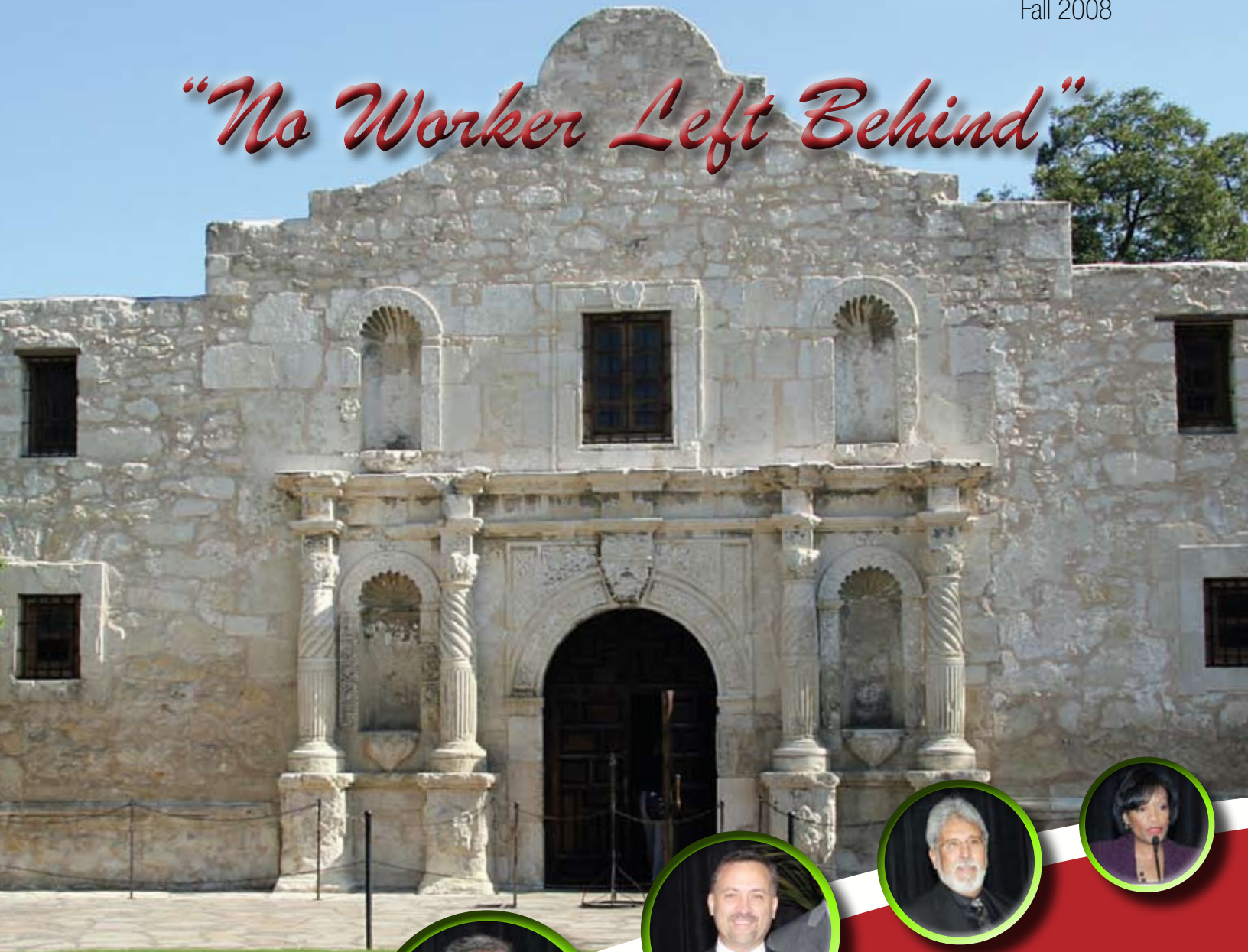




SER America

Fall 2008

"No Worker Left Behind"



Tom Trotter
Begins Tenth Year
of Service to
SER National





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SER America is a publication of SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. Direct all editorial and advertising inquiries and subscription correspondence to:

SER - Jobs for Progress National, Inc.,
c/o SER America
122 W. Carpenter Fwy., Suite 200
Irving, TX 75039
Tel: 469-524-1200, Fax: 469-524-1287
Website: www.ser-national.org

