunities and job satisfaction.

Jessica's journey exemplifies how targeted support and training can lead to significant career and financial improvements. Her success story highlights the positive impact of career development programs and the difference they can make in individuals' lives. Special thanks to Mid-Michigan Community College for their role in Jessica's training and certification.

THE POWER OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Huron Co. - McKenzie began her journey with a solid foundation as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). With just four semesters remaining to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, she faced the dual challenge of managing tuition and preparing for state testing. Determined to achieve her goals, McKenzie turned to SVSU while managing independent living at just 21 years old. Her dedication was evident through her frequent appearance on the Dean's List and her ability to secure employment before graduation.

In March 2023, McKenzie attended a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) orientation, which marked the beginning of a transformative chapter. McKenzie faced significant challenges, including financial constraints that led her to juggle three jobs to afford her tuition. Despite these obstacles, she maintained her focus on her studies. GST Michigan Works! supported her with a targeted scholarship (MiREACH) for students pursuing medical degrees in a rural area, helping to alleviate her financial burden. By December, she proudly graduated with her bachelor's degree in nursing and passed the NCLEX exam just two months later.

McKenzie's hard work paid off when she applied for and accepted a graduate nurse position. As a registered nurse working 36 hours a week, she now enjoys a great salary with benefits. Her success story is a testament to her relentless commitment to learning and personal growth.

Reflecting on her journey, McKenzie shares, "I am very thankful to my career coach for providing me with the tools to finish my education and obtain a position in my dream career. I plan to further my education and become a paramedic in the next 2 years. GST Michigan Works! was most helpful for me because they reviewed my lifestyle and suggested solutions specific to me."

COINCIDENCE OR DESTINY?

Lapeer Co. - When Haymet registered for work at GST Michigan Works! in Lapeer while receiving unemployment benefits, she had no idea how pivotal this step would be for her future. Originally from the Dominican Republic, Haymet built her professional life in New York, working in a clerical office occupation. Her life took a turn when she moved to Missouri, where she met the love of her life and started a family.

Life seemed perfect until her husband received an employment opportunity in Michigan. He didn't hesitate to accept, and despite the disruption to her career, Haymet prioritized her husband's opportunity and the family moved to Michigan.

In Michigan, Haymet faced unexpected challenges. Although she was independent and willing to take on any job, she yearned to return to her clerical office work. She took on jobs as a school bus driver and lift truck driver, but these were temporary roles, and she eventually found herself collecting unemployment benefits. This was her first interaction with GST Michigan Works!, where she attended workshops and an orientation for the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program.

These services reignited her motivation. Despite her initial hesitation, she decided to pursue CNA training—a field different from her previous experience but one that excited her with the prospect of helping others. Haymet excelled in her program, becoming an outstanding student and participant in the WIOA program. She began her career as a CNA with great enthusiasm, working third shift and 50-hour weeks. Though challenging, she quickly adapted and found fulfillment in her new role.

Not long after, an employment opportunity at GST Michigan Works! arose, requiring a bilingual candidate fluent in English and Spanish. Haymet was hesitant at first; she had grown attached to her CNA role, her patients, and her coworkers. However, after some introspection, she realized that this opportunity could bring her back to her long-awaited clerical office occupation.

Today, Haymet is a proud and grateful member of the GST Michigan Works! family. Her story illustrates that what may seem like mere coincidences are often signs of destiny—we just need to be attentive to see them.



A JOURNEY OF DETERMINATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Genesee Co. - Adrian embarked on a transformative journey in January 2023 when she joined the WIOA Program and Jobs for Michigan's Graduates. Despite facing challenges, Adrian's determined spirit and the support she received paved the way for remarkable achievements. Upon enrollment, Adrian dedicated herself to her education at Job Corps, pursuing her High School Diploma and a certificate in Office Administration. Her commitment to learning was unwavering, and she excelled in her studies, setting a solid foundation for her future.

Understanding the importance of practical experience, Adrian seized the opportunity to participate in a work experience program. Serving as a receptionist, she acquired invaluable soft and hard skills, gaining hands-on experience in office administration and customer service.

Throughout her journey, Adrian was guided by her Career Coach, Rosie, whose consistent support and mentorship played a crucial role in her success. Rosie's encouragement and guidance empowered Adrian to overcome obstacles and stay focused on her goals. The assistance provided by the WIOA program was instrumental in Adrian's journey, from funding for technology to essential clothing, auto repairs, and supportive service assistance needed for her employment. The program ensured Adrian had the resources necessary to thrive in her educational and professional pursuits.

Adrian's hard work and dedication paid off as she graduated from Job Corps with flying colors, equipped with both academic qualifications and practical skills. Armed with a High School Diploma and a certificate in Office Administration, Adrian was ready to take on the next chapter of her life. Entering the job market with confidence, she secured a full-time position in Customer Service at Home Depot.

As Adrian continues to pursue her dreams and make strides in her career, her story reminds us that with hard work, support, and determination, anything is possible. Adrian's journey is a testament to the transformative impact of education, mentorship, and perseverance, inspiring others to reach for their aspirations and pursue success against all odds.





JOBS *for* MICHIGAN'S GRADUATES

CONGRATULATIONS! JMG AWARDS

The GST Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program had a phenomenal year in PY23. We served over **600 youth** across **11 sites, now reaching all six GST counties**. The team was recognized at the Youth Solutions Summer Summit conference in July, winning several awards. These awards include:



- ★ *7 JMG Specialists achieved 6-of-6 on their individual case loads*
- ★ *Regional 6-of-6 for Multi-Year (In School) programs*
- ★ *Regional 6-of-6 for Out of School programs*
- ★ *Outstanding Manager of the Year – Angela Libkie*
- ★ *Outstanding Specialist of the Year – Katie Chrismer*
- ★ *Living our Values: Leadership – Sabrina Plamondon*
- ★ *Living our Values: Solutions Focused – Nicole Medellin*
- ★ *JAG Force Jedis – GST region*
- ★ *Program Introduction Video – GST region*
- ★ *JAG Bowl trivia – GST region*





Student SUCCESS STORIES

KENYETTA SUCCESS STORY



Kenyetta Jones is an Out-of-School Youth participant from the Greater Flint Health Coalition's Flint Healthcare Employment Opportunities (FHEO) program, a GST Michigan Works! service provider. Prior to joining the FHEO Program, Kenyetta was employed as a packer with a local manufacturing company. Kenyetta shared that she has always wanted to pursue a healthcare career because she enjoys helping those in need.

