



FLASHBACK 2009: A BIG YEAR IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

By Arnesa A. Howell

From analyzing the impact of the No Child Left Behind law on career and technical education in District public schools to spotlighting the challenges of the formerly incarcerated returning to the workforce, the *JOB'S Coalition Pathways* newsletter last year continued as a strong voice for the JOBS Coalition in its persistent efforts to raise awareness of issues affecting the hard-to-employ, hard-to-reach and returning ex-offenders. Here, we take a look back through excerpts of the biggest stories of 2009. □

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MAKING STRIDES: JOB'S COALITION ACCOMPLISHMENTS



While raising awareness of workforce challenges and potential barriers to employment, the JOBS Coalition and its members have combined their resources and industry expertise to achieve the following results:

- Built the Bellevue Resource Center, a program facility serving the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ, and returning ex-offender populations. The Center was completed on September 30, 2003.
- Guided the creation of the Construction & Design Academy at Cardozo, providing District students access, training, and preparation for careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation. The Academy officially opened in September 2005.
- Leading the Children of Mine Center, in partnership with the Architecture Research Institute at the University of the District of Columbia, in designing, planning and developing a new community center in the Anacostia/Hillsdale community, and restoring the historic home of the city's first mayor. □



REV. ANTHONY J. MOTLEY President of the JOBS Coalition

JOB'S OUTLOOK 2010

Over the last decade, the JOBS Coalition has persevered in its efforts to become the premiere job advocacy organization in the District of Columbia. With the support of the Board of Directors and the Re-Entry Task Force on Employability, the Coalition has worked hard to address the varying factors associated with employing the hard-to-reach, hard-to-employ and the formerly incarcerated.

By Rev. Anthony J. Motley

But challenges remain for the workforce development community as we enter 2010. A high unemployment rate and loss of business throughout the city will make it increasingly difficult to bridge the gap between the unemployed and employment. Legislative mandates, and training and employability obstacles, are ever-present. When faced with these hurdles, it becomes even more important to continue to enhance and fund the support systems necessary for creating positive, productive citizens who will make valued contributions to their communities. Therefore, we must move towards creating a seamless network of support services that includes education, training and employment opportunities. We must continue to build collaborations with community-based organizations and other entities that share our vision for the community.

The JOBS Coalition has made significant strides over the past year, including releasing the standards of employability in October at

the University of the District of Columbia after nearly ten months of meetings and dialogue, and also addressing vocational education and green jobs issues. I am optimistic that through the "good will" efforts of those with the resources and a commitment to the development of a competent and holistic District workforce, we will continue to make significant progress towards our goal of creating employment opportunities for those we serve.

Moreover, it is imperative that as we address these employability issues (and be assured that we will continue to do so throughout the year), the Coalition must begin to look at employment and job creation through small business development — the pulse of many communities — especially along some of our more challenging business corridors, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and Good Hope Road in Southeast, and the H Street and Benning Road corridors in Northeast.

The workforce development community has
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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2009

This first installment of a two-part series examines whether the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law hindered efforts to revive career and technical education in District of Columbia schools, and analyzes the impact school restructuring efforts (led by the Chancellor of D.C. Public Schools, Michelle Rhee) have had on these specialized programs. This piece also highlights the benefits skilled trades have for young people by helping them learn the core academics of math and reading, a focus of NCLB. Exposure to career and technical education (CTE) programs within the District of Columbia is critical in a time when the city doesn't have a large pool of qualified construction workers. Instead, a sizeable number of workers in this field are coming from outside the District. Cultivating the next generation of construction leaders and those skilled in the trades is key to overcoming this challenge.

Outlook 2010 *Continued from page 1*
 an unprecedented opportunity to use its creative genius and experiences to come up with policies and incentives designed to revive production and service-oriented jobs in our city. There needs to be a joint effort between city and business leaders to draft a comprehensive employment and business development strategy for the District of Columbia. I hope that during this year, the Coalition — working with our city and business leaders — will attempt to draft such a strategy, which should encompass all aspects of busi-

...Some observers argue that the D.C. public school system is “running in direct conflict with recognized policy consensus” that CTE programs are a critical part of public education in this city. The latter seems to be a viewpoint held by D.C. Council members like David Catania, who has called for the revitalization of vocational education programs in District schools. Similarly, Mayor Adrian Fenty has called for replication across the city of programs like the Academy of Construction & Design at Cardozo, which provides young people with access to, and training and preparation for, careers in the construction industry and trades after graduation.