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

Publisher



SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.
122 W. Carpenter FWY, Suite 200
Irving, TX 75039
Tel: Tel: 469-524-1200
Fax: 469-524-1287
Website: www.ser-national.org

SER President & CEO
Ignacio Salazar

SER America Coordinator
Roland R. Ramirez

SER America
Writer: Elva Perez
Contributors: Adriana Lopez, Daniel Gomez

Publishing Partner
Luis Nuno Briones
LUNUBRI Publishing
P.O. Box 540474, Dallas, TX 75354
Tel: 469-855-4774, Email: lunubri@yahoo.com

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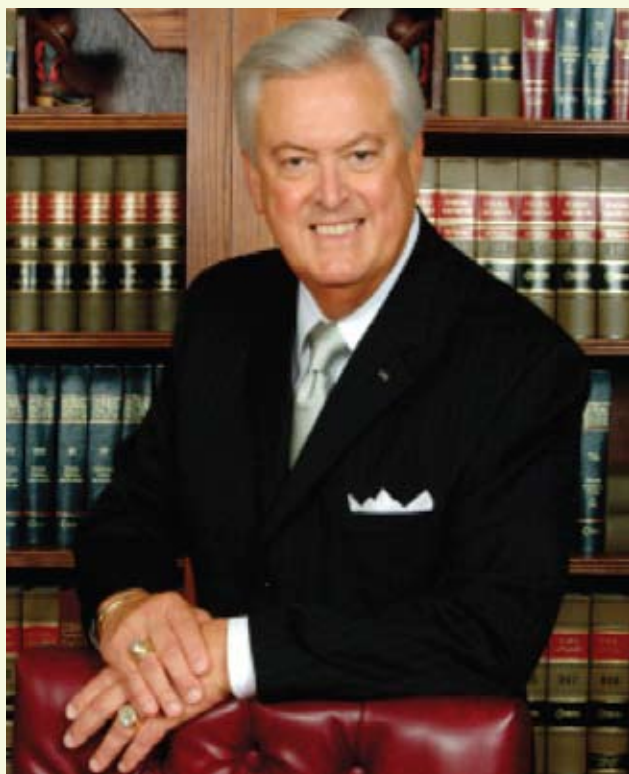


(L-R) Ignacio Salazar, President & CEO, SER National; Alma Morales Riojas, SER National Vice Chairman; Tom Trotter, Chairman, SER National; Gloria Johnson Goins, Chief Diversity Officer, Diversity & Inclusion, The Home Depot; Joe Juarez, Regional Administrator, Region IV, U.S. Department of Labor; Rosa Rosales, President, LULAC National and SER National Board Member, during the 42nd Annual SER National conference, October of 2008 in Dallas, TX.

Photo by Luis Nuño Briones

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Tom Trotter Begins Tenth Year of Service to SER National



Entering its 43rd year as a premier national organization that meets the employment, education and training needs of today's workforce, SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. continues to refine, through hard work and dedication, its strong, solid and productive place of service. With a sweeping legacy of outreach to communities-at-large across the United States, SER National has cultivated the experience, capacity and mastery to perform even greater deeds for others. SER National's commitment to improving people's lives is a principle perfectly aligned with its mission and reason for being.

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve on the SER Board for a total of nine years – five years as Board member and four years as Chairman of the Board. I look back with pride and satisfaction for all that the Board of Directors and the SER National staff have accomplished in this period. Through our collective efforts, we have made positive differences in the lives of the following segments of society:

- mature workers seeking employment training and jobs;

- foodservice and hospitality workers acquiring workplace English language skills;
 - diverse groups wishing to obtain financial literacy training.
- We have set the course for achievement and are pressing ahead each day to reach that goal.

On a personal note, I am tremendously appreciative of the Board's full support of my leadership. We have successfully worked together as a cohesive unit to ensure SER National's forward advancement. I am very gratified that Board members have trusted me to advance our agendas expeditiously, so that we are respectful of each member's precious time, while ensuring that everyone is able to voice opinions or concerns and ask questions. Because I spend well over 1,000 hours per year in volunteer efforts, I am acutely aware of the value of people's time.

