

## Cultivating America's Greatest Resource: People



President Barack Obama, signs H.R. 803, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act on July 22, 2014. Standing on left hand side of President Obama, Sergio Olivas Muñoz, SER-Jobs for Progress program participant from Albuquerque, New Mexico, observes the signing of the WIOA.

*(Official White House Photo by Chuck Kennedy)*

### Highlights:

- Building on Progress: An Overview of SER National Initiatives
- SER National Affiliates Highlights
- SER Board Elects Officers, Welcomes New Members
- SER National Welcomes Linda Rivas

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# SER America

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SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc., acknowledges the support of the U.S. Department of Labor and the advertisement support of corporations who made this publication possible.

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## Message from the Chairman of the Board



Photo by Luis Nuno Borges

**Francisco F. Ivarra, *Chairman***

Welcome to our SER National Conference. As was strikingly recognized during SER's 50th Anniversary, the evolution of SER National, Inc., LULAC, and the American GI Forum is historical in context. It is because of the two Hispanic civil rights organizations that SER became a reality. As a 40-year-member and former Vice and National Commander of the American GI Forum, I have a long history with SER. When one believes in an organization the way I believe in SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. and what it represents, it is not difficult to seek to serve on its board. SER National abides by what it stands for: Service, Employment and Redevelopment. It helps people in our community better themselves, better their families, and to be successful in life.

The partnership and cooperation among SER, LULAC, and the American GI Forum are well known among Hispanic organizations. The standards of helping to develop a human working resource in 1964 are the same standards we use today: "...to place program participants into permanent, unsubsidized and productive employment." The successful partnership between the American GI Forum and SER is not a secret

formula: It is an effective and common sense approach.

This is my second tour of duty on the SER National Board, having joined most recently in 2009 and as Board Chairman last October. SER is an excellent and nationally recognized organization. I am excited because I have the opportunity to work with some great leaders and outstanding professionals who bring their own perspectives on the various programs SER offers. We work cooperatively to make our decisions based on what will help strengthen and enhance the success of SER National and the programs offered to our community.

As a retired university professor, I consider most—if not all—of SER's programs educational because of their learning components and the possibility of advancement for participants to become productive and contributing members of our society. SER's education initiatives have been and continue to be exemplary. Among the most relevant programs is the Career Online High School, which provides people, who otherwise cannot go to school, an opportunity to work toward a GED online. SER has managed to stay relevant because it is a part of the many educational institutions that recognize that online schools work.

Over the decades, SER has helped millions of people. My fellow board member Janey Appia is an example of how a person made an opportunity into a fruitful reality. She is a product of SER, who continued her journey of advancement from a student of SER National to becoming a corporate leader at 7-Eleven. I greatly admire and respect her work ethic and determination to make a difference in becoming a successful role model for future generations, especially women. She makes a significant contribution to the board. Her story is a great story.

As impressive as SER is, I don't think its biggest accomplishment is a program, individual or even the institution. SER's biggest accomplishment can be summed up

in one word – anticipation. The leadership, board, and staff do a great job of anticipating what future programs are needed to stay relevant, in having a vision and aligning its work and mission to help achieve that vision. My father always used to say, "If you want to be the best, don't go around like a horse with blinders on. You have to have and see a vision and utilize that vision not for yourself, but to help others." That's what SER does; it has a big vision. SER anticipates needs and makes those programs work for our community.

During my tenure, I hope to continue expanding SER's affiliate base geographically. Providing employment training to veterans is a new area we're exploring. We're currently looking at partnering with Veterans in Community Service in Los Angeles. There are thousands of veterans in need of employment, training, and retraining.

In short, SER's work means opportunity for those in need in the Hispanic community, an opportunity that is a game changer to many who help themselves and their families in becoming agents of change for the betterment of our society. We are indebted to our corporate sponsors in helping us fulfill our mission and vision. We are very grateful for their contributions. That support not only helps SER, but our entire community. Together, we are helping to produce productive citizens in our society. That's what it's all about.

Again, welcome to our annual conference. The leadership and staff have worked diligently to make your attendance and stay with us during the conference a meaningful and memorable one. Please enjoy yourself with the greatness of Dallas-Fort Worth and have a pleasant time with your old friends and new ones. ¡Bienvenidos!



# *unlimited potential*

Success begins with education. Inspired by committed educators, and aided by the latest educational technology, students can thrive personally and strengthen their communities.

AT&T salutes SER-Jobs for Progress for helping students realize their boundless potential.





## Message from the President and CEO

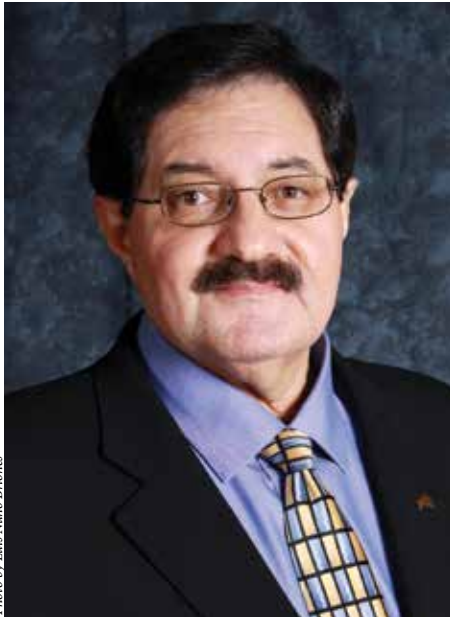


Photo by Luis Nino Briones

**Ignacio Salazar, President & CEO**  
SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.

Last year we celebrated five decades as an organization. Looking back on that milestone, we recognized that things have changed substantially in the past 50 years. While we started out small, we now have more than a million people walking through our doors annually. This is indicative of the footprint that SER-Jobs for Progress, and our network of affiliated partners, has in this country. As we begin our next era of SERvice, it is important to expand our service delivery through an ever growing network of affiliates and new and emerging corporations, in response to a changing more diverse workforce and technological advancements in the workplace.

We have started our 51st year on a positive note, continuing to offer successful programs, creating new ones, and building new partnerships. We are fortunate to have corporate support for initiatives in different parts of the country, and we will continue to expand in areas that enhance the depth and breadth of what we offer.

This past year we received a grant from Coca-Cola for SER MUJER project, which helps educate entrepreneurial women interested in starting their own businesses. We also continued the second year of the One Job at a Time program with a grant from Walmart.

We continue to offer financial literacy in partnership with Ally Bank, in addition to an AARP tax preparation program. Moreover, we are offering a second generation of our English Language Acquisition program for low income individuals that is a self-paced online program and free to anyone through our website, thanks to the support of the Ford Motor Company Fund.

### Among other accomplishments:

- We have diversified SER National's Board of Directors, increasing our corporate, community and affiliate membership.
- We continue to harness the power and usefulness of technology. We've revamped our website, and since Hispanics over index on mobile devices, we are or will offer many programs, including SER MUJER, financial literacy, etc., on mobile apps in both English and Spanish. This is available, through our website, anywhere internet access is provided.
- We continue to expand our affiliate network, most recently to Virginia, Arizona, and Oregon, and look to continue that growth by moving into Oklahoma, the Carolinas, and other states in the near future.

We take a holistic approach to eliminating barriers and serving our clients, which tend to be on the lower end of the economic scale. For example, when young families are starting out and looking for childcare, we ask ourselves is it accessible? Is it affordable? Does it work to promote a child that comes from a bilingual home? That's why we created a dual-language Head Start program in Irving to serve the Dallas area; it's a model that we created to serve children 0-3 years of age. Our programs are designed to help our community in all stages of life. This is another program we hope to expand in the future, in other parts of the country.

Also in education, we offer high school completion, mentoring, and postsecondary programs. We're in the process of developing a two-year-program that is a hybrid of distance based and classroom learning to ad-

dress the lack of opportunities of our enrollees in high-demand occupations. Our goal is to prepare our youth and adults to obtain a good paying high demand job, so that they can enjoy a greater quality of life and contribute to our nation's growth.

Recently, SER was invited to join President Barack Obama for the signing of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act at the White House. I, along with Executive Vice President Linda Rivas, and Director of Program Development Julian Martinez, and Sergio Olivas Muñoz, a student from our New Mexico affiliate in SER Santa Fe, had the opportunity to be present for the signing of this important piece of legislation and to visit with the President, Cabinet members, and congressional leaders. The Act continues the critical funding to provide our youth, adult, dislocated workers and veterans, etc., with the skills and abilities that will make them productive citizens.