Before healthcare training, Kenyetta completed 120 hours of Life Skills and Healthcare Career Exploration training

hosted by Flint Strive. Kenyetta shared that this training changed her life and gave her the opportunity to focus on her long-term career goals. Kenyetta said that Flint Stive taught her job seeking skills like interview etiquette, punctuality, and resume writing. In January 2024, Kenyetta began certified nurse assistant training at Charter Healthcare Training Center. The FHEO Program provided financial support for Kenyetta's tuition, textbooks, and required supplies. Kenyetta experienced a personal setback during the last week of training and had to postpone the completion of training. However, Kenyetta did not let this obstacle deter her from reaching her goals. While waiting to complete training, Kenyetta participated in a subsidized employment opportunity at McLaren Flint as a housekeeper. This opportunity allowed Kenyetta to network and showcase her workplace skills while providing sanitation services.

In April 2024, Kenyetta completed her certified nurse assistant training and her subsidized employment opportunity. She transitioned from the housekeeper position to a nurse assistant with McLaren Flint and is enjoying her new career.

Kenyetta states that,

Working at the hospital has been a wonderful experience and I love McLaren Flint."



MEET GST'S AUGUST EMPLOYER SHOWCASE:



WWW.GREATLAKESFUSION.COM



SCAN OR VISIT GSTMIWORKS.ORG/SHOWCASE
TO WATCH ALL EMPLOYER SHOWCASE VIDEOS

EMPLOYER SUCCESS STORIES

JOSH'S FROGS

A UNIQUE BUSINESS REQUIRES **UNIQUE** **TRAINING!**



Shiawassee Co. - When you have job titles like Arachnid Keeper, Isopod Technician, Amphibian Keeper, and Microfauna Technician, you have a unique enterprise! This is Josh's Frogs. Here they breed and raise dart frogs, hissing roaches, lizards, and other terrarium type animals and plants. Due to the specialized "nature" of their business, not many new hires have all the required knowledge and skills to be totally proficient at their jobs. This is where the training opportunities offered through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act On-the-Job-Training (OJT) program help. GST Michigan Works! along with the staff at Josh's Frogs were able to build customized training plans for new employees in several departments. These plans helped to get them the additional skills to be able to perform at the level needed to be a contributing team member. GST Michigan Works! was able to award \$5,400 in OJT funds.

"The OJT program has become a fundamental part of our onboarding at Josh's Frogs. It has helped our new hires have a positive experience acclimating to their new jobs and overcoming obstacles that may have hindered their success at previous employers. We are grateful for this program and consider it a key component of a positive onboarding experience!" shared Alyssa Rahman, VP of Human Resources at Josh's Frogs.

INDIAN TRAILS

Shiawassee Co. - For over 100 years, Indian Trails Motor Coaches has been a staple in Owosso. The company is always striving to be the best by offering state-of-the-art buses and exceptional customer service. As new drivers enter the profession, the need for training in the customer service area is addressed. Indian Trails turned to GST Michigan Works! to help customize training plans for their new drivers. GST was able to assist, and Indian Trails was awarded \$4,320 in OJT funds to help qualified hires receive the needed training.

DRIVING TO BE THE BEST!



We are truly grateful for the On-the-Job Training funds. **They have been a lifeline for our business, allowing us to grow and hire new drivers** without the burden of excessive training costs."

- **Jennifer Freman**, HR Generalist at Indian Trails, Inc.

THUMB PLASTICS

THUMB PLASTICS UPSKILLS WITH GOING PRO TALENT FUND AWARD



Huron Co. - The announcement of the Going PRO Talent Fund applications brought a wave of excitement! Recognizing the opportunity, GST Michigan Works! Huron County Business Solutions Professional scheduled a meeting with Jade at Thumb Plastics to discuss her training needs for the upcoming year. Jade had a clear vision for 2023. She highlighted the need for courses in Leadership, Problem Solving, Design, Electrical, and more. She believed this training would significantly enhance her employees' performance. Additionally, she mentioned an apprentice who was in the final stages of his On-the-Job Training (OJT) program.

As we delved deeper into Jade's requirements, it became evident that a Going PRO Talent Fund Grant would be the perfect solution to fund the desired training programs. We guided Jade through the application process, and Thumb Plastics was awarded the grant!

With the grant secured, four employees at Thumb Plastics embarked on a journey of professional growth. They earned Certificates of Completion in various specialized training courses: Building Better Work Relationships, Component Repair, Introduction to Design of Experiments, Advanced Problem Solving: Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt, and Finance for the Non-Financial Manager.

These training programs were more than just certifications. They were pivotal in making the employees more efficient and enhancing their understanding of various facets of their jobs. With better-trained employees, Thumb Plastics anticipated a ripple effect of positive change. The newly acquired skills would be shared among colleagues, fostering a more collaborative and knowledgeable work environment. This, in turn, was expected to lead to increased quality, productivity, and employee retention.

Despite the challenge of managing short-staffed shifts during training periods, the long-term benefits were undeniable. The temporary absence of employees was a small price to pay for the wealth of knowledge and skills they brought back to the company. The investment in training not only promised a brighter future for the employees but also paved the way for Thumb Plastics to thrive with a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

GPTF SUPPORTS VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS

VETCON

Genesee Co. - VetCon's journey is a testament to the power of determination and strategic planning. Since its inception in 2014, this Veteran-owned small business has continuously aimed for excellence in the construction service industry. With a portfolio that includes general contractor services, licensed electrical work, and overhead/garage door installations, Vetcon has established itself as a reliable partner statewide.