Shelly Morrison, manager of the Academy of Construction & Design (ACAD) at Cardozo Senior High School, says school restructuring has taken a toll on the program she oversees — by stagnating enrollment. — JOBS Coalition Pathways, **NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: HARM TO CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION? Part 1 of Two Part Series** □

ness and employment opportunities, to include light industry such as computer and shoe repair, electronic parts assembly and recycling. We could also look at expanding warehousing and servicing opportunities such as office cleaning, educational supplies, and clothing, food and equipment distribution.

In 2010, the JOBS Coalition will continue to build on past experiences and lessons learned. We will remain at the forefront of workforce development efforts to address the challenges facing us in the months and years to come. □



MARCH/APRIL 2009

The JOBS Coalition Re-Entry Task Force moves forward in its discussion of job retention for returning citizens. A working group is created to develop proposed standards to ensure that this population receives “quality” life skills training that would better prepare them for the workforce. JOBS Coalition Adviser Carol Randolph stresses the need to ramp up the quality of training in life skills programs.

“It is the goal of this ad hoc committee to develop a process somewhat akin to a ‘Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval,’ which will connote to future employers that the person bearing this ‘seal’ has successfully completed training in a quality program,” added Randolph, who heads the Branding and Marketing Committee, which will likely play a key role in the dissemination of these standards once adopted. By raising the quality of such training programs, task force members said they are aiming to improve on-the-job performance that can keep individuals gainfully employed. ...After the meeting, Randolph told Pathways that among the issues the working group will likely be considering are whether all individuals should be required to complete high school or a GED program, and whether program training needs to be extended beyond the generally accepted three to 12 weeks to be effective in reducing or eliminating “bad behavior.” As for what makes a good program, she said: “One trait would be the ability to offer potential employers an extended period during which the training program would remain connected to the newly-hired individuals, continuing to offer or extend any social services that may be needed in order for that person to remain gainfully employed.” — JOBS Coalition Pathways, **JOBS TASK FORCE TO RAISE QUALITY OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING** □



MAY/JUNE 2009

With a focus on improving employment opportunities for returning citizens, the working group looks at next steps in breaking the stereotypes associated with this population. The task force drafts proposed standards of responsibility for ex-offenders, training providers and employers.

The benefit of these standards, says JOBS Coalition Adviser Carol Randolph, is that they would “state exactly what we’re going to do — they’re transparent and hold you accountable.” She added that implementing standards would inject accountability at all levels. “The beauty of this is that the responsibility flows both ways. An addendum can be signed by the person who’s enrolled in the program, the people who are to provide the training, and it can be signed

*by the people who are hiring the individuals,” she explained. “Everyone can lay out exactly what their expectations are and what you can expect them to do.” — JOBS Coalition Pathways, **PROPOSED STANDARDS AIM TO INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR EX-OFFENDERS***

>Pathways profiles Donohoe Construction Company President Steve Donohoe, whose entry into the field occurred during his high school years when he worked as a laborer during summer breaks. He would later become a superintendent with the company, started by family patriarch John F. Donohoe, an Irish émigré who started out as a grocer on Capitol Hill, and in 1884 opened the region’s first full-service real estate company.

*For Donohoe, being active with the Construction Trades Foundation is about participating in the life of a community that has sustained The Donohoe Companies for generations. It is also his way of helping to provide more opportunities for vocational education. “Having the opportunity to be exposed to construction might spark some interest in a career. Maybe a young person will start working in a trade and then elect to go into management or architectural engineering,” he says. “There is talent out there that has to have an avenue to be developed.” — JOBS Coalition Pathways, **STEVE DONOHOE: A PROFILE IN CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** □*



JULY/AUGUST 2009

The 2009 Meet the Future Luncheon celebrates the 14 graduates of the Academy of Construction & Design (ACAD) at Cardozo Senior High School. This diverse group of young people gained skills in construction and vocational trades — and with the support of ACAD staff like Manager Shelly Morrison — the desire to excel in life on both personal and academic levels. Grads Marie Louise Ngo Mbock and Freddy Possian received academic boosts as recipients of Norman Dreyfuss Awards, \$2,500 and \$1,500 respectively. Their award-winning essays in part chronicled their life experiences.