A few weeks ago, I attended the opening of My Brother's Keeper Alliance at Lehman College located in the Bronx, New York. President Barack Obama announced this important program that seeks to assist young boys and men of color with a variety of new and innovative strategies nationwide. I have been asked to serve on this new Advisory Board to oversee the implementation and operation of this important initiative.

Thank you for your support throughout the years, and in *Cultivating America's Greatest Resource: People*. What we accomplish is the result of many forces coming together to create positive energy and positive action in response to pressing needs in our society. We value the ideal that all men and women are created equal and should be offered access to equal opportunities. We are enhanced as a nation when we all contribute to our fullest potential!

Enjoy your stay in Irving and enjoy the conference!





General Motors is proud to support the SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc., Annual Conference. Thank you for making steady jobs a reality for so many.

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GENERAL MOTORS





# Building on Progress: *An Overview of SER National Initiatives*

At the invitation of the White House, SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. was present for President Barack Obama's signing of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) "Investing in America's Competitiveness" last summer. SER Executives, along with Sergio Olivas Muñoz, a young Santa Fe man whose life had been transformed through SER-Santa Fe's environmental program, along with numerous national leaders were on hand.

Mr. Olivas Muñoz was laid off from his fencing job two years ago. The 25-year-old high school graduate and father of one entered the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program as a long-term dislocated worker and received training and employment assistance from the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico. After some intensive training, Mr. Olivas Muñoz was referred for a job as an Environmental Engineer with 814 Solutions. He did not have the requisite skills or experience, but 814 Solutions agreed to hire Mr. Olivas Muñoz under the WIA on the job training program. The company agreed to train him in EPA and OSHA regulations, the Clean Water Act, handling of hazardous materials, and many other environmental regulations and components, including construction and inspections for a total of 1,040 hours. As a result, Mr. Olivas Muñoz has many opportunities for long-term employment. A bright future awaits him and his family.

That SER and Mr. Olivas Muñoz, as a SER participant, were asked to be present is a testament to the long history of education, workforce development, and skills training — and above all, the 51-year legacy of empowering people to reach their full potential — for which SER is known.

SER National does that through its many programs. By being innovative and adaptive, but always keeping true to its mission of increased development and utilization of America's human resources, with special emphasis on the needs of Hispanics, in the areas of education, training, employment, business and economic opportunity, SER has served millions of people nationwide.

Through WIOA funding, SER can

continue to assist people from cradle to cane. While continuing long-running programs, such as the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), SER continues to offer new programs: In the area of education, for example, SER National is incubating a new Head Start program for children ages 0-3 in the Dallas area. In addition, SER launched two new programs to serve women: SER MUJER made possible by a grant from Coca-Cola, and Comcast's Digital Connectors program, through a grant from Comcast.

Additionally, SER National has partnered with AARP to provide free tax services to people, particularly seniors. Always with an eye toward the future, SER is exploring new partnerships to assist veterans in need of training or retraining to find employment, as well as utilizing technology to make training and education accessible and affordable to its clients.

"What we're driving for is to make the biggest impact by utilizing technology to help as many people as we can," said SER National President and CEO Ignacio Salazar. "Our job is to assist these people who dream of a better tomorrow achieve those dreams."

Keep reading to learn more about SER's many outstanding programs.

## **AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Partner to Expand Free Tax Preparation Services**

SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. (SER) is pleased to announce its new collaboration with AARP Foundation Tax-Aide. SER is working with its affiliates to encourage use of AARP Foundation's free tax prep services, aimed at low-to-moderate-income adults, especially those 60 years of age or older.

During this unique, 18-month campaign, SER will reach out to local customers and

also have a targeted social media campaign in an effort to get more people to use the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide free service. SER local operations will make presentations and distribute the free tax service information to their program participants and clients. With 6,000 locations nationwide, it's easy to find a Tax-Aide site near you — simply visit the website [www.ser-national.org/tax/](http://www.ser-national.org/tax/) or call toll free 1-888-227-7669.

SER National's President and CEO, Ignacio Salazar, said "Partnering with the AARP Foundation to provide this free tax service to our clients is a win-win partnership for SER." He added, "SER, along with our network of local offices and affiliates, will be increasing the use of AARP Foundation Tax-Aide services in cities where SER has operations."

Raul Santa, SER National's Director of Network Relations, said: "Through this partnership, we want you to get all the tax credits and deductions you deserve. As the tax-preparers are IRS-certified, there's no fee



and no sales pitch for other services."

Every year, our free tax services help millions of low- to moderate-income taxpayers—especially those 60 and older—get the credits and deductions they deserve. Started in 1968 by four volunteers, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is now the

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**At MillerCoors** we have a long tradition of supporting the communities where we live and work. We dedicate time and resources to partner with organizations that help make a positive impact, especially related to civic leadership, responsibility, economic empowerment and water stewardship.

As part of our mission, MillerCoors is proud to support **SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.**



For more information about MillerCoors and our community involvement, log onto [www.millercoors.com](http://www.millercoors.com)



# Building on Progress: *An Overview of SER National Initiatives*

nation's largest free, volunteer-run tax preparation program. In 2012, over 35,000 volunteers worked at nearly 6,000 Tax-Aide community-based sites in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. We helped 2.6 million people navigate complicated tax codes, receive proper credits and deductions, and file their federal, state and local tax returns.

## **In High Demand**

Free tax services are more critical than ever as the U.S. tax code has become increasingly complicated. Older low- to moderate-income people who use AARP Foundation Tax-Aide face particularly difficult tax situations:

- Many older taxpayers are unaware of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or believe they don't qualify for it. One of the most important forms of income support for low-income workers, the EITC reduces tax liability and can generate a refund.
- Retirees accustomed to the short 1040EZ often face new provisions and complex forms to determine the taxable portion of their retirement income, different standard deduction amounts, permissible health care deductions and, if they sell their house, treatment of capital gains. If the spouse who has always handled taxes dies or becomes incapacitated, the other spouse may be unsure how to proceed.

## **Ready and Able**

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers are trained and IRS-certified each year to ensure their knowledge of revisions to the U.S. tax code. With their help, taxpayers received \$1.3 billion in refunds and more than \$232 million EITCs. By using AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, these low- to moderate-income taxpayers also avoid preparation fees and pitches for high-interest tax credit or refund loans. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is offered in conjunction with the IRS.

## **SER MUJER Creates Women Entrepreneurs Using E-Learning**

With a mission of encouraging and supporting aspiring women entrepreneurs, SER MUJER is now available to women



nationwide through its new web- and mobile-based e-learning for women entrepreneurs.

The *mujer* in SER MUJER is an acronym for Mastering and Understanding Jobs and Entrepreneurial Relationships. This new program is a first and important for SER, given that the fastest growing entrepreneurial segments in the country are Hispanic and African American women. SER MUJER provides the opportunity for women to empower themselves via entrepreneurship training and development, with a particular emphasis on Latinas and women of color. The program's full coursework, offered in traditional workshop settings in select cities, including Dallas, Fresno, Los Angeles, Miami, and Washington, D.C., is now available both online and via a mobile app. The new e-learning for women entrepreneurs now makes this opportunity available to aspiring women nationwide.

The training to SER MUJER participants provides both classroom instruction and online resources both in English and Spanish. Women learn everything from creating a business plan, business structure, financing, marketing, tax planning, and registering a business. The training can be customized for women who may be a first-time entrepreneur, the owner of a small "mom-and-pop" shop or have an idea for a

more complex business model.

SER MUJER also serves as an incubator and an accelerator for these budding entrepreneurs, which studies from the Small Business Administration have shown translates to a success rate of 87 percent

among graduating start-up ventures, compared to 44 percent for all other firms.

SER MUJER is aiding many women interested in starting their own businesses to realize that dream. Two SER MUJER success stories are those of Kim Burney of Fort Worth and Delfina Cook of Los Angeles.

## **The Sweet Smell of Launching A Business**

Ms. Burney had been unemployed for several years. She'd been taking advantage of job search services at the Northside Workforce Center in Fort Worth and exploring employment opportunities at one of its job fairs. Ms. Burney always had a desire to work for herself and has an incredible talent for making homemade candles and crafts.

While attending an orientation at her local workforce center, she heard about SER MUJER and was eager to become a participant of the program. After participating in workshops and training, Ms. Burney obtained her commercial license and now sells her products to a niche customer base. Staff continues to support and assist the new entrepreneur with the marketing and promotional aspects of her business.