One of the key strategies that Vetcon has embraced is utilizing available resources to enhance its workforce. Year after year, Vetcon has seized the opportunity to apply for Going PRO Talent Funds (GPTF). These funds have not only proven to be instrumental in the retention of employees within their apprenticeship programs but have also alleviated the financial burden associated with schooling and training.

In the most recent success story, Vetcon doubled down on its commitment to workforce development. With a clear focus on training, they prioritized the enhancement of their Electrical Apprenticeship program. By partnering with institutions like Mott Community College and Michigan State University, Vetcon ensured that their apprentices received top-notch classroom education, fully funded through Going PRO.

Moreover, VetCon's dedication to excellence extended to its hiring process. Recognizing the importance of skilled professionals, they brought two new Journeyman hires on board. The cost associated with training these new hires was significantly offset through the Going PRO funds, thereby ensuring a smooth transition into the workforce.

But Vetcon didn't stop there! Understanding that effective project management is crucial for success, they sought approval for project manager training through GPTF. This strategic move not only enhanced the capabilities of their existing workforce but also paved the way for future growth and success.

Vetcon was awarded \$39,500 for training initiatives. This financial support not only validates their efforts but also

serves as a testament to their potential for continued growth and impact within the construction industry. Vetcon was able to capture a total of \$21,000 of their FY23 Cycle 2 Going PRO Award.

Through strategic utilization of resources, unwavering dedication to workforce development, and a commitment to excellence, Vetcon has solidified its position as a leader in the construction service industry. As they continue to grow and innovate, their success story serves as an inspiration for aspiring businesses and a testament to the limitless possibilities that lie ahead with the right approach and determination.



ASPIRE



ASPIRING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Tuscola Co. - In January 2024, Hills & Dales General Hospital rebranded itself as "Aspire" following a significant merger with Marlette Community Hospital, The Heartlands Senior Living Center, and Deckerville Community Hospital. This strategic move positioned Aspire as a more formidable entity in the regional healthcare landscape, expanding its reach and services.

Aspire is committed to fostering career growth within the healthcare industry, as evidenced by its Surgical Tech Apprenticeship program, which is approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and awarded On-the-Job Training through the Going PRO Talent Fund. The program currently offers two positions, both of which have recently been filled by apprentices who completed their training. These graduates have now embarked on new career paths, making room for two additional apprentices to join the program.

The success of this initiative has prompted Aspire to request an additional USDOL-approved apprenticeship slot, increasing their Surgical Tech positions to three. This expansion reflects Aspire's dedication to developing skilled healthcare professionals and its ongoing investment in the community's workforce.

OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OJT's HELP OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Shiawassee Co. - As public school funding is decreasing due to declining enrollments, every training dollar helps. Owosso Public Schools, the largest district in Shiawassee County, is always looking for ways to help train their staff, and new hires are no exception. Several of the non-teaching staff needed some additional specialized training to be proficient in their new positions. GST Michigan Works! was able to assist with those needs using \$3,732 in On-the-Job-Training funds to help train two administrative hires. The individualized training plans helped get them ready for their new positions in the school system.

The training provided through GST Michigan Works! has been instrumental in equipping our new hires with the necessary skills, knowledge, and tools to excel in their roles. We highly recommend the On-the-Job Training program to any organization looking to invest in their workforce and achieve **outstanding results.** GST Michigan Works! has truly made a positive impact on our district,"

shared Carrie Yoho, Human Resources Director at Owosso Public Schools.

LACADA

SUPPORTING NON-PROFITS: BUILDING CAREERS AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES



Lapeer Co. - Navigating a career in the human services field can be daunting, especially for those new to the world of work. This challenge is compounded for non-profits, which must fill positions in a competitive job market. The Lapeer Emergency Shelter, LACADA, which provides advocacy and support services to

survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, is one such organization making a difference.

For many young individuals, finding the right opportunities for career exploration can be difficult. The “Young Professionals” program aims to bridge this gap by connecting participants with host sites that match their career interests. These organizations offer a mentoring environment where participants can learn the skills necessary to become valuable employees.

One such success story is Jayden, a participant who joined LACADA to explore a career in human services. From the beginning, Jayden displayed a natural talent and passion for working with LACADA’s clients, offering much-needed support and care. Her dedication and aptitude did not go unnoticed, and her experience with LACADA has been overwhelmingly positive for her and the organization.

Jayden's journey began with the support of the Lapeer Family Literacy Center, which helped her complete her GED and enroll in the “Young Professionals” program. Through this program, she gained hands-on experience and developed skills that have made her an asset to LACADA. As a result, there is now the possibility of her transitioning to full-time employment with the organization once her work experience program concludes.

Jayden plans to continue her education in the fall, and if that does not interfere with her work schedule, she will remain with LACADA as an employee. This opportunity not only benefits Jayden but also demonstrates the potential for non-profits to be viable employers who provide meaningful work experiences.



NILES INDUSTRIAL COATINGS

Genesee Co. - We are delighted to share the success of our recent hiring event with Niles Industrial Coatings! The event was held on May 22nd and attracted 30 enthusiastic candidates eager to explore new career opportunities.

The Niles Team expressed their satisfaction with the event, and we were thrilled to share in their excitement! Thank you to everyone who participated and made this event a success.



FENTON W&B

CONNECTING TALENT WITH OPPORTUNITY AT FENTON WINERY & BREWERY

Genesee Co. - On April 1st, Fenton BSP, Roy, received an email from a fellow Fenton & Linden Chamber member looking for a work experience for his daughter, Morgan, while home from college for the summer.

Roy promptly connected with Morgan to understand her internship needs and aspirations. Although he wasn't aware of any immediate openings in her field, he assured her that he would pass along her resume to potential employers.

On April 16th, Roy visited Ginny Sherrow, the owner of Fenton Winery and Brewery, for a routine check-in. During their conversation, Ginny mentioned that their Marketing Manager had recently left, leaving a significant void during a busy season. Recognizing an opportunity, Roy shared Morgan's background and interest in a summer internship. Ginny was intrigued by Morgan's qualifications and her previous restaurant experience, making her a promising candidate for the Marketing Internship.

