

The mission of the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) is to expand employment and training opportunities for Cambridge youth and adult residents. Through a combination of direct service, program coordination, and outreach efforts, OWD services reach over 1000 residents and businesses each year.

The Latest Word on:

- Connecting residents to employment opportunities
- Cambridge Health Alliance promoting career advancement
- City continuing its commitment to employing young people

CONNECTIONS TO WORK

Christine Williams had had no luck looking for a job in the food service industry. She had lots of experience and had been looking in the newspaper and applying where she saw *Help Wanted* signs, but nothing panned out. Then she heard about the Cambridge Employment Program. "I went to the orientation and it was really helpful. I got lots of tips and information about resources." She also got connected to one of the program's career counselors who helped her rework her resume and focus her search on some key employers in the industry. "She was incredibly helpful," said

Christine, referring to her counselor, Wendi Brown. "She was always in contact with me, always thinking about me and helping me get a job."

The Cambridge Employment Program (CEP) offers free job search assistance to any Cambridge resident. The staff help residents identify their skills, prepare resumes and cover letters and learn strategies to find job postings through traditional sources and by using the internet. CEP is a resource for both residents seeking help finding a job and for local employers looking for qualified staff.

Residents come to CEP from a range of backgrounds – some have lengthy work histories and advanced degrees, but may be recent immigrants and need coaching to better understand American work culture. Others may be re-entering the workforce or are already employed and in search of a better job. CEP staff are able to help people assess their situation, identify employers, and prepare for interviews. Staff then provide encouragement and support to stay on the job once someone is placed. For those who need additional training or education

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YOUTH WORKERS "TALK ABOUT SEX"

The fourth annual Youth Worker Conference, sponsored by the Office of Workforce Development, was held on November 3rd. The conference, titled "Let's Talk About Sex," was designed to help local youth workers explore teen's behaviors and attitudes around sex and sexuality in our culture.

Sophie Godley, Director of Prevention and Education at AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, welcomed

attendees with a provocative address titled "The Problem

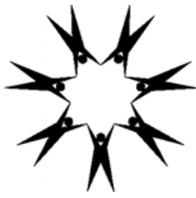


Youth workers participate in a workshop at the fourth annual Youth Worker Conference, sponsored by OWD.

With the Thong." Her interactive presentation helped set the stage for lively and open discussion as participants moved through workshops.

In workshops, youth workers came together to discuss challenges they face when dealing with teens around the issue of sexuality, and learned tools, techniques and guiding principles to feel more confident in their work. Workshop

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“I love this job!”
*-Cambridge
 Employment Program
 client Christine
 Williams on the
 position she found in
 partnership with her
 career
 counselor*

Fact File

Participants at OWD’s annual Youth Worker Conference left better informed about teens and sex. Here are just a handful of facts on the subject:

3 out of 4 teens say the fact that “TV shows and movies make it seem normal for teenagers to have sex” is one reason teenagers have sex.¹

Young teens (ages 13-15) rank entertainment media as the top source of information about sexuality and sexual health.²

13 out of 100 babies born in the U.S. annually are born to teenage parents.³

The percent of MA high school students who ever had sexual intercourse dropped from 8% in 1993 to 6% in 2003.⁴

1. Peterson, J., Moore, K. & Furstenberg, F. (1991). Television viewing and early initiation of sexual intercourse: Is there a link? *Journal of Homosexuality*, Vol. 21, 93-118.
 2. Kaiser Family Foundation, 1996; 1998.
 3. <http://www.notmykid.org/parentArticles/TeenageSexuality/default.asp>
 4. Massachusetts Department of Education School Nutrition, Safety, and Climate Unit. 2003 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results Executive Summary.

CONNECTIONS (CONT.)

to achieve their career goals, CEP staff help identify options and then assist with placement when the person is ready to look for a job.

CEP staff are committed to helping people find jobs and will continue to work with someone for as long as it takes, but success is based on a partnership between the job seeker and the career counselor. Christine Williams described her relationship with Wendi, her career counselor, in this way: “It is definitely a partnership. It was about me showing up and her being there for me.” Christine worked to follow up on the leads generated by her counselor, but it was often just knowing that she had someone encouraging

her when things got difficult that made the strongest impression. When other things got in the way of her job search and she hadn’t been in contact with the program, Christine said, “I’d have a message on my machine from Wendi telling me it was time to come back in.” She would then get information about postings or job fairs. One day she came in to the office and her counselor told her that she had been in contact with a hiring manager from Tufts University Dining Services. She went over that day for an interview. She was asked back for a second and third interview and offered a full-time position. “I love this job,” Christine said. She has been in her position

since September.

Job search is never easy, but CEP helps people stay motivated and focused so that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves.

For more information about the Cambridge Employment Program, call Susan Mintz at 617-349-6234

—Sue Walsh



Youth Workers (Cont.)

topics included: “Healthy Relationships,” “Teen Dating Violence,” “Talking to Youth About Sex,” and “The Influence of Media, Culture & Technology on Teens’ Sexual Behavior.”

Networking and professional development continued during a lunchtime discussion with Dr. Katharine Heintz-Knowles on media messages and teen sexuality. The audience was shown a popular music video and asked to decode its messages with colleagues and discuss its impact on teens’ views of sexuality.

Marco Bonilla, longtime gymnastics instructor and youth worker, was presented with the 2004 Youth Worker of the Year Award. Nominated by

JAM’NASTICS, Inc. and Cambridge Athletics, Marco exemplifies the professional and personal qualities that make youth workers so important to our communities.