I am particularly pleased to state that SER National is fiscally sound. Through the leadership of Ignacio Salazar, President and CEO and the Board of Directors, we were able to lead SER from financial instability into a record of sustaining a healthy operating budget, as well as accruing annual profits and surplus funds at the end of each year. Operating in the black on a steady basis enables SER to provide a livelihood to many people and to deliver consistent outreach to many other groups and organizations.

IBM's 40 year relationship with SER National remains stronger and more committed than ever as IBM continues to be SER's oldest and largest supporter. It has been a privilege for IBM to donate over \$15M of equipment, cash and technology to an organization that is eager to adopt new technology and to incorporate it into programs that help Hispanics everywhere attain a better standard of living.

This year, alone, IBM donated accessibilityWorks software to SER affiliates in San Diego, California and Chicago, Illinois. In

2009, IBM will make it possible for several SER affiliates to offer this beneficial software to participants. Allowing seniors to navigate computers with ease, accessibilityWorks strips all of the banners and backgrounds on an internet page, leaving just the text on the screen. It can also stabilize the mouse for computer users who have difficulty with unsteady hands, permitting them to easily

click on the right spot. I am pleased that the software is a logical extension of our SCSEP efforts and that the partnership with IBM can be of unique assistance to SER in bidding for other contracts involving mature workers.

I am extremely proud to announce that, in 2009, IBM will

"I am extremely proud to announce that, in 2009, IBM will donate over one half million dollars in hardware and software to SER Affiliates."

donate over one half million dollars in hardware and software to SER Affiliates. Three cutting-edge software packages – ¡Tradúcelo Ahora!, Reading Companion and accessibilityWorks – will constitute the bulk of IBM's donation program.

¡Tradúcelo Ahora!, an innovative website and email translation

program, not only translates websites from English to Spanish automatically, but also translates email messages bidirectionally (English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English). The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, a Latino think-tank at the University of Southern California, conducted an evaluation of the pilot ¡Tradúcelo Ahora! program and found that having access to the translation software benefited organizations and their constituents in significant ways.

Reading Companion is an effective, easy-to-use adult literacy program that uses voice recognition technology to help adults improve their reading skills without the embarrassment of being in a classroom environment where they might mispronounce or misuse words. The Reading Companion software 'listens' to readers and provides useful feedback, enabling learners to practice reading and their English pronunciation as they acquire fundamental reading skills. This exciting donation program will make such a practical difference in the lives of many, many Hispanics as they learn English and, ultimately, obtain better jobs.

As I prepare to take on the role of Chairman Emeritus of the SER National Board of Directors this month and begin a decade of service to SER, I do so with even more zeal and determination to support and extend

Although my job at IBM for 41 years had nothing to do with diversity and equal opportunity, it has always been my desire to see Hispanics and other underserved populations increase their quality of life. Diversity has been my personal passion and continues to be the driving force behind my volunteer work.

When a worldwide Fortune top 10 company like IBM invests in ways to help people develop themselves or redevelop their careers, it sets an extraordinary example for other companies to follow. When workers can transition from an uncertain hourly

"I feel that SER National does more to make a difference in people's lives than many other organizations."



Photo by Luis Nuño Briones

"When a worldwide Fortune top 10 company like IBM invests in ways to help people develop themselves or redevelop their careers, it sets an extraordinary example for other companies to follow. When workers can transition from an uncertain hourly position to a solid technical job and virtually double their household income, the American dream begins to unfold. "

position to a solid technical job and virtually double their household income, the American dream begins to unfold. I am privileged to be a part of this wonderful opportunity – it's the very reason I pledge to continue my personal commitment to serve others.

Sincerely,

Tom Trotter
Chairman of the Board
SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.

the organization's mission and tenets. I feel that SER National does more to make a difference in people's lives than many other organizations.

Message from the President and CEO



Photo by Luis Nuño Briones

Welcome to SER National's 43rd Annual Conference, held this year in beautiful San Antonio, Texas. Together we will explore the conference theme: No Worker Left Behind.

Throughout the week you will be attending outstanding workshops presented by nationally recognized experts in workforce investment, financial literacy and public policy. We will discuss those critical issues impacting the populations we serve and learn creative strategies that directly support our program efforts. I am certain that by joining forces to learn from one another through shared experiences, new information and best practices, we will not only augment local delivery systems, but also acquire new techniques for interfacing more effectively with our participants.