Roy sent Morgan's resume to Ginny and by May 10th, both Morgan and her father reached out to Roy with exciting news: Morgan had interviewed with Ginny and was hired for the Marketing Internship at Fenton W&B for the summer!



I found working with Roy and GST Michigan Works! to be immensely helpful in my search for a summer internship. Roy connected me with Fenton Winery and Brewery, a business in my hometown that I hadn't considered in my search. ***The Brand Ambassador Internship at FW&B has been a great learning experience and I feel it has prepared me to be a stronger candidate when I enter the workforce.*** The entire staff has been extremely welcoming and helpful, and I'm so glad I get to be a part of this community, even for just a summer. Beyond the initial connection, Roy and GST Michigan Works! have expressed continued interest in my career aspirations, further showing their dedication to helping me get where I want to go. I look forward to working with them more over the years. ***I can't recommend GST Michigan Works! enough!***

- Morgan

VETS ACCESS LLC'S COMMITMENT TO VETERAN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

VETS ACCESS, LLC

Genesee Co. - Founded in 2005, Vets Access, LLC is a proud Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) dedicated to providing specialized medical equipment and comprehensive services to veterans across the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam. As project management specialists, Vets Access, LLC supports its clients from start to finish, ensuring that every veteran receives the best and most appropriate products and services. With deep respect for those who serve or have served, Vets Access is committed to overcoming the unique challenges faced by veterans through tailored support and dedicated service.

Amid its broad mission of supporting veterans, Vets Access recognized a growing need for skilled labor in the construction industry, particularly in residential carpentry. Many veterans and other employees were struggling to find quality training programs that not only equipped them with job-ready skills but also respected their military background and unique experiences. Addressing this skills gap was essential for empowering veterans and others in facilitating their successful transition into the workforce.

To tackle this challenge, Vets Access, LLC collaborated with GST Michigan Works! to launch a pioneer hybrid apprenticeship program for Residential Carpenter Specialists. Led by Chris Emmons, the program director at Vets Access, LLC, this initiative harnessed the expertise of GST Michigan Works! to develop and fund a robust training program specifically designed for veterans' unique needs.

The Hybrid Apprenticeship Program creatively combines hands-on training with classroom instruction, providing three apprentices with the opportunity to develop essential carpentry skills in a supportive learning environment. This innovative approach ensures that the training is comprehensive, fostering both technical



proficiency and personal growth. The curriculum is tailored to meet industry demands while also addressing the unique challenges faced by participants.

The funding provided by GST Michigan Works! is a vital part of the program's success. With the help of a \$6,000 MiSTAIRS Grant, Vets Access, LLC was able to train these three employees on the job without putting a financial burden on them. This invaluable support allowed the organization to focus on delivering high-quality training that meets the participants' needs. Furthermore, GST Michigan Works! provided \$4,947.24 for the in-class instruction.

At the heart of this success story are the three apprentices participating in the Residential Carpenter Specialist program, along with Chris Emmons of Vets Access, LLC. Chris' dedication to empowering others is reflected in his commitment to developing meaningful training opportunities that truly benefit those who have served.

Throughout this apprenticeship, the participants actively engage in practical carpentry projects alongside seasoned professionals, gaining hands-on experience that equips them with valuable industry skills. This unique program not only builds carpentry expertise but also fosters a sense of community among employees, reinforcing their connection to one another as they learn and grow together.

The Hybrid Apprenticeship Program launched in early 2024, with structured training sessions held weekly. The enthusiastic response from the apprentices indicates that the program is effectively meeting its goals and providing meaningful training that prepares them for successful careers in carpentry.

Training takes place at Vets Access LLC's facility in Flushing, Michigan. This central location ensures accessibility for veterans and other staff in the surrounding communities, creating an inclusive environment focused on learning and growth.

The success of this apprenticeship program is crucial for several reasons. It not only addresses the immediate skills

gap in the carpentry sector but also plays a vital role in helping individuals regain their independence and find meaningful employment. By equipping these individuals with marketable skills, Vets Access contributes to their overall well-being and enhances their quality of life.

Through the strategic partnership with GST Michigan Works! and the funding provided, Vets Access has been able to create a successful framework for the apprenticeship program. This collaboration exemplifies how targeted interventions can lead to significant outcomes, positively impacting the lives of those who seek to build a brighter future.



MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE

EXPANSION LEADS TO MORE TRAINING!

Shiawassee Co. - Memorial Healthcare, the largest employer in Shiawassee County, is expanding. This continued growth leads to increased hiring, which at times requires further training for these new team members. One of the training sources is the On-the-Job Training (OJT) using WIOA funds. During the 2023-24 fiscal year, Memorial used \$10,418 to help five qualifying individuals increase their skill set through individualized training plans to better perform their new job. These positions included Dietary, Medical Office Administration, and Medical Assistant. The hospital is proud to partner with GST Michigan Works! to be able to offer this

opportunity to their new employees.

"Memorial's participation in the OJT program has been very beneficial for the organization and for incoming new team members. The program has assisted incoming new hires to prepare for their new job by helping with the costs of taking on a new job. Additionally, the organization has benefitted by helping to offset some of the training costs for these individuals. The program has been an all-around positive and we look forward to continuing to participate in the future!" Doug Taylor, Director of Talent Management.



LJ INC.

Genesee Co. - GST Michigan Works! was connected to LJ Inc. through our partnership with the Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance. LJ Inc. worked directly with an outside employment group to complete their Going PRO fact-finding, training plan, and application. After receiving a FY23 Cycle 1 Going PRO award of \$77,500.00, GST connected directly with Laura Slieff, President, and Andrea Chapman, HR Administrator. During our meeting to discuss the award guidelines and expected outcomes, it was evident that a major modification would need to be completed for LJ Inc.'s award. Through a more thorough discussion, it became apparent that there were some misunderstandings about the Going PRO Talent Fund and program expectations.