## **From Adversity to Opportunity**

Ms. Cook is a model of courage for women of all ages.

In 2002, Ms. Cook came to the United States to live her dream. When she arrived here, she worked



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## *An Overview of SER National Initiatives*

hard to help her family in Mexico make ends meet.

In 2006, she met the man of her dreams (or at least she thought so at the time) and married him. Three years later, she gave birth to a daughter, Alicia Sarah. Ms. Cook never expected that she'd become a victim of domestic violence and abuse. Eventually, Ms. Cook's husband left and took their daughter with him, which devastated Ms. Cook.

Because she was unemployed, she turned to SER for assistance and resources. While attending promotional events, Ms. Cook heard about the SER MUJER program. Through intense job search training and support from staff, Ms. Cook was able to obtain employment.

Today, Ms. Cook works at the Sheraton at Los Angeles International Airport, although she continues to receive job offers. She understands that having a job is important in her fight for her daughter. She credits SER MUJER with helping her along her journey and with boosting her self-esteem and confidence. The orientations and training she received, she said, were key in giving her the encouragement she needed to get back on her feet.

### **Latina Youth Learn Technology, While Helping Their Communities**

Another program targeting women is Chicas Youth Development (Chicas), a program of Oregon nonprofit Adelante Mujeres. It serves high school students, helping them build or improve their computer skills in efforts to have them entertain studies and careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) career paths. Through a partnership with Comcast's Digital Connectors (CDC) program, the young women also give back to the community, as participants are required to commit to 56 hours of community service. Many young women often contribute many more hours.

The partnership with CDC allows Adelante to fulfill its mission of providing holistic education and empowerment opportunities to low-income Latina women and their families to ensure full participation

and active leadership in the community.

"Chicas Comcast Digital Connectors Program has been a great opportunity for our youth," said Karla Hernandez, Chicas Facilitator. "We are empowering young women through technology."

Seventeen Chicas students participated in a seven-month training program that meets once weekly after school.

Yareli Cornejo Torres said she joined the program because she was interested in learning about social media and digital literacy. "I want to apply those skills and knowledge to teach others in my community," she said.

"With this great partnership, our students are getting an opportunity to put into practice what they are learning," Ms. Hernandez said.

The students are also leading educational presentations on topics such as cyber bullying and Internet safety at local schools and churches.

"It is great to see our students have the confidence to go out into their communities and facilitate educational trainings," Ms. Hernandez said. "It is great to see some of our students stepping out of their comfort zones, building new relationships with their peers and professionals alike, and becoming



As part of their community service, for example, some Chicas students offer free drop-in computer assistance at local public libraries. They assist people with everything from word processing to accessing Facebook to digital photo editing. Since Chicas students are bilingual, they also help the many Spanish-speaking community members who may have limited access to this type of assistance.



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# Building on Progress: An Overview of SER National Initiatives

more comfortable using and understanding technology.”

Ms. Torres added, “This program has helped me contribute to my community in a new way.”

Each student receives a laptop and Kindle Fire upon successfully completing the program.

## SER Education Initiatives Serve Hispanics Cradle to Cane

Time and again, research shows that education — in many forms — is key to success and that the earlier it starts, the better off a person will be. With that in mind, SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. (SER National) launched a new Bilingual Early Childhood Education Program. It also continues to build on the success of its online high school, SKOOLnet, and has taken its English-language acquisition program, U.S.A. Learns, mobile.

## Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership

SER National was awarded an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant with Education Station in Irving, Texas. The grant totals approximately \$5.6 million over



four and half years. Through this grant, SER National will implement a bilingual early childhood education program serving a minimum of 72 children ages 0-36 months of low-income families in Dallas County. The partnership will provide access to high-quality, comprehensive services to low-income toddlers and their families. The partnership will also allow for improvement in the service quality for

all attending children, up to age three, by elevating program quality to meet Head Start Performance Standards.

SER National and Education Station intend to implement an innovative, culturally relevant, and developmentally appropriate bilingual care and early school readiness program for vulnerable, and mostly English Limited Speaking infants, toddlers, and their families.



The Partnership’s goal is to deliver high quality services, through a Birth-to-Three Continuum of comprehensive child development and family support services that will:

- Enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of participating children,
- Support parents’ efforts to fulfill their parental roles, and
- Help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

The Partnership will maintain full compliance with Texas Minimum Standards, and Texas Guide for Infants and Toddlers at the Partner Site, while also seeking the highest level of quality care. The Leadership Team will work strategically and systematically towards the full implementation of Early Head Start and Head Start Performance Standards, and the National Academy for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Program Standards.

## Career Online High School Scholarship Campaign

As part of its Clinton Global Initiative “Commitment to Action,” SER National

will be offering 50 scholarships to the SER Career Academy to combat the epidemic of high school dropouts in the U.S., which is particularly prevalent among males in low-income African-American and Hispanic populations. Scholarship recipients will have full costs of earning their accredited high school diploma, including transfer of any previous high school credits. In addition, they will receive career training in one of eight career certificate tracks of their choice:

1. Childcare and Education
2. Certified Protection Officer
3. Certified Transportation Services
4. Homeland Security
5. Office Management
6. Retail Customer Service Skills
7. Food and Customer Service Skills
8. General Career Preparation

In partnership with six self-selected Affiliate Partners, SER National has awarded 40 of 50 scholarships in local communities served by SER, some of which were awarded through a national persuasive video/essay contest. The contest was hosted by SER National’s interactive online community network, SKOOLnet.org, and promoted on its various social media platforms. An additional 10 scholarships will be awarded in the coming months.

Scholarship recipient Patrick Gabrieldson is one of those student success stories. Having recently graduated with a high school diploma and professional skills certificate, he now plans to continue with post-secondary education and is exploring career options, including online certificate programs offered through SER’s online education catalogue.

## Free English Language Acquisition through U.S.A. Learns

SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. (SER National), in partnership with the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE), will serve as a proprietary content developer for the U.S.A. Learns website, mobile app, and related materials, and will also be the exclusive national community-based organization partner in its promotion, outreach, and advocacy to communities of Hispanics, Latinos, and other underserved

*Continued on page 14*



A woman with dark hair, smiling, wearing a blue patterned jacket over a white top. She is holding a white sign with the word "OPEN" in large, bold, black letters. The background is a blue-tinted image of a modern interior with large windows and glass doors.

# Altria Today

# Growing Together

As business leaders, Altria's companies believe in promoting economic development in the communities we call home.

We support organizations' enterprise initiatives that attract capital investment and create new jobs, helping build a robust local economy. And, we're committed to leadership development programs that prepare future leaders for community service.

Altria salutes SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.

Philip Morris USA  
U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company  
John Middleton  
Nu Mark  
Ste.Michelle Wine Estates



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and low-income populations. The SER National website, [ser-national.org](http://ser-national.org), will host and promote U.S.A. Learns as a portal to access the tool.

U.S.A. Learns is a best in class, free website



to support immigrants who want to learn or improve their English language skills as they become part of American society. Used by nearly 6 million adults worldwide, the site offers contextualized practice activities in listening, reading, writing, speaking, and life skills necessary for success at work and in the community. All instructional materials are online — therefore no videos or workbooks need to be purchased.

Designed as an online tool to learn English outside of a classroom, U.S.A. Learns currently consists of three unique programs:

- **First English Course** is a 20-unit, video-based course designed for ESL beginner-level adult learners. The classroom-based teaching video, *Putting English to Work 1*, is used as the basis of scope and sequence, while activities in each unit build upon previously presented content.
- **Second English Course**, a 20-unit, video-based course designed for ESL intermediate-level adult learners, is an extension and expansion of the popular online series – *English for All*. Each of five topics uses a different video story with an instructive plot and interesting characters. The video story of each topic is unique and all instructional activities are based on the language and actions of the video stories.
- **Practice English and Reading** offers 44 intermediate-level stories and activities based on real-life situations. These stories can be used to supplement and extend the intermediate students'

curriculum. Each story contains a reading, vocabulary development, comprehension questions, and a writing prompt.

The new iteration of U.S.A. Learns, released in early 2015, includes expanded course areas. SER National will leverage its nationwide network of affiliate and community partners to launch organic, grass roots utilization in Hispanic and Latino communities.