I believe that SER's efforts are more important today than they have ever been in the history of this organization. In a time of financial uncertainty, SER is responding proactively by providing employment training opportunities for mature workers; by empowering individuals through technology; and by promoting economic sustainability for the working poor. SER's dual language financial literacy initiative, conducted in partnership with Chrysler LLC, is supported through a first-ever Congressional earmark. The Generational Diversity Awareness 502(e) Program is a pilot effort, through which we provide generational diversity training to Human Resource personnel working with our SCESP

participants. Both programs are innovative ventures that SER is proud to implement.

We are doing what we do best. SER National and SER Affiliates have skillfully honed and refined our employment training processes over the years to offer, at this point, the best ever job readiness preparation to participants. To further bolster their skills and maximize their natural abilities, SER National is providing mature workers with powerful participant training that includes acquiring computer competencies, increased self-confidence and a full 'toolkit' of job-ready skills for the real world.

It is my pleasure to inform you that SER's financial outlook continues to remain positive. The SCSEP grant was successfully reauthorized at approximately \$30 million for another year. Presently, we are financially strong and look to the future with great optimism and determination.

For their service and commitment to SER National and for their strong support of the organization's initiatives, I extend my sincere appreciation to our Board of Directors. To our Corporate

"I believe that SER's efforts are more important today than they have ever been in the history of this organization."

Partners for their strong involvement and contribution to National SER and for their generous conference sponsorships, I express genuine thanks. On behalf of the entire SER family, I offer heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Tom Trotter, who has served on the Board for nearly a decade, the last four years of which he has served as Chairman. We deeply value his continued service to SER as he assumes the mantle of Chairman Emeritus in the coming year.

Again, welcome to San Antonio! I trust your experience will be memorable for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ignacio Salazar".

Ignacio Salazar
President and CEO

SER Leads the Charge on Financial Literacy Education

By: Adriana C. Lopez; Staff Consultant

In January of 2008 SER National President and CEO, Ignacio Salazar was appointed to sit on the President's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy along with other financial literacy education experts from throughout the country. The Council, appointed by President George W. Bush and led by such notables as Mr. Charles Schwab, founder and CEO of the Charles Schwab Corporation, and Mr. John Hope Bryant, founder, Chairman and CEO of Operation HOPE, has spent the past nine months working in collaboration with community partners, business leaders and government agencies such as the U.S. Department of Treasury to bring national attention to the need for improved financial literacy education as well as to aid in research, support and the recommendation of mechanisms for delivering this education to Americans of all ages and backgrounds.

In his work on the Council, Ignacio Salazar has focused his resources and expertise via two of the Council's subcommittees: the Workplace Committee and the Committee on the Underserved.

The Workplace Committee is one that has centered its efforts on increasing financial literacy education among America's workforce while they are in the workplace. As workforce development is one of SER National's areas of expertise, Salazar was able to contribute ideas and information that aided in the shaping of the Committee's main project, a financial literacy "Honor Roll Program" implemented through the U.S. Department of Treasury. The premise behind the program is to both award employers for current efforts to promote financial literacy and sound fiscal habits amongst their employees as well as to incentivize other employers to begin implementing workplace financial literacy programs.

The Committee on the Underserved is one that is working to target financial literacy efforts towards populations that often are the last to receive key services and information, including many of the communities that SER currently serves. The Committee has undertaken a variety of activities comprising but not limited to:

- actively soliciting feedback from financial industry regulators, service providers and consumers on the current sub-prime mortgage crisis and ways in which financial literacy can play a role in future remedies;

- investigating and recommending "Model City/State" programs, implemented through the U.S. Department of Treasury, that can incentivize city and state leadership to get involved with and promote financial literacy education in their jurisdictions.

In relation to the Underserved Committee's work, Mr. Salazar was instrumental in dialoguing with officials at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and later crafting a proposal, presented by the Committee, that would recommend to the full Council that they actively support the SBA's efforts to re-launch an Office of Entrepreneurship Education. This support was unanimously granted at the Council's Third Public Meeting held June 18, 2008; the Office of Entrepreneurship Education was re-launched by the SBA the following month. In speaking to this decision, Mr. Salazar stated that, "I am glad the Council chose to approve the proposal. The teaching of financial literacy and entrepreneurship is already occurring in America's classrooms and often go hand in hand with

one another. The Council's support and the SBA's efforts are a few more steps in the right direction for financial literacy education."

