

Literacy for Life Launches New Work Skills Program



Literacy for Life is thrilled to announce the launch of its EmployEd Program.

“For over 40 years, we have been helping adults in our community with reading, writing, math and English language skills,” said Executive Director Joan Peterson. “With the addition of the EmployEd program, we are now giving targeted help to our learners who wish to transition into living wage jobs so that they can support their families.”

Meiber’s story illustrates the program’s mission and success. Meiber fled Venezuela with her husband and their young son. She came to the United States speaking almost no English. She immediately sought the services of Literacy for Life and studied English every day. As her English skills improved, Literacy for Life staff and tutors helped her connect with the American Job Center and focused on the English needed to become a certified medication aide (CMA).

Today, just three years after her arrival, Meiber is working as a CMA at a local clinic and looks forward to becoming a registered nurse. Meanwhile, the clinic benefits from its well prepared new employee, and the local economy benefits from another worker filling the “middle skill gap.”

Middle skill jobs require education beyond high

school but less than college. These jobs make up the largest part of the labor market, but there are not enough workers to meet the need.

In Virginia, about 49% of all jobs are middle-skill, but only 39% of the workforce is trained to that level. This gap is costly to employers, who spend billions of dollars annually on training and remediation.

Through the EmployEd Program, Literacy for Life is building bridges between its learners and local training programs, services, and employers. Under Literacy for Life’s roof, a single learner might identify a career goal; develop the reading, writing, math, English, computer and soft skills required for a chosen career; meet with a representative from the American Job Center to explore scholarship funding; apply for a credentialing program; receive individual tutoring over the course of the training; write a resume; and receive referrals to potential employers.

EmployEd learners have already transitioned into several local training programs including the Certi-



Joan Peterson, Executive Director

fied Nursing Assistant training at Heart to Heart; the ChefsGo program at Thomas Nelson Community College; and HVAC technician training at New Horizons Regional Education Centers. They have secured employment at local businesses including Williamsburg Landing, Greystone, and Olde Towne Medical Center.

Joan Peterson reflects, “Our mission at Literacy for Life remains to improve lives by giving adults the skills needed for self-sufficiency, better health, and meaningful participation in society. We are so excited to add the EmployEd program, which not only aligns perfectly with our existing mission but has the added benefit of meeting the needs of local employers and boosting our economy. Everybody wins.”



301 Monticello Avenue • School of Education
College of William and Mary • 757-221-3325
literacyforlife.org