### **SER Continues Serving Young People through WIA**

As the SER National Work Investment Act (WIA) youth program completes its third year of funding by Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas, it continues to serve successfully the most at-risk youth in Dallas County. A majority of participants are low-income or high school dropouts, some are young parents, and/or often help support their own immediate families. SER National partners with the Dallas Workforce Center and places students in jobs that empower them with work and life skills.

Three prior participants credit the youth program with changing their lives for the better. All three are now employed by SER National.

Julie Mendoza was in high school when she learned about the program. She didn't think the program was for her because it helped people earn GEDs, but when she learned that she could possibly find a job, she applied.

"My inspiration to being successful has always been wanting to become something better in life," Ms. Mendoza said. "I come from a family in which my mother didn't work and always depended on someone else. My father was not around, and my siblings were always getting into trouble. I was always taught that I should get married and depend on my husband for anything and everything. I didn't want to be a stay at home wife. So when I was in my teen years I decided that I wanted to be an independent woman and not rely on someone else. I want to thank SER National for giving me the chance to intern and learn job skills and most of all for making me a part of their team."

Priscilla Mota earned her GED through the program and was placed at the Grand Prairie Boys and Girls Club, where she worked as an activity leader. Eventually, she was hired as a receptionist at SER National, and today she is the Peer Support Specialist at the Grand Prairie Workforce Center.

Once a teen mom, Ms. Mota, now a mother of two, said she was inspired by her daughters to seek an education and a career as a legal assistant. She, in turn, hopes to serve as inspiration to her daughters.

"I have dreams to help my daughters succeed because I am now succeeding. My philosophy is 'Have faith, dream big, think big, and know that anything is possible,'" Ms. Mota said. "I am greatly appreciative of the support and confidence that SER staff has shown with my career."

Damaris Flores is appreciative of the opportunity to prove that someone with a GED can be a success. Natalie Covington, a SER National employee who was a former youth participant, inspired her. "It doesn't matter if you have a high school diploma or a GED, if you're not determined or focused on your education and future, then you won't be successful. You have to stay positive and true to yourself," Ms. Flores said. "My life changed when I joined the youth works program. I feel blessed because SER has given me so many great opportunities and a better future."

Two recent participants found valuable employment, lessons, and have successfully enrolled in college. Detavious Maloy entered the program as a sophomore in high school, and he worked the summer at the Boys and Girls Club in Dallas. He returned to SER the summers of his junior and senior years, working at the same Boys and Girls Club at the request of center supervisors, who knew they could count on Mr. Maloy's work ethic and positive influence on youth at the center. While there, his supervisors said Mr. Maloy was a valued employee and learned many leadership and employment skills.

Last summer, Mr. Maloy and his mother, Jaquelin Herron, made a point of stopping by the Dallas Workforce Center to thank case manager and SER National employee, Rosa Leal, for all the help the Youth Works

*Continued on page 16*





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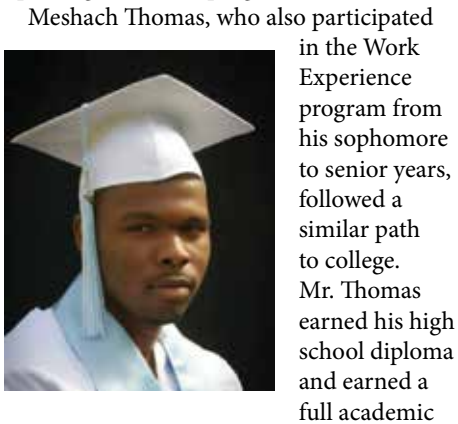
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# Building on Progress: An Overview of SER National Initiatives

Program provided. Ms. Herron credited the program and all of the other resources (transportation assistance, school and work clothing throughout the duration of the program) her son received with helping him to succeed in school. Ms. Herron said her son's ability to earn money during the summers also helped their family and taught him how to work, stay focused and busy, and be a good citizen.

Ultimately, Mr. Maloy received a scholarship from Southeastern Oklahoma University, which he is currently attending. He still maintains contact with Ms. Leal, updating her on his progress.



Meshach Thomas, who also participated in the Work Experience program from his sophomore to senior years, followed a similar path to college. Mr. Thomas earned his high school diploma and earned a full academic

scholarship to Texas Tech University. He and his family greatly benefited from the program.

Mr. Thomas worked at the Oak Cliff Boys and Girls Club, where he said he learned to work hard and be responsible. He also learned customer service, time management and teamwork at the Boys and Girls Club and was known as a leader at the club and among his peers. Today, Mr. Thomas is excited about the future and about playing baseball for Texas Tech.

## SCSEP Helps Seniors Find Meaningful Employment

One of SER National's longest-running and most successful programs, SCSEP helps train or retrain seniors for employment. Participants also learn job search skills and on the job training through placement in a temporary work setting at a host agency, where there is often potential for fulltime employment. SER National has been serving

seniors through SCSEP since 2003. To date, it has trained and helped place thousands who are now gainfully employed.

Among the many seniors served through SCSEP in the past year are the following success stories:

Felix Avalos went to SER Miami, where he enrolled in SCSEP after having lost his job as a driver. He was placed with a host agency, where he trained in the kitchen. He also learned job search techniques, interview and other skills, which he used to land a full-time job as an aircraft mechanic. He expressed gratitude to SER Florida for getting them back into the workforce.

In Milwaukee, Alejo Pacheco retired from his job as a groundskeeper at a cemetery only to discover that he would be unable to make ends meet. He tried unsuccessfully for two years to find unemployment, due in part to his limited English. He learned of SCSEP at SER National Wisconsin and was placed in a training program at Journey House, a non-profit dedicated to helping people out of poverty through various programs and services. Mr. Pacheco trained as a maintenance employee while he worked on improving his English through ESL and adult basic education classes. The Mexico native was eventually hired on a part-time basis, due in large part to his good nature, attendance, dedication, consistency and work ethic.

Robert Harris of Stockton, California, was homeless and staying at a men's shelter when he learned of the SCSEP program and

applied for the program with SER in 2013. He trained at the Emergency Food Bank in the food pantry and the warehouse, where he served as a resource to other volunteers and a big help to the warehouse supervisor.

Mr. Harris was later transferred to a thrift shop in Stockton, where he received further training and was later hired. Today, Mr. Harris has his own place to call home and plans on buying a car.

Betty (Elizabeth) Persson went to the Workforce Center in Oak Hurst, CA, where she participated in SER's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).




She had been out of the job market for many years, but after receiving job skills and other training, she landed a job as a dinner cook at a nursing home. An expert cook and soup-making maven, Ms. Persson preps and cooks dinner five nights a week for more than 150 patients and guests, who have very different dietary needs. She prides herself in making everything from scratch, particularly her soups because the nursing facility used to serve canned soup. The patients also appreciate her cooking.

Ms. Persson credits SER with helping her land a job she thoroughly enjoys. She says the job is strenuous, "I'm on my feet from 10 a.m. to about 8 at night, but it seems to be keeping me young," said Ms. Persson, who turns 72 this year. "I never would have gained the ability or the confidence required for this position. When I first applied for the job, I had to 'sell myself!' I knew what I was capable of doing without any formal training (all the other chefs have had extensive class-time in various programs), and had to be able to project that. Your program helped me regain that confidence and ability after many years off the job market."





A photograph of three children lying on their backs on a lush green lawn. At the top is a girl with long dark hair wearing a bright blue t-shirt with a sequined collar. In the middle is a girl with blonde hair wearing a blue button-down shirt. At the bottom is a boy with dark hair wearing a red and white polo shirt. They are all smiling at the camera. The text 'The things you care about are the things we care about too.' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

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# SER National Affiliates Highlights

## SER Affiliates Help “YouthBuild” Academic and Career Successes through National DOL Program

Every year, an estimated 10,000 low-income youth who drop out of high school enroll in YouthBuild Programs across the country. YouthBuild, founded as a local program in New York’s famed Harlem in 1978, has grown to a national program funded by the Department of Labor (DOL). Three SER National Affiliates—in Chicago, Detroit and Houston—are grant recipients and currently provide education and hands-on training to hundreds of young people through this program.

Interested participants begin the YouthBuild program by participating in two weeks of “mental toughness” camp designed to gauge their interest and most important, their readiness to commit to the program. During this assessment phase, youth are also tested to gauge their numeracy and literacy levels. The camp also provides leadership and team-building lessons. SER staff provides resources for all youth who attend, as well as access to information on other programs that may be more appropriate. The camp ends with a selection and enrollment process.