The Council also has committees focused on research about financial literacy, on outreach campaigns promoting financial literacy education and on education targeting youth. These efforts have resulted in recommendations to implement many initiatives including but not limited to: a Financial Literacy Volunteer Initiative;

public listening sessions; research on a Financial Literacy Program Content Standard, the administration of an annual National Financial Literacy Challenge and others.

In its Fourth Public Meeting, set for October 14, 2008 at the U.S. Department of Treasury, the Council will address several items including their annual report and recommendations to the President on the past year's efforts. Mr. Salazar will continue to serve out his two-year term with the Council and looks forward to the work ahead.



SER National Prepares the American Workforce for Financial Success

Because today's economy is markedly different from that of years past, the workforce training industry is experiencing uncertain transitions. Old ways of preparing the labor force are now relatively ineffective. Today's jobs require more specialized skills, higher levels of training and collaborative problem solving. The present economy demands workers who are not only comfortable in a rapidly changing, high technology and collaborative work environment, but who are also personally able to participate in the local economy. Recognizing this very important precept, SER National created an exciting program of workshops focused on empowering individuals through financial literacy.

Throughout the next 12 months, SER National will offer financial literacy workshops to approximately 500 underserved participants in the states of Texas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Colorado, New Mexico, Illinois and California. During the initial immersion phase, the communities of El Paso, Texas and Fall River, Massachusetts will be served through the delivery of fifteen workshops, and the second training phase will serve the five remaining states through fifteen workshops during the final seven months of the project.

A culturally and generationally-sensitive curriculum, customized to fit the needs of local SER Affiliates' clientele, will be developed and used to teach all financial literacy workshops. Monitored, spaced-repetition exercises in the curriculum will foster behavioral change, and industry-specific needs, as well as individual pacing, will contribute to a customer-focused delivery. Included in the curriculum will be a reporting system that will allow participants and their respective case workers to self-direct and measure progress. At the conclusion of each class, SER National will receive documented evaluation of each participant's level of progress.

Experienced trainers will follow the criteria adopted by the FDIC and major banking institutions in the U.S. to move beyond traditional financial literacy. While the SER National Financial Literacy Workshops will concentrate primarily on essential information for participants unfamiliar with the economic system in the U.S., they will also address the basic development of skills that are crucial to navigating the world of banking, checking accounts, credit, auto loans and home loans. Classroom training, delivered by qualified instructors/trainers, will involve approximately 30 students per

class for a minimum of 4 hours, and students will be provided with lunch. SER National will also provide students with all supplies, materials, equipment and learning technology needed to complete the workshop.

Opportunities for structured, spaced repetition through e-learning, for any student desiring review or practice exercises, will be available for twelve months following completion of the course. Additionally, e-learning textbooks that include schedules, modules, and learning exercises will be given to each student.



The following program objectives for the Financial Literacy Workshops were developed to measure student progress. By the end of each class, participants will have:

- Studied American banking practices in order to make informed decisions about personal finances;
- Identified personal questions or doubts regarding personal finances;
- Developed skills needed to reach financial goals;
- Identified communication needs in diverse financial institutions;
- Recognized expectations of financial institutions; and
- Discussed positive consumer expectations of customer-friendly financial institutions.

SER National's financial literacy training will enhance the ability of SER Affiliates to successfully place participants in the workforce, while also providing preparation of an under-served population in skill sets that will be highly valued by corporate America. SER National is proud to engage in this exciting effort that will make positive differences in people's lives and financial capabilities.

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SER National Pioneers Generational Diversity Training for Corporate Partners

SER National has embarked on a new, cutting-edge project designed to shift the thinking of employers about hiring mature workers. In one of only three 502(e) Programs awarded nationally by the US Department of Labor (DOL) in 2008, SER National has begun to implement innovative outreach and recruitment strategies for employers in the effort to challenge negative generational stereotypes regarding older workers.