However, by developing a strong relationship with Laura and Andrea, we were able to make the necessary modifications and changes to meet LJ's needs within the required rules of the program. We wanted to ensure that LJ Inc. could recapture some of the Going PRO Award and not simply rescind the entire amount.

Modifications to the award included removing the apprentices from the training plan. Apprentices on the Going PRO Talent Fund must be USDOL Registered Apprenticeships. Even though LJ Inc. has a successful

apprenticeship program in place, it is a State of Michigan apprenticeship program and not a United States Department of Labor program. We also removed a few courses and replaced them with other eligible training courses LJ Inc. needs for their current and incoming employees.

By modifying, LJ Inc. was able to recapture a total reimbursement of \$19,726.00 of their FY23 Cycle 1 Going PRO award. While it's not close to the original awarded amount, it was enough to alleviate some of the cost of the training that LJ Inc. invested in their employees.

As with any first-time Going PRO Talent Fund awardee, open conversations can have a dramatic impact on the employer and employees involved in the training process. LJ Inc. was so happy with the modifications and explanations of how to have an effective award, they applied again for FY24 Cycle 2 and are anxiously awaiting the final results. Let's hope they are awarded and can use the requested amount of \$37,100.

UPDATE: LJ INC. WAS AWARDED THE REQUESTED AMOUNT OF \$37,100 FOR FY24 CYCLE 2!

AUTOKINITON

AUTOKINITON AND GST MICHIGAN WORKS! PARTNER TO DEVELOP A SKILLED WORKFORCE



Huron Co. - Autokiniton, a leading North American manufacturer of structural components and assemblies for automotive manufacturers, faced a significant challenge: finding skilled Electricians, Maintenance Technicians, and Tool & Die Journeymen in their rural area. Recognizing the need for these roles, Autokiniton took proactive steps to address this gap by developing an apprenticeship program.

To ensure comprehensive training, Autokiniton established USDOL Registered Apprenticeships in each of these fields and partnered with Delta College for the classroom portion of the training. This partnership ensured that apprentices received high-quality education tailored to their specific needs.

To further support their apprenticeship program, Autokiniton collaborated with GST Michigan Works! who assisted by providing WorkKeys testing. This testing was used to screen new apprentices, ensuring that only candidates with the right skills and aptitude were selected. During a fact-finding mission, it was determined that the Going PRO Talent Fund would be an excellent resource to help fund the apprentices' training.

In 2023, Autokiniton applied for and received a Going PRO Talent Fund Grant. This grant enabled the company to support 16 current apprentices with both classroom and On-the-Job Training (OJT). The breakdown of these

apprentices included seven Electricians, three Maintenance Technicians, and six Tool & Die Apprentices. Additionally, the grant facilitated the hiring of two new Maintenance Technicians and one new Electrical Apprentice.

As a result, a total of 19 apprentices attended the necessary classes to advance on their path towards achieving their Journeyman Card. The training has been transformational for the employees, allowing them to expand their knowledge, increase their wages, and acquire skills crucial for earning their Journeyman Card.

The success of this initiative is evident in the positive impact on both the employees and the company. Skilled employees are now better equipped to contribute to Autokiniton's mission of being a leading provider of automotive parts. Despite the challenges of finding qualified employees who can balance classroom training and work schedules, the collaboration between Autokiniton, GST Michigan Works!, and Delta College proved to be a winning strategy.

This success story highlights the importance of strategic partnerships and targeted funding to address skill gaps in the workforce, ensuring the continued growth and success of both employees and employers.

SUNNY PATCH EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Genesee Co. - Sunny Patch Early Learning Center has exemplified a successful partnership with GST Michigan Works! leveraging a suite of programs to enhance their growth and development initiatives.

Through the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC), Sunny Patch Early Learning Center identified a perfect fit for their team—a teacher assistant whose values aligned seamlessly with their organizational culture. PMTC, a robust online platform, facilitates matches by enabling employers to pinpoint talent based on specific business needs. With support from GST Michigan Works!, Sunny Patch Learning Center was not only able to streamline the recruitment process but also received crucial funding and training assistance essential for integrating new hires effectively.

Upon identifying their ideal candidate, Sunny Patch Early Learning Center swiftly capitalized on GST Michigan Works! On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. This initiative proved instrumental in onboarding new talent, despite an initial lack of experience. The program's reimbursement structure alleviated the financial burden typically associated with training, enabling Sunny Patch to invest in their new employee's development without hesitation. By nurturing this individual from a novice to a proficient team

member, Sunny Patch not only secured vital talent but also fostered a sustainable employment opportunity.

Sunny Patch Early Learning Center then extended its commitment to workforce development by establishing a Registered DOL Apprenticeship program. GST Michigan Works! apprenticeship liaisons guided this initiative bolstering their ability to offer structured learning pathways, ensuring continuous skill development and career advancement opportunities within the organization. This proactive approach not only enhances employee retention but also reinforces Sunny Patch's reputation as a nurturing and growth-oriented employer within the community.

Sunny Patch Early Learning Center's partnership with GST Michigan Works! has yielded significant benefits. From efficient recruitment through the PMTC, comprehensive onboarding via the OJT program, and creating structured apprenticeships. By embracing these resources, Sunny Patch not only met their staffing needs but also contributed to local workforce development, embodying a model of success in education and employment. This collaborative effort underscores the transformative impact of strategic partnerships in fostering organizational growth and community prosperity.



HARBOR BEACH COMM. HOSPITAL

GSTMW SUPPORTS SURGICAL TECHNICIAN APPRENTICESHIP THROUGH GPTF



Huron Co. - Harbor Beach Community Hospital faced a significant challenge in filling its Certified Surgical Technologist opening. Leanne, an employee in the Surgical Department, was eager to assist with surgeries but lacked the necessary certification.

Recognizing this as a potential apprenticeship opportunity, GST Michigan Works! Apprenticeship Manager reached out to Tina at Harbor Beach Community Hospital. Together, they worked on establishing an apprenticeship program tailored to their needs. Additionally, discussions about the Going PRO Talent Funding led Tina to apply for a grant, which was successfully awarded for Cycle 1 of 2023. As a result, Harbor Beach Community Hospital received \$3,500 from the Going PRO Talent Fund for 2023.