YouthBuild combines education, occupational skills and leadership development, and community service to trainees so that they are equipped with the career and personal development skills needed to enter employment and/or post-secondary learning opportunities.

YouthBuild serves not only young SER clients, it helps cities and communities by training youth to build projects, such as affordable housing in Chicago and mobility ramps for low-income seniors and disabled individuals in Detroit. Read on for more specifics of this significant program.

### Windy City YouthBuild Central States SER

Windy City YouthBuild recruits Chicago youth with a particular focus on those who are at risk of joining or already involved with gangs. This successful program already has a waiting list of potential youth participants.

Currently in its second cycle of YouthBuild funding, Central States SER

was first awarded the Department of Labor grant in 2011 for 64 youth and in 2013 was successfully renewed to train another 64 young people.

After mental toughness week, young people are selected, enrolled, and sign a pledge to be punctual, meet deadlines, and respect one another. Teambuilding exercises are used, as well as restorative justice techniques, peace circles and reflection, to ensure that the youth stay committed to the program and to one another.

Windy City YouthBuild leverages several community partners to provide the experience for the youth. Central States SER provides GED instruction on site at Dawson Technical Institute. Dawson provides OSHA training and certification, as well as National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) curriculum, an accredited construction curriculum, and a practice classroom for the youth to practice work modules. The modules include: basic carpentry, drywall, introduction to electrical wiring, introduction to basic plumbing and flooring, etc.

At the same time, Windy City YouthBuild participants take part in career counseling, college fairs, and leadership and team-building exercises. Central States SER leverages programming at its two workforce centers so that youth also receive job readiness training and financial coaching. SER partners with Youth Charter Connections Schools so that some youth are able to access online learning and diploma recovery in lieu of GED classes. Activities are planned in order to engage the family and friends of youth, as youth who are supported

tend to excel.

Hispanic Housing Development Corporation through its subsidiary, Tropic Construction Company, provides off-site work experience at an actual construction



site for low-income housing. Youth go through an orientation on worksite rules, are then outfitted with construction gear and clothing and assist in tasks under close supervision.

All youth in the program are subject to random drug testing and will receive incentive pay for good attendance and successful completion of a training module. Youth who completed Windy City are assisted with employment and/or continuing education tracks. SER is currently in conversation with the Chicago Federation of Laborers to explore ways in which they can support the program.

### SER YouthBuild Construction Institute SER Metro-Detroit

Luis Leija joined SER YouthBuild Construction Institute (SYCI), a program of SER Metro-Detroit, in September of 2012. Raised in Southwest Detroit, he began the program with a 10th-grade education,

however, he was reading at a fifth-grade level and doing math at a fourth-grade level.

Mr. Leija was focused and determined to achieve his educational and employment goals; he committed himself and persevered, successfully completing the program and earning his GED three months later. He took the GED exam in December 2012



Patrick Joseph “Pat” Quinn, Jr., Former Governor, Illinois, visits Windy City YouthBuild

Continued on page 19





# SER National Affiliates Highlights

and received a composite score that was nearly 200 points higher than the required minimum passing score.

Mr. Leija also earned several construction industry credentials, but had his sights on another learning and career opportunity. After completing YouthBuild, he pursued an associate's degree in automotive technology with the Wayne County Community College District. He is now employed full-time as a mechanic at a Ford dealership in Southwest Detroit.

Since July 2009, 194 young Detroiters have enrolled in SYCI. These trainees participate in numerous academic, career-development, and leadership activities, as well as community service and civic engagement to help further their careers and personal success. SYCI's program design was purposely created to maximize outcomes for participants, partners, and other stakeholders, resulting in a high-level social and economic impact in the communities served. SYCI partnerships are strategically aligned to ensure graduates are equipped to enter directly into entry-level employment, pursue post-secondary learning, and/or enter advanced career pathways within the construction and building trades.

In addition to being an AmeriCorps program since 2012, SYCI collaborates with a number of community, labor organizations, and training partners to provide training and service learning opportunities. O'Brien Construction is SYCI's construction training partner, providing trainees with on-the-job training designed to supplement and enhance skills they acquire in the classroom. Graduates are also able to enter into apprenticeship learning opportunities. SYCI's career readiness curriculum provides trainees with career exploration and preparation activities that include academic testing and regular college crawls. As a partner, Henry Ford College provides orientations, academic and financial counseling, and a waiver on registration fees for entering students.

SYCI's success as both a YouthBuild and AmeriCorps program resulted in a Youth Action Grant from the Starbucks Foundation in April 2013. Known as the Youth Ramp-Up Detroit Initiative, SYCI members are constructing ramps for low-income seniors and disabled individuals.

SYCI is committed to helping YouthBuilders to not only build homes, but to build their characters and make lasting and significant change in their lives and communities.

## YouthBuild Houston

SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc. began operating the YouthBuild Houston program in November 2013. The program recruits primarily 18-24 year olds who come from a low-income household and dropped out of high school. Although youth as young as 16 are eligible, Texas law makes it difficult for anyone under the age of 18 to pursue a GED rather than a high school diploma, so YouthBuild Houston focuses on slightly older recruits.



*YouthBuild Houston hosted Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, and Houston Mayor Annise Parker during a special site visit in August, 2014.*

After successfully completing the mental toughness component, participants receive official YouthBuild Houston shirts in a small ceremony to recognize their commitment. During this component, participants earn a small daily stipend and a bonus for perfect attendance.

In addition to SER job training staff, SER has four dedicated YouthBuild Houston staff members who are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program. On any given day, staff members provide individual coaching, track and report participants' grades, verify training hours, and help students with personal issues and any required tutoring.

Students volunteer at local nonprofit

organizations, including the Houston Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity, every-other week, integrating community service into the program.

Once participants have completed training and earned their certification, they receive a tool kit and proper construction gear and clothing so that they may begin hands-on training at a worksite. At this stage of the program, participants earn a slightly higher stipend and bonus.

The Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) has been an invaluable partner for YouthBuild Houston and has been a major contributor to the program's success by providing the use of classroom space as an in-kind donation. In addition, it supplies the GED instructor, Test of Adult

Basic Education (TABE) to measure academic gains, practice tests for students, and helps SER's YouthBuild Houston staff recognize when students are prepared to take each portion of the GED exam.

To-date, YouthBuild Houston has enrolled 70 participants. Six have successfully completed their GEDs, 15 have been successfully placed in



employment, and three have been inducted into the Adult Education Honor Society.

YouthBuild Houston also had the honor of hosting a special site visit for the U.S.

*Continued on page 20*



# SER National Affiliates Highlights

Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, and Houston Mayor Annise Parker.

## SER Metro-Detroit

### SER Metro-Detroit Recognized by White House for Helping Those At Risk

SER Metro-Detroit is a vital community resource, enhancing the lives of thousands across the city each year. Through a series of education, job training, and job placement programs, along with youth development and education initiatives, SER provides Detroit residents with the skills, resources and opportunities they need to achieve self-sufficiency.

SER Metro-Detroit has had a banner year in serving the citizens of Detroit and other parts of the country. Eva Garza Dewaelsche,

that a growing number of families across southeastern Michigan; indeed, across the nation, are struggling and that even a job is not enough to move people out of poverty.”

Recognizing this challenge, SER Metro-Detroit has partnered with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and United Way for Southeastern Michigan to operate the Center for Working Families. The program provides on-site employment services and wraparound services that participants need to move up the economic ladder and achieve long-term economic stability.

Other new initiatives include the SER Learning Academy, an alternative high school that provides a combination of academic instruction and vocational training for in-demand industries. Other new programs include the Detroit Workforce

Many families seeking cash assistance through the Michigan Family Independence Program (FIP) face significant barriers in securing and retaining employment. From childcare to transportation and literacy, career coaches cite a long list of barriers that can keep families from achieving self-sufficiency. Having positive mentors can help direct job seekers to reach their educational, career, economic and relationship goals. Our program focuses on a partnership between SERCO and PATH participants in building assets and developing protective factors, including their future aspirations for themselves, relationships and employers. The program covers such topics as developing and maintaining job search skills, practicing effective communication skills, career exploration, and obtaining life skills while working toward self-sufficiency and employment.



President and CEO of SER Metro-Detroit, was honored as a Champion of Change by the White House for “extraordinary dedication and hard work to help those with criminal records re-enter society with dignity and viable employment opportunities.” SER’s nomination resulted from a visit and tour of SER Metro-Detroit’s programs and facilities by White House officials from the President’s “My Brother’s Keeper” initiative. The visit included a presentation by some of SER’s program graduates. White House officials were inspired by the story told by a graduate, who shared how her participation in SER’s Center for Working Families helped turn her life around and gave her the second chance she desperately needed after serving time in prison.