Marco Bonilla of JAM’NASTICS, Inc. and the Cambridge Athletic Department received the second annual Youth Worker of the Year Award at OWD’s Youth Worker Conference in November.

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the event, and most found the topics and information presented to be very interesting and useful for their work. “The speakers at the beginning and in the workshops were informative, interesting, and fun,” said one respondent. “‘Let’s Talk About Sex’ really made me look at issues around sex and young people,” said another.

The Office of Workforce Development will continue its commitment to the development of Cambridge youth workers with another networking and professional development event this fall.

—Michelle Farnum

Program Spotlight: Cambridge Healthcare Career Advancement Program



Andrea McGregor (right), of the Cambridge Health Alliance's Cambridge Healthcare Career Advancement Program, along with her tutor Shawn Kelly.

By now, the staffing shortages within the health care industry are well documented. The scarcity of nurses has become a national crisis, and there aren't enough radiology technologists or pharmacists to go around. The problem will only get worse as baby boomers age and require more health care services. While many health care institutions are leaving positions unfilled or offering bonuses to lure workers from other employers, the Cambridge Health Alliance is taking a creative approach to growing its own cadre of health care professionals. With funding from the Cambridge Community Development Department's Economic Development Division, the Cambridge Health Alliance launched the Cambridge Healthcare Career Advancement Program in summer, 2003.

The Cambridge Healthcare Career Advancement Program (CHCAP) is designed to increase the number of Cambridge residents, especially Cambridge Health Alliance employees and community residents from targeted neighborhoods, who enroll in healthcare degree and certificate programs. As part of this innovative program, Bunker Hill Community College is providing selected prerequisite courses (such as Reading Skills, College Writing, Algebra and Biology) on-site at the Health Alliance. Participants also receive career coaching, on-site tutoring from Alliance employees and community volunteers, and college preparatory training. Twenty-two employees and community residents are currently participating in the program. When they complete the training later this year, these participants will have fulfilled the prerequisite courses necessary to apply to Bunker Hill for programs in nursing, radiology, and other health care fields.

The tutoring component, which offers students assistance with math and English skills, has been key to the success of the program. Before tutoring was available, "some of the students were struggling to pass math courses, and many considered dropping the course and the program. However, once we launched the tutoring program, students' grades improved dramatically, their self-confidence increased, and they were motivated to succeed in their courses and achieve their goals," said Margaret Walther, Human Resources Specialist for the Cambridge Health Alliance and the driving force behind the Alliance's workforce development efforts.

Despite the fact that participants are still completing their prerequisites, nearly fifteen students have already applied to programs in Nursing and Radiology. They expect to graduate in 2007 and be ready to fill key shortages at the Health Alliance. Most of these students are balancing jobs, families, and other commitments along with the demands of college coursework, but they feel encouraged by the success they've experienced so far. Andrea McGregor, a Cambridge resident who has been employed by the Cambridge Health Alliance for the past ten years, explained, "If it weren't for this program, I wouldn't be here. I never thought that I could be a nurse. Now I have the opportunity to pursue my dreams. I have been set up with such great tutors and I learned how to integrate what I was learning into everyday life. This program has opened up so many doors for me and will continue to in the future." Thanks to this innovative partnership between the City of Cambridge and the Cambridge Health Alliance, there might be enough health care professionals to take care of local baby boomers after all.

For more information about the Cambridge Healthcare Career Advancement Program, contact the Cambridge Health Alliance at 781-306-8762.

—Susan Mintz

Summer Jobs Lead to Fall Opportunity

The Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program is broad in scope, employing 750 youth at more than 120 organizations around the city. Over the course of a quick six-week span, the staff of the program and its partner organizations work together to help young people develop a strong work ethic and skills that will help them throughout their working lives. Six weeks, however, is not a long time, and as the summer draws to a close each year, the need remains for meaningful work experiences for youth even as they return to school.

With this in mind, four years ago the Office of Workforce Development began the Fall Youth Employment Program. The program is smaller in scale, employing just 25 young people. The program exists to provide a supported work experience for young people, with more advanced job-readiness workshops than those offered in the summer. The program is also dedicated to allowing youth and worksite partnerships that proved successful in the summer to build on that success.

This year, a record 86 youth applied for 25 positions in the program. Young people completed a more advanced application process than is required for the summer program, writing an essay, getting recommendations, and completing an interview. Once youth had been selected, they were matched with appropriate sites, and in the end 16 non-profit and city agencies were selected to participate out of the 30 that applied.

Young people worked in child care centers, offices, and at afterschool youth programs for nine weeks, fin-

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OWD does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability. OWD will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

Summer will be here soon!

Hiring a teen can help you pick up the slack left by vacationing employees or can allow you to complete special projects.

OWD can connect you to young people and answer all of your questions about hiring teens.

For more information, call 617-349-6234

Fall Employment (Cont.)

ishing just before the winter school vacation.

Many of the youth in the program clearly had positive experiences. Sandra Francois was assigned to work in the Election Commission, starting just weeks before Election Day. After the program ended, OWD received a thank you note, in which Sandra wrote, "I hope whoever is lucky enough to take my place next year really enjoys it like I did."

In December, staff from the Office of Workforce Development had a closing celebration in recognition of the young peoples' accomplishments, and to give them one final reminder of the skills they had learned that will benefit them as young workers in their next jobs.

Beginning February school vacation week, some of these young people returned, joining with others

who are working for the first time, to participate in the Neighborhood Service Project, a community service-learning program that develops work skills while encouraging young people to identify and address needs in their community.

—George Hinds