The support from GST's Apprenticeship Manager was crucial in setting up the Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship Program, which gained approval on January 25, 2023. Leanne began her training shortly after, on February 3, 2023, and completed her Surgical Technologist Certification through MedCerts on November 11, 2023. She is now actively assisting with surgeries!

The funding received for this training was a game-changer for Leanne. It allowed her to pursue certification while continuing her work at the hospital. This accomplishment not only advanced her career, elevating her to a higher position with better pay but also equipped her with valuable skills that she can continue to develop.

FLINT ODYSSEY HOUSE



GPTF HELPS SUPPORT WHOLE PERSON HEALING

Genesee Co. - Flint Odyssey House has 26 recovery housing units certified by the Michigan Association of Recovery Residences, Inc. (MARR) located in Flint, Saginaw, and Port Huron. They provide a variety of services including, but not limited to, medically monitored withdrawal management, medication-assisted treatment, high and low-intensity residential, intensive outpatient, outpatient, and various substance use and co-occurring disorders including opioid use disorders, stimulant use disorders, and various substance use disorders.

Flint Odyssey House was awarded \$100,190.00 in Going PRO FY23 Cycle 1 to train incumbent staff in Behavioral Health Equity Leadership, American Society of Addiction Medicine Interactive Journaling, and Health Equity Grounded Population Health. This training allows the staff to provide overall health care for each patient, which is critical in treating substance disorders.

Using the Going PRO FY23 award, Flint Odyssey House trained 97 incumbent workers in Health Equity Leadership and 11 incumbent workers in Grounded Population Health. They were able to receive a reimbursement of \$62,895.00. "FOH leadership increased their knowledge of fiscal sustainability tools and population health metrics. FOH staff increased their self-knowledge related to the intersectionality of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Both directors and staff function as interdisciplinary teams, the health equity grounded leadership training increased knowledge of organizational culture, cultural competence, cultural humility, and substance use disorder health-related disparities," stated Ronnie Tyson, Director of Programs Outpatient.

GST Michigan Works! cares deeply for our local communities and we are proud to be able to work with an organization such as Flint Odyssey House. FOH works very hard to care for the whole person when treating substance disorders to ensure each person has a successful and positive outcome.



S&S FAMILY CHILDCARE CENTER

GPTF SUPPORTS CHILD DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Huron Co. - S & S Family Childcare Center, located in the heart of Bad Axe, is dedicated to nurturing and educating children ages 0-12. With a comprehensive range of services, including preschool, Latchkey programs, and daycare, the center has been a cornerstone of early childhood education in the community. However, like many employers in the childcare industry, S & S Family Childcare Center faced a significant challenge: finding qualified individuals to care for and educate the children.

Recognizing the importance of having well-trained staff, Sarah, the Center Director, explored opportunities to enhance the qualifications of her current employees. Together, we identified the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential training as a valuable program that covers essential aspects such as establishing a safe and healthy learning environment and understanding the principles of child development and learning.

To make this training accessible, we discussed applying for the Going PRO Talent Fund Grant. The GST Michigan Works! Business Solutions Professional guided Sarah through the application process, and her diligent efforts paid off when she was awarded the grant! This funding enabled two of the center's employees to attend the CDA training locally at the Huron Area Technical Center.

The two employees completed their training and earned their CDA Credentials. This achievement has significantly enhanced their ability to plan and implement activities that support the children's intellectual and social development. Due to the seasonal availability of the class, which is only offered in the Fall, we could not train as many employees as initially planned. However, the success of the two employees who completed the program has set a positive precedent and demonstrated the value of continuous professional development.

EMPOWERING THE FUTURE AT MEMORIAL CHILDCARE ACADEMY

Shiawassee Co. - Since its establishment, Memorial Childcare Academy in Owosso has been dedicated to supporting families in nurturing and educating their children. As a premier childcare provider, Memorial Childcare Academy offers services for children from infancy through age 12, with a mission to work alongside parents to prepare their children for success. Under the leadership of Executive Director Adam Grass, the academy takes a holistic approach to child development, helping parents set benchmarks for their children's growth both in class and at home.

With the growing demand for quality childcare services in the community, Memorial Childcare Academy saw an opportunity to enhance its offerings by developing a skilled workforce of Childcare Development Specialists. However, the challenge lay in finding and training qualified individuals who could meet the academy's high standards and effectively support the diverse learning needs of its students.

To overcome this challenge, Memorial Childcare Academy partnered with GST Michigan Works! to launch a new apprenticeship program for Childcare Development Specialists. Utilizing the Business Solutions Professionals (BSP) philosophy, GST Michigan Works! connected the academy with the necessary resources and funding to

establish a robust training program. This collaboration exemplified the commitment to workforce development and the importance of community engagement in addressing local challenges.

The apprenticeship program at Memorial Childcare Academy is designed to provide hands-on training and mentorship for seven apprentices, equipping them with the skills needed to deliver high-quality childcare. The academy received substantial funding from GST Michigan Works! totaling \$36,630.00, which included \$4,900.00 for mentors, \$12,180.00 for apprentice support, \$1,000.00 for starting the new apprenticeship program, and \$18,450.00 for on-the-job training. This comprehensive funding package enabled the academy to create a nurturing and educational environment for both the apprentices and children.

Adam Grass, the Executive Director of Memorial Childcare Academy, and the seven devoted apprentices—Alexis A., Ariana, Alexis L., Destini, Deeleena, Bailey, and Misty - are key figures in this success story. The academy's capacity to assist families in Owosso and the surrounding area has been enhanced by its collaborations with GST Michigan Works! and other community groups.

The apprenticeship program trains apprentices in essential childcare skills and enriches the learning environment for the children at Memorial Childcare Academy. Each apprentice benefits from tailored mentorship, hands-on experience, and a curriculum designed by graduate-level educators. This immersive training ensures that the apprentices are well-prepared to create an active, educational, and exploratory learning environment for the children.