Ms. Garza Dewaelsche said she was honored to receive the recognition for “the important work that SER does in the community to change the lives of even the most at-risk job seekers.”

However, much remains to be done, said Ms. Garza Dewaelsche. “There is no question

Development Department-sponsored Youth of Promise Leadership Program and Adult Education Center. SER Metro-Detroit also continues to operate the Samaritan Center One Stop Resources Center, which houses 106 partner agencies that synergistically meet common goals.

### Adult Education Services at the Ford Resource and Engagement Center

Adult Education Services at the Ford Resource and Engagement Center (FREC): Funded by Ford Motor Fund, SER provides education services, including assessment, Vocational English as a Second Language, GED preparation services and bilingual basic computer classes. As the lead workforce development agency for the FREC, SER also offers participants one-on-one career coaching services and job readiness workshops, as well as access to financial literacy and coaching through the Center for Working Families.

### P.A.T.H. | Partnership, Accountability, Training and Hope Program

### The Youth of Promise Leadership Program

This is a Workforce Investment Act year-round program that provides comprehensive services for youth ages 14-18 in high school. The program focuses on academic enrichment, tutoring and mentoring activities, leadership training and career guidance and counseling.

“SER is dedicated to providing relevant job training and access for all to employment and educational opportunities in today’s highly competitive job market,” Ms. Garza Dewaelsche said.



In addition, SER Metro-Detroit operates workforce centers in Detroit, and SERCO, the for-profit arm of SER Metro-Detroit, operates workforce centers in Corpus Christi, El Paso and Philadelphia.

*Continued on page 22*



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# SER National Affiliates Highlights

## Central States SER

### Central States SER Ensures Road to Success

Central States SER is a workforce development and education organization that believes in the potential of each and every individual. Since its inception, it has assisted thousands of marginalized and disadvantaged residents from across the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County in achieving their career and academic goals through quality employment, education and training programs. Central States helps some of the hardest-to-reach youth and adults — people trying to improve their lives but who are at risk of slipping through the cracks — and does what it takes to help them succeed.

Central States SER officers a variety of youth and adult programs, as well as SCSEP, which serves seniors. The youth programs include:

#### WIA Yes Programs

Youth Empowered to Succeed (YES!) is SER's comprehensive program to fully develop the potential of youth, ages 14 to 24, who are at risk of not transitioning successfully into adulthood. SER targets youth from low-income, underserved communities, including many who are ex-offenders and/or gang-affiliated and helps them to become productive and thriving members of society. YES! helps youth identify, pursue and achieve their academic, job and career goals. Providing these youth with a second, or even third chance has the ultimate potential to improve the vitality of the community.

#### PODER: Afterschool Program

PODER (Positive Outcomes Delivered through Education and Respect) is a 21st Century Community Learning Center funded by the Illinois State Board of Education as a part of the No Child Left Behind Act. PODER currently operates as an after school program that promotes academic and social enrichment to students in low-income Title 1 schools who are of the greatest need. PODER operates in schools that are low-income schools that have failed their AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). In addition to facing academic and economic challenges, the students live in gang-infested

neighborhoods. These neighborhoods provide very few positive and structured opportunities for the students after school, leaving the students susceptible to gang-violence.

#### Bridges to Pathways

The Bridges to Pathways Initiative that helps youth being released from detention centers with achieving education and employment goals. The program includes an intensive combination of: high school credit and diploma recovery training, cognitive behavioral therapy, paid work experience, career and college readiness training, service-learning, and individualized career planning and referrals to other supports.

#### Intensive Youth Services

Project Onward is a supplemental academic service program that addresses needs of in and out of school youth who are gang affiliated and court involved. This program takes a holistic approach to academic enrichment and youth development. Each participant receives comprehensive academic services that include both traditional and innovative approaches. In addition to classroom instruction, this program implements alternative learning methods, such as peer-led instruction and education through field trips and community service projects.

#### YouthBuild

YouthBuild is an intensive, six-month program that integrates GED preparation with construction training and community service projects.

#### SER's Healthcare Careers Pathway

Programs involve two main components: Helping lower-skilled, lower-income adults gain access to training that leads to a viable career in healthcare; and helping local healthcare employers find quality staff. SER's Healthcare Bridge is a partnership with Daley College and the Arturo Velasquez Institute. It has helped hundreds successfully complete a contextualized literacy and numeracy program so that they may gain admission into a healthcare-focused occupational training program at Chicago City Colleges and ultimately find employment at a healthcare facility. Career

pathways include nursing and radiology technician; nursing assistant and personal care technician as entry opportunities.

#### Garfield Workforce Center

The Garfield Workforce Center provides employment assistance or occupational job training to Chicago residents in in-demand fields with wages that lead to self-sufficiency. Eligible and suitable customers receive labor market counseling, interviewing skills and/or resume development with the final goal leading to employment through job referrals, job club activities and job fairs.

#### Cicero Workforce Center

The Cicero Workforce Center provides employment assistance or occupational job training to Suburban Cook County residents that lead to employment in in-demand fields with wages that lead to self-sufficiency.

#### Center for Working Families

SER's Center for Working Families (CWF) works with individuals to make their most of their paycheck, to take advantage of income supports, and to improve their credit and net worth. Through the CWF, individuals meet one-on-one with an experienced financial coach to establish a budget, repair damaged credit, reduce debt, and build savings and assets. An income supports specialist also helps eligible families take advantage of supports such as food stamps and the Earned Income Tax Credit. SER works with the family to achieve short-term personal finance goals and to move towards a long-term plan for economic stability.

#### SER-Jobs for Progress – Miami

SER-Jobs for Progress Florida has served as one of Florida's leading providers of workforce development services for more than three decades. Founded in Miami's Little Havana in 1978, SER's programs emphasize counseling and education, career guidance and placement. It covers a service area stretching from Palm Beach County to the Florida Keys and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Everglades. The organization primarily offers outsourcing services to state and local governments. Targeting youth, individuals 55 and over, and welfare recipients looking for

*Continued on page 24*





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# SER National Affiliates Highlights

work, SER Miami assists more than 10,000 people a year through its various programs. Among them are:

## One Stop Career Center

This center provides online job search assistance, in-classroom and on the job training. In a typical year, the center helps more than 10,000 job seekers with an expected 35% entered employment rate. For those who cannot find a job through basic services, 500 people per year are referred to training with a planned 92% entered employment rate. The center also helps transition families from welfare to work, serving over 200 with a 35% entered employment. There is also a veteran's assistance program serving more than 100 veterans who have an entered employment rate of 35%.

## Advanced Technical Centers

ATC is SER's education division, and the institution educates over 200 students annually. The current list of educational program includes: Computer operations, Cisco network associate, customer service, microcomputer data processing, and travel agent.

## Housing Program

When the nation began to experience the current mortgage crisis, it became evident that SER's participants were being affected. So, with the guidance and financial backing of our long-time partner Esperanza USA, SER began offering housing assistance programs. Esperanza, which means "hope" in Spanish, is a national faith-based organization headquartered in Philadelphia. SER Florida annually serves more than 150 families facing the loss of their homes.

## Stay-in-School Program

This program assists an average of 30 at-risk youth a year. The students attend Homestead Senior High School and are referred by the Department of Juvenile Justice. They all have at least one arrest on record. The program's performance goal is to retain at least 80% of the youth through the school year.

Like many other SER Affiliates, SER Miami received a Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) grant

from the Department of Labor. In addition to serving low-income families, welfare recipients, dislocated workers, high school students and dropouts, and senior citizens, SER also provides program services to special populations throughout Miami-Dade County, such as refugees, at risk youth and the elderly.

"We manage and implement programs and services in every community with the clear understanding that we are part of the community in which we operate," said Jose Cela, SER Miami President. "We are committed to employing the best people residing in the communities we serve."

## SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.-Santa Fe

### SER Santa Fe Receives White House Recognition

SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. of Santa Fe believes in and encourages innovation at every level. Its workforce programs, which educate, train and employ clients, have boosted opportunities in the area since opening its doors more than four decades ago.



(Right) Sergio Olivas Muñoz looks on as President Obama signs WIOA.