Mbock, originally from Cameroon in West Africa, wrote that she overcame the challenges of being a

*“French-speaking person in an English country” in the classroom. At the Academy, where she had started with the study of carpentry, she recalled: “Meeting with my teacher there for the first time was not an easy thing. I was not talking; I couldn’t look at them, seemed lost and could not answer when I was asked a question. I was the laughing stock of the class because of my accent and my timidity.” But through the nurturing of those like Morrison, who is affectionately known as a “mother hen,” Mbock blossomed. “I believe the things learned at the Academy of Construction & Design have made me a better, stronger and wiser young woman and I would not have been able to learn them anywhere else,” stated Mbock, who added she has gained “skills that I will carry for a lifetime.” Her newfound confidence, she continued, will help her become a future social worker. “I want to become a person who will always be there for those in need of help, for anyone who is hurt and needs to turn his or her life around,” she wrote. — JOBS Coalition Pathways, **CLASS OF 2009, ACAD CELEBRATES 14 GRADUATES** □*



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

The Academy of Construction & Design (ACAD) at Cardozo Senior High School teams with DC Habitat for Humanity to help build homes in Northeast Washington, D.C. for families in need. ACAD students volunteer their time during summer vacation to put their classroom knowledge to use for a cause.

*Fellow volunteer and ACAD student Ivan Ango, 17, showed the signs of his hard work — covered in dust from head to toe and wearing a tool belt, equipped with hammer and utility knife, slung around his waist. The rising senior at Cardozo says the “fun” of working on this Habitat project is using the electric drill and marking and measuring materials. Sometimes, he admits, there are trials and errors: “If wrong, you have to measure again.” But Ango says he enjoys doing the math. And what brings him even more pleasure? “I like it when I come back and see that the house I’ve worked on is done and people are living in it,” says the repeat DC Habitat volunteer, who aspires to become a bioelectrical or electrical engineer. — JOBS Coalition Pathways, **NEW HOMES FOR FAMILIES IN NEED: ACAD PARTNERS WITH DC HABITAT** □*

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

The Re-Entry Task Force reaches a major milestone when it unveils its standards of employability and seeks comment from high-ranking officials within the judicial system, business community and community-based organizations. These Accords, presented at a forum at the University of the District of Columbia, are built on the premise that every District citizen should benefit from opportunities of “growth and prosperity” in the city. The panelists weighing in on the issue included Chief Judge Lee F. Satterfield of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia; Margaret Singleton, vice president and executive director of the DC Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Bessie Swann, executive director of Wheeler Creek Community Development Corporation (CDC); and Drew Hubbard, on behalf of D.C. Councilmember Marion Barry (Ward 8).

As a result of the economic downturn, states and the District are suffering from gaps in services, noted

Satterfield, who having read the Accords, commended them as “certainly mapped” appropriately. He stressed the importance of looking at what can be realistically accomplished when citizens are returning to their communities after incarceration because many have not completed their educations or even received vocational training to help them transition home and into the workforce. Meanwhile Hubbard, representing Councilmember Barry on the panel, reinforced the thought that the Accords are moving “in the right direction” as they address important issues such as wraparound services. He said it “makes sense” when looking at this target population to focus on these types of issues upfront. At the same time, he reiterated that realistic goals must be set, and local resources like school facilities must be used more effectively to the benefit of the community. — JOBS Coalition Pathways, TASK FORCE UNVEILS STANDARDS OF EMPLOYABILITY, JOBS COALITION CONTINUES EFFORTS TO SUPPORT RETURNING EX-OFFENDERS □

JOBS COALITION PROMISES

- Provide opportunities for District residents to secure gainful employment opportunity.
- Remove barriers that prevent meaningful employment.
- Provide educational and training opportunities for all District residents interested in pursuing careers in various industries and trades.
- Work toward the creation of a comprehensive, fair, and more open system of training and hiring the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.
- Ensure that the training and educational skills being taught are relevant to the job market of today and tomorrow.
- Engage elected and appointed officials to support legislation and maintain appropriate oversight to ensure gainful employment for District residents, including the underserved, unemployed, and returning ex-offenders.

JOBS COALITION MISSION STATEMENT

We will work together to develop a long-term strategy that creates an environment where aspiring District residents will have unprecedented opportunity to succeed. We strive to create a fair and open system, supported by government, industry, employers and the education and faith-based communities, which seeks to properly train today’s apprentices while making an unparalleled commitment to educating students and others not yet in the workforce.

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