The new facility is strategically located in North Owosso, providing a child-friendly and safe atmosphere for children and families. The academy boasts secure drop-off and pick-up procedures, a new environment tailored for young learners, and access to amenities that enhance child development.

The success of the apprenticeship program is pivotal for several reasons. It not only addresses the critical need for skilled childcare professionals in the community but also fosters a supportive learning environment for children during their formative years. With a focus on reducing child-to-teacher ratios and ensuring curriculum-based learning, Memorial Childcare Academy is positioned to set new standards in childcare and early education.

GST Michigan Works! played a crucial role in the success of Memorial Childcare Academy by providing vital funding, resources, and support for the apprenticeship program. Their commitment to workforce development and community collaboration has made a meaningful difference in training the next generation of childcare professionals, ensuring that the academy can continue to fulfill its mission of partnering with parents to set children on the path to success.



MI-TECH TOOLING

PRECISION AND PROGRESS: HOW MI-TECH TOOLING'S CUSTOMIZED TRAINING DRIVES INNOVATION AND SUCCESS

Tuscola Co. - Mi-Tech Tooling, Inc. is a family-owned company founded in 2004 by current President Joseph Langenburg. They manufacture carbide cutting inserts and round tooling and consider themselves a specialty tooling shop. The main sectors they provide for are Aerospace and Oil & Gas Industries. Receiving an award of \$25,622 through the Going PRO Talent Fund has allowed Mi-Tech to contract training instructors directly from the manufacturer of the machines they purchase. This allows customized software and validation training for the employees who are operating the machines. They gain more knowledge and can apply that knowledge constructively.

Mi-Tech's Office Manager and Co-Owner Colleen stated, "There are many applications our machines can master and now with more experience, it will open new doors for new product design, productivity, pay increases, and satisfied customers all contributing to our bottom line."



ALLIED INDUSTRIAL GROUP

ALLIED INDUSTRIAL GROUP SUCCESSFULLY HIRES & TRAINS NEW SALES ENGINEER WITH SUPPORT FROM GSTMW

Genesee Co. - Allied Industrial Group is a company made up of several industrial tooling disciplines; manufacturing, fabrication, metal processing, paint and powder coat, custom ergonomic solutions and consulting, sales, service and support of industrial fastening tooling. One of their long-time salesmen is retiring this year. This could have meant years of accumulated tooling knowledge leaving Allied, and as you can imagine, those skills are not something gained by taking a one-week course or even one year of coursework.



Allied Industrial Group was able to find a solution to their problem. They wanted to add William to their team. William came from a key customer of AIG's who supported the move. It was a win-win situation as they could guarantee having someone to service their account who knew their operations and had their best interests in mind. William came to AIG with a large pool of technical tooling knowledge. However, he was moving into a position that was a mirror image of his old position, and he

had no sales experience. AIG Office Coordinator Michele Reynolds then reached out to the Business Solutions Professional at the GST Michigan Works! Fenton Service Center to see if William would be eligible for the On-The-Job Training (OJT) Program. With William having no prior sales experience coming into this new role, BSP Roy saw that this could be a perfect fit for GST Michigan Works! OJT program. William began his OJT at AIG on January 2, 2024.



William was the perfect candidate for the GST Michigan Works! On-the-Job Training program. We were able to dedicate the time to have our retiring salesman work day-to-day and hand-in-hand with William doing the necessary knowledge transfer relating to the sales and service aspect of the position.

Over the years Allied Industrial Group has worked with GST Michigan Works! on and off to help find candidates to add to our team and take advantage of the On-the-Job Training program. During the last year, the strategic decision to work with Roy strengthened our partnership with GST Michigan Works! They are a knowledgeable team and have spent the time getting to know us and our business. Things have changed quite a bit since the pandemic and adding the resources at GSTMW to our asset pool has been a positive experience."

- Michele Reynolds, AIG Office Coordinator

On March 11th William completed his OJT program with GST Michigan Works! and is excelling in his new role at AIG. On April 12th, Roy delivered a reimbursement check of \$2,382.60 to Allied Industrial for their new Sales Engineer William's training. This was a huge win for William and Allied Industrial Group! AIG has found a great new addition to their team and William was able to be trained for a new and exciting position within his industry.



During my training at Allied Industrial Tool Group for the Sales Engineering position I had to learn a whole new side of the industry that I was never exposed to in my previous employment. Not only did I need to learn about the new company I am working for, but also all the customers and vendors I'm working with daily. I've had to accurately create quotes for equipment, understand the differences in shipping methods and terms, deal with issues regarding importing and exporting equipment, and learn overall professionalism in sales. I'd like to thank Roy and GST Michigan Works! for their support during this transition period for me and Allied."

- William, Sales Engineer

BETTER TOGETHER: BRUNCH & BUSINESS



lives, was invited to bring their trailer to serve donuts and coffee onsite! Employees, who are students with mild to moderate learning disabilities and differences, interacted with many local businesses creating awareness for the program and making connections for future employment. The Way Coffee's vision: Where unique learning needs meet empowering employment experiences, was undoubtedly the perfect choice for the event!

Genesee Co. - A dual-hosted event was created to educate businesses and showcase the value of both GST Michigan Works! and Financial Plus Credit Union. GST Michigan Works! Business Solutions Professional, Roy Reynolds and Sarah Kaplan, Fenton Branch Manager of Financial Plus Credit Union worked together to host the Brunch & Business event held on July 11th. The event was presented at the GST Michigan Works! Fenton Service Center and brought in 16 different businesses.