SER Santa Fe provides educational and workforce opportunities in 14 counties throughout northern and central New Mexico with a goal of placing its program participants in permanent, productive and unsubsidized employment.

The agency had a uniquely special moment last summer when one of its program participants, Sergio Olivas Muñoz, was invited to the White House for the signing of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act by President Barack Obama. He was a

participant of SER Santa Fe's youth program training youth for jobs in the environmental industries.

SER of Santa Fe offers many programs to its clients, which include youth and adults in 14 counties in Northern and Central New Mexico.

## Youth Programs

A new innovative GED program was developed and piloted in Taos, N.M., using unique learning tools that integrate art, creativity, incentives and lots of community support.

Another innovative project targeting so-called "green industry" jobs was developed in Santa Fe, along with Santa Fe Community College and Earth Works. Participants are given college-level coursework that included hands on projects in the community.

## Career Alternatives

SER's program, which boasts award-winning curriculum, is used in participating school districts that provide a teacher and classroom.

The program uses state-of-the-art computer technology and research based academic curricula to help students with credit recovery, skills enhancements, career planning and paid work experience.

## SER's Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

SER has been the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program service provider in the Northern Region of New Mexico since 2003 and in the Central Region since 2007. The total service area now encompasses 14 counties, which encompasses about half of the state population.

## State Energy Sector Program (SESP)

This program is designed to train workers in renewable, energy-efficient occupations, reduce unemployment and upgrade the skills of employed workers to qualify them for higher wages, resulting in greater community prosperity. The program works with employers in green construction/energy efficiency, wind, solar and biofuel sectors. The program has been highly successful.





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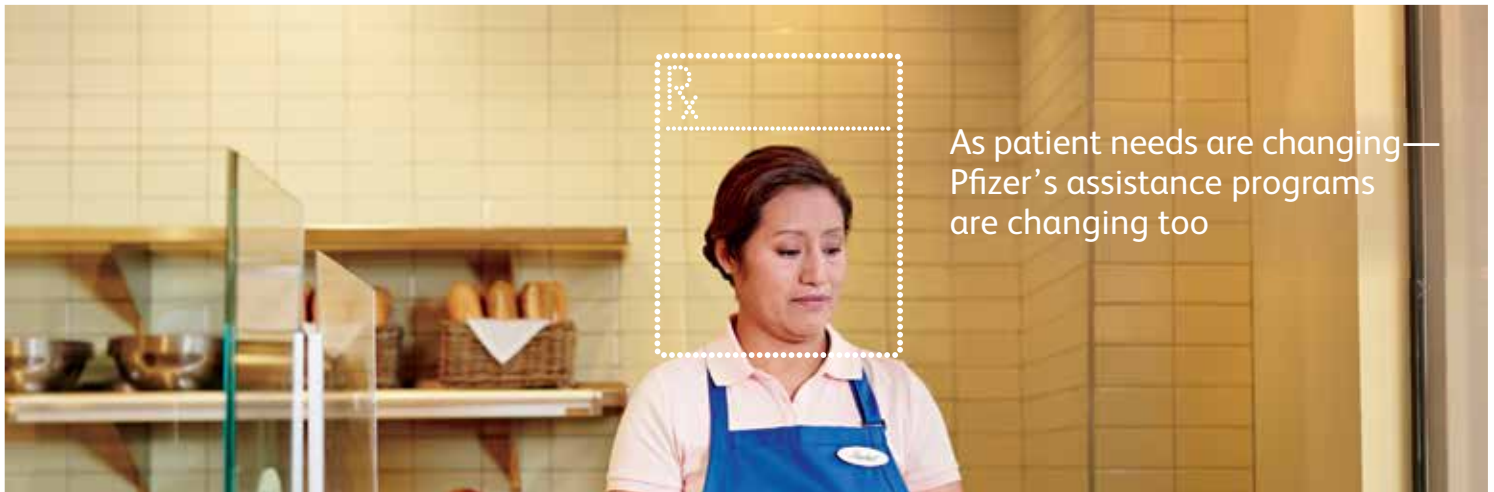


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## SER Board Elects Officers, Welcomes New Members

The SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. Board of Directors elected new officers and welcomed new members, most hailing from the corporate sector. The new officers include: Chairman Francisco F. Ivarra, representing the American GI Forum; Vice Chair Margaret Moran, National LULAC President and representing LULAC; Treasurer Frank Casillas of Casillas Consulting, LTD, corporate representative; and Secretary Jose L. Cela, President, SER Florida, and affiliate representative.

Four new board members join a diverse group of colleagues from Fortune 500 companies, community based organizations, and SER Affiliates. Board members are charged with providing essential oversight and focused direction to ensure that SER National is fulfilling its mission of transforming lives through education, employment and empowerment in the most effective, efficient way possible. The new board members (listed in alphabetical order) are:

**Nory Angel**, Executive Director/CEO for SER – Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc.



Ms. Angel joins the board as an affiliate representative. She has been with the Texas Gulf Coast affiliate for 10 years, five as its Executive Director and CEO. Under her leadership, SER opened a Green Career Training Center in February of 2010 through a \$3.1 million contract from the Department of Labor, and more recently received a \$1.1 Million YouthBuild grant to serve high school drop outs and prepare them for jobs in the construction industry. A native of Los Angeles and a first-generation Latin American, Ms. Angel holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Texas and an MBA from Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. Ms. Angel's passion for improving lives through employment and training, started after college when she began working for a non-profit agency that assisted refugees from all over the world. Fluent in English, Spanish, and French, she is an American Leadership Forum Fellow, a National Hispana Leadership Institute Fellow, and a graduate of the Center for Houston's Future. She also serves on the boards of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, the Greater East End Management District, and the Eastwood Civic Association. She is a founding member of the East End Collaborative, created to serve the diverse needs of Latinos in the East End community.

**Jane C. Garcia**, Board Member, MGM Board of Directors/Local Partners

A licensed social worker, Ms. Garcia has had a long career in the public sectors and community-based organizations. She worked as a classroom facilitator and counselor for the Detroit Public School System, a Community Specialist for the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Executive Director of LASED, and an Employment Coordinator and Counselor for SER Metro-Detroit Jobs for Progress, Inc. A community activist for more than four decades, Ms. Garcia has served on many boards and commissions, including SER Metro-Detroit Jobs for Progress, Inc.; Central States SER Jobs for Progress, Inc.; Detroit Wayne Area Agency on Aging; and New Detroit Inc. She has been a Cable Commissioner for the City of Detroit and sat on the board of United Way for Southeastern Michigan, serving as a member of the Executive Committee of United Way Community Services for 20 years. Ms. Garcia has received numerous prestigious recognitions for her work, including being named Michigania of The Year Award in 2008 and receiving the Oxtli Award, the highest award presented by Mexico to a Mexican or Mexican American working on behalf of the Hispanic Community of the United States. In 1982, she was the first Hispanic elected Vice-Chair of the Michigan Republican Party. In 1990, Ms. Garcia founded Corporate Responsibility through Advocacy, which advocates for minority board membership on corporate and other boards. Currently, she is a member of the MGM Board of Directors/Local Partners, which oversees the Detroit casino operations.



**Gloria Schoch**, Community Commerce and Partnerships Manager, MillerCoors

At MillerCoors, Ms. Schoch is responsible for the development and execution of multicultural community investment and outreach strategies and programs to increase commercial impact, build consumer and customer interest, and enhance the company's reputation. She serves as the community liaison with community leaders, organizations, and consumers. Previously, she served as Director of Public Affairs for First Data and Community Relations Manager for Western Union. Before joining the corporate sector, Ms. Schoch was the Assistant Curator and Director of Public Relations and Marketing at the Museo de las Americas in Denver. She currently sits on the advisory board for the University of Colorado School of Public Affairs. She's also served as the chair of the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce's Corporate Leadership Collaborative and a member of the Board of Directors of the Denver Coalition for Integration and the Denver Health Foundation's Level One Society. In 2012, Ms. Schoch was named a Young Hispanic Corporate Achiever by the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility. In 2009, she was awarded the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce's "Young Professional of the Year Award" and named one of "Forty Under Forty" by the Denver Business Journal. A Leadership Denver alumnae, she holds a bachelor of science in anthropology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Colorado at Denver.



*Continued on page 31*





## SER Board Elects Officers, Welcomes New Members

### **Raul Villarreal**, Area Manager, General Motors

A native Texan, Mr. Villarreal has 35 years of manufacturing experience with General Motors. Currently, the Area Manager at the GM Arlington Plant, he has held different positions in the United States, Canada, and Spain. As a senior staff member, he leads by example; he believes that breaking down boundaries and challenging conventional wisdom can only enhance success for the corporation and its customers. Mr. Villarreal also is an advocate of success through education and is dedicated to helping students obtain college scholarships. An advocate of education and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math or STEM education, he is active in community and educational organizations. He currently serves as a board member of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Central Region Advisory Board, and previously served as Co-Chair of the Greater Kansas City Regional Planning Committee for First Robotics. Mr. Villarreal holds a Bachelor of Science degree in management from Baker University. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including HENAAC Luminary Award for promoting "Success Through Education," and the 2011 Boss Kettering Award, GM's highest internal recognition for technical innovation.



*For a complete list of board members, please see Page 27.*

## SER National Welcomes Linda Rivas

Linda Rivas has joined SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. as Executive Vice President.

SER National President & CEO Ignacio Salazar hired Ms. Rivas to oversee daily operations at the national headquarters.

"We took someone who is a proven leader, who is results oriented, has a standard of achievement that is second to none, and brought her expertise to the national headquarters," he said. "She's a significant talent acquisition."

No stranger to SER, Ms. Rivas has served on the SER National Board of Directors and is the immediate past President of SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. of San Antonio, a position she held for 16 years.

"I am thrilled to be working for SER National and under the mentorship of Mr. Salazar," said Ms. Rivas. "My goal is to bring the same goals for excellence and achievement to SER National that served me well during my tenure at SER-San Antonio. I am fortunate to work with SER National's cadre of loyal corporate supporters and sponsors and a supremely talented and committed staff. Together, we will continue to serve the needs of our clients through workforce development training, as well as addressing their education, financial literacy and language acquisition needs through our many proven programs."

Ms. Rivas has won numerous accolades for her work with SER-San Antonio, where she oversaw annual budgets of \$13- to \$19 million, and she and her staff provided workforce development services to more than 225,000 customers a year. Under her management, the San Antonio affiliate was awarded the Best Overall Performance by a Large Board from the Texas Workforce Commission in 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Mr. Salazar said under Ms. Rivas' leadership, SER-San Antonio was "one of the best providers in the nation, not just SER, but the nation."

Prior to joining SER-San Antonio, Ms. Rivas held leadership positions at the Alamo Community College District and with the City of San Antonio.

Ms. Rivas was recognized by the Imagen Foundation as a 2010 Latina Leaders Honoree, having been nominated by Congressman Charles A. Gonzalez in the category of social services. She has also garnered awards from the National Women's LULAC Commission, the National League of United Latin American Citizens, Work Source Alamo, Image de San Antonio, La Prensa Foundation Inc., the San Antonio Women's Chamber of Commerce, and SER National.

In addition, Ms. Rivas has served on the boards for the University Hospital District, the City of San Antonio's VERANO Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, and the Alamo Area Council of Governments.

Ms. Rivas holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration from the University of Texas at San Antonio and a Master's of Business Administration from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. She joined SER National in January.





# SER Network Directory

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Irving, TX 75039

Tel: 469-549-3600

**SER National Program Dev. Office**

1133 19th Street, N.W., Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 202-833-3384

**SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. of San Joaquin Valley**

Fresno, CA

**Latino Educational Fund**

Inglewood, CA

**El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center**

San Bernardino, CA

**Barrio Station**

San Diego, CA

**Pueblo y Salud**

San Fernando, CA

**Orange County/SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

Santa Ana, CA

**Multicultural Career Intern Program**

Washington, DC

**Florida SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

Miami Springs, FL

**Central States SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

Chicago, IL

**Southeastern Massachusetts SER**

Fall River, MA

**La Alianza Hispana**

Roxbury, MA

**US Hispanic Youth Entrepreneur Education**

Baltimore, MD

**SER Metro-Detroit, Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

Detroit, MI

**Puerto Rican Unity for Progress**

Camden, NJ

**SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

Santa Fe, NM

**SER of Westchester, Inc.**

White Plains, NY

**Adelante Mujeres**

Forest Grove, OR

**Hispanic American Organization, Inc.**

Allentown, PA

**Fundación Chana y Samuel Levis, Inc.**

San Juan, PR

**SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

Pawtucket, RI

**People Organized in Defense of Earth and her Resources**

Austin, TX

**Ignite Community Service Centers, Inc.**

Edinburg, TX

**SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast**

Houston, TX

**SER-Jobs for Progress of San Antonio**

San Antonio, TX

**Shirlington Employment and Education Center**

Arlington, VA

**Centro Latino SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.**

Tacoma, WA

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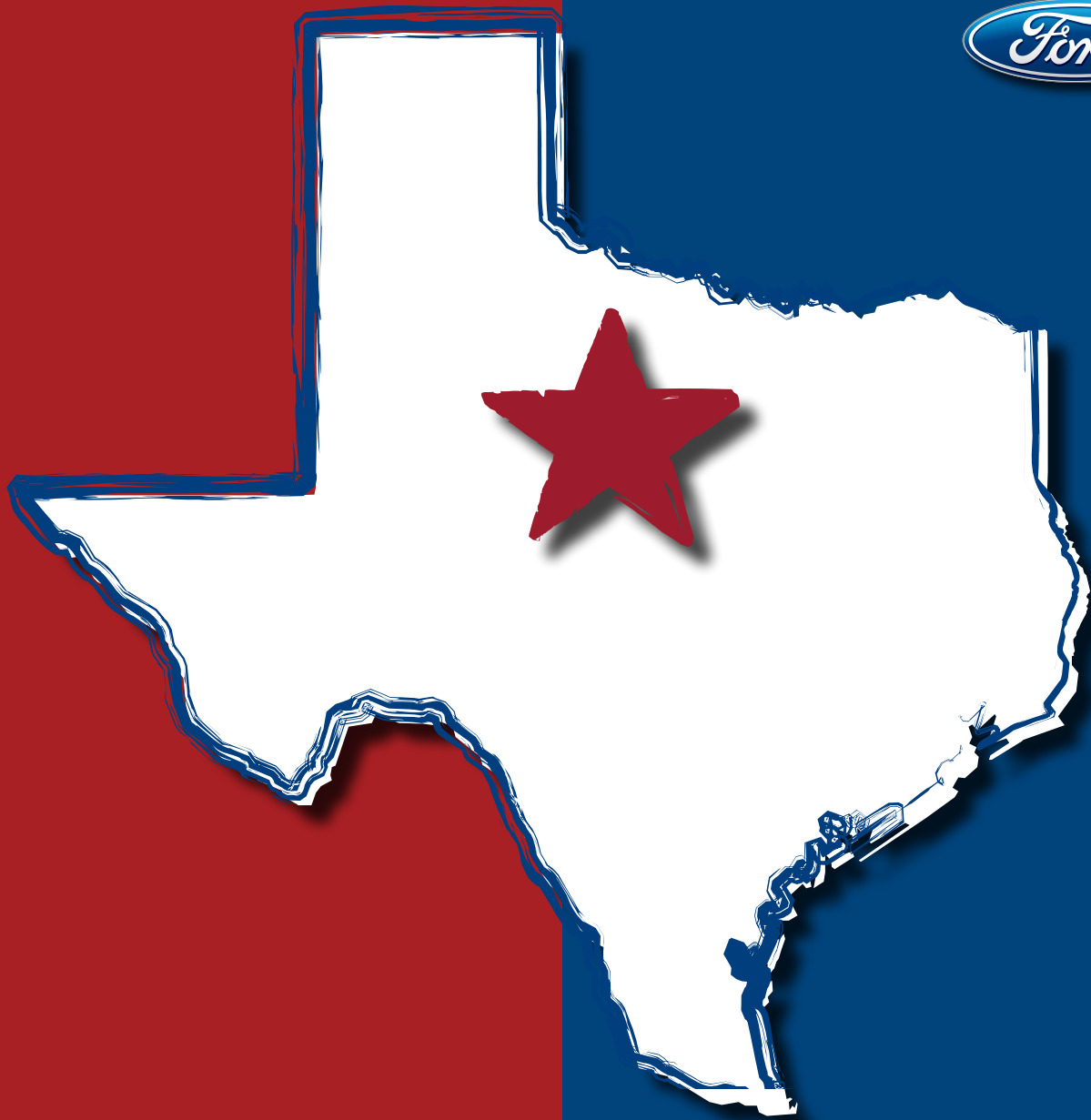
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