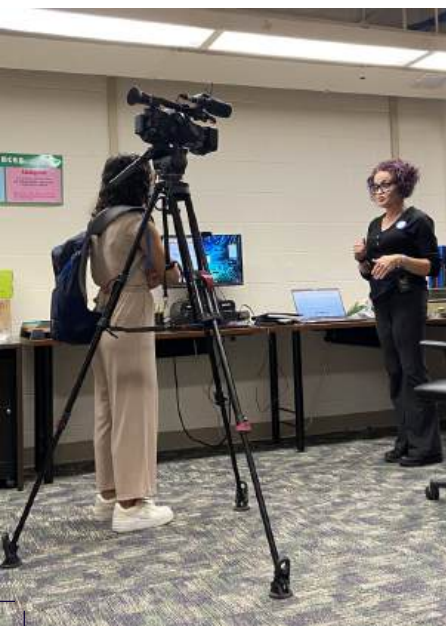
An overview of GST Michigan Works! services was presented by Cindy Thornthwaite, Business Services Manager of Genesee & Shiawassee Counties. Sarah Kaplan and several other FPCU employees provided the overview of Financial Plus Credit Union services. Sarah Kaplan shared,

GST Michigan Works! is proud to partner with our local community agencies to ensure our services are widely known within the communities we serve. All of GST Michigan Works! Business Solutions Professionals are actively involved with local chambers and attend those events regularly.

Financial Plus Credit Union's partnership with GST Michigan Works! has proved time and again to be invaluable."

GST Michigan Works! and Financial Plus Credit Union are actively involved with the Fenton & Linden Chamber so supporting local businesses and organizations is always top of mind. As such, special attention was given to all aspects of the event, including the brunch menu. The Way Coffee, an organization committed to changing young





The GSTMW! team is dedicated to enhancing public recognition of our work and impact. Sharing our story and demonstrating how we make a difference remains a top priority. This quarter, the Talent Development Center Team highlighted the success of customers gaining access to digital literacy training, delivered in partnership with the Greater Flint Health Coalition.

READ THE FULL STORY HERE



PUBLIC RECOGNITION & PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS

LEARN & EARN

JULY/AUGUST 2024 | VOL. 23 ISSUE 1

WIOA SUMMER OPENING DAY TRAINING

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) summer work program held its summer training at the SRES on July 9th. Students learned valuable information about how to be a good employee. They identified their “power skills” and the personal traits they bring to their summer work experiences. Other topics included workplace safety, good hygiene, and a positive work ethic.

Students also brainstormed how to handle different workplace scenarios.

Following employee training, students visited the Reality Store, a practical exercise that simulated career choices, corresponding salaries, and real-world life choices. Afterwards, students honed their skills in filling out job applications, understanding the importance of accurate contact information, and effectively documenting their education, skills, employment, volunteer experiences, and references.

Each student then met one-on-one with their case manager to review information specific to their individualized worksite placements. Afterward, the group received instructions on what to expect during their first day of work, how to introduce themselves, and employer expectations. The students, having absorbed all the training, finished the day with a sense of anticipation, ready to start their 4-week community-based work experiences.

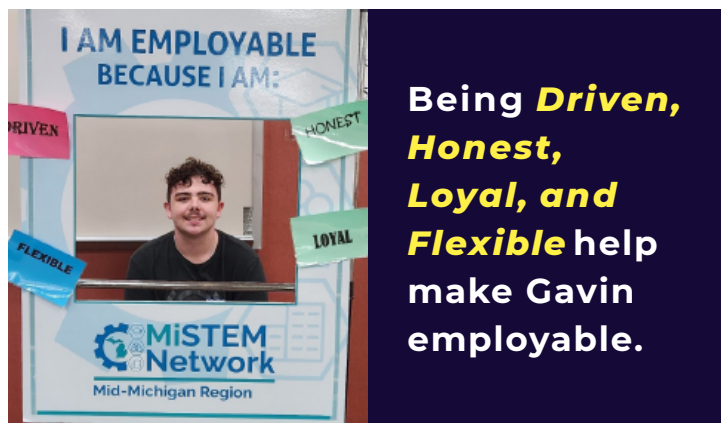
REALITY STORE

Students also participated in Reality Store, a real-life simulation game where they were given a future career and the corresponding monthly income. The students moved through stations making choices about housing, utilities, groceries, transportation and insurance, while using paper money to pay their monthly bills. The students also had choices regarding extras, such as entertainment, clothing, and eating out, with the goal to have money left over at the end of the month for savings. The students learned about needs vs. wants and how their education, career, and life choices impact their future.

Many thanks to the Shiawassee RESD staff and WIOA friends who make the event possible by staffing the store.



THANK YOU TO MISTEM MID-MICHIGAN FOR SPONSORING THE EMPLOYABLE STATIONS.



Being *Driven*, *Honest*, *Loyal*, and *Flexible* help make Gavin employable.



Abura is employable because she is *Energetic*, *Creative*, and *Confident*!

STUDENTS AT WORK

THANK YOU TO OUR EMPLOYERS!

Ace Hardware of Durand
CarQuest of Perry
Corunna Save A Lot
Durand Senior Care
Fairview Pet Center
Gilberts Hardware & Appliances
House of Wheels

Junction of Hope
Pat's Place
Shiawasee County Human Society
Time for Flowers
TIP'n POINT Grocery and Meat Market
Volunteers of America
Walgreens



Gavin has been working hard at the Corunna Save A Lot, assisting with stock management



Spencer assists at Pat's Place, the Adult Social Center in Corunna



Victoria assists with food service at Chesaning's The Junction of Hope



Joel maintains a fully stocked inventory at CarQuest Perry



Wyatt helps keep the bike wheels spinning at the House of Wheels in Owasso



Dylan has been keeping the shelves stocked at Ace Hardware in Durand



Marissa has been helping seniors keep active at the Durand Senior Center



The Shiawasee County Human Society's animals have received great care from Charleigh



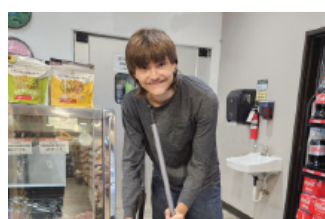
Thomas has been working in the greenhouse at Gilberts Hardware and Appliance in Owasso



The shelf fronts have been looking great at Walgreens thanks to Dakota



Christina has been assisting at the Volunteers of America



Adrian has been keeping TIP n' POINT Grocery and Meat Market in tip-top shape



Abura has been learning the art of flower arranging at Time for Flowers



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