The workforce landscape in our country is changing dramatically. In times past, the economy was more stable and predictable, and attrition was acceptable because companies could afford to hire new people. In today's workforce, employees are no longer plentiful and easy to come by. Rather, employers are straining to find qualified persons to fill customer service positions, for example. They know, with great certainty, that there is a serious shortage of workers who are equipped with relevant skill sets, experience and the appropriate work ethic to fill their available customer service positions.

Recognizing an opportunity to 'break new ground', SER National has developed and presented Generational Diversity Awareness Training sessions for approximately 500 staff and local hiring managers employed by SER National's corporate partners in three states – California, Colorado and Florida. The training sessions will emphasize the following concepts:

- overcoming ageism, which is more pervasive than other types of discrimination;
- recognizing negative attitudes toward older workers;

- understanding the financial necessity that compels older people to work;
- identifying resistant mind-sets to hiring older workers;
- realizing that some older people wish to work for personal fulfillment reasons, rather



than financial need;

- removing silent messages that older workers are not welcome; and
- appreciating the difficulties faced by older workers in finding new and different career paths that will utilize their knowledge and transferable skills.

Above all, the sessions stress proper communication skills needed by

employers, particularly managers at the local level, to manage ALL differences – including generational differences – in ways that promote respect and empowerment for all workers. It is SER National's goal to provide useful strategies for maximizing the diverse contributions of different age groups in order to fulfill each company's individual corporate mission.

Having identified and assembled the elements for success, SER National has joined with a new hiring partner – the Multicultural Food and Hospitality Alliance (MFHA) – which provides access to over 600 members, including SYSCO, SODEXO, Marriott,

Hyatt, Hilton Hotels, Burger King and many, many other companies, while maintaining our well established, highly regarded alliances with Home Depot and CVS in this venture.

Human Resources personnel working with partner companies then participate in a SER-sponsored half-day training session during which the above listed concepts are introduced and discussed. Company representatives are also presented with the advantages and benefits of

hiring SCSEP participants, who have some of the very qualities that they are seeking in employees: a strong work ethic and loyalty to an industry or company.

SER National is certain that this methodology will be doubly successful. On the one hand, companies participating in the half-day training session will very likely take measures to increase their hiring of SCSEP participants and other mature workers. And, on the other hand, SCSEP participants and other mature workers will be able to take advantage of new employment opportunities which more closely fit their work styles.

Improving the employment prospects of SCSEP participants and presenting other avenues of employment possibilities to hiring partners is SER National's overall objective through the 502(e) Program. SER National takes tremendous satisfaction in pioneering breakthrough approaches that will effectively minimize inter-generational conflicts, as well as maximize the ability of companies to recruit, retain and expand the full potential of America's workforce.

"It is SER National's goal to provide useful strategies for maximizing the diverse contributions of different age groups in order to fulfill each company's individual corporate mission."

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“The only thing worse than losing
a trained employee.....
Is keeping an untrained one!”

SER National Launches a New Initiative: SCSEP Training Empowers Participants

By Elva Perez

SER National is one of 18 national contractors operating the U. S. Department of Labor funded Senior Community Employment Service Program (SCSEP), which focuses on the training and employment needs of the mature worker. Designed for low-income job seekers, age 55 or older, this community service and work based training program is implemented through SER sub-grantees, or local non-profit organizations referred to as host agencies. In its fifth year of operation, SER serves approximately 3,500 SCSEP participants in the states of California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Rhode Island, Texas and Wisconsin.

Assistant Vice President/ National Director of Operations Arturo Zertuche states, "Because SCSEP's overall goal is to prepare participants for part-time or full-time work, we recognized the need to supply them

with additional training options. SER National requested funds from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide enhanced training in the specific areas of customer service skills, motivation, computer training, and other areas that would give our mature workers marketable skills that are sought by employers. SER National wanted to go beyond granting participants the normal community service assignments by strengthening their experiences with targeted, interactive and customized training, which we know will add value to both employees and employers."

SER National contracted with two organizations, 360 Solutions and SER-Jobs for Progress – Florida, to deliver specialized classroom training and e-learning that would further assist and support SCSEP participants in their job searches.

According to Zertuche, "SER National wanted to go beyond granting participants the normal community service assignments by strengthening their experiences with targeted, interactive and customized training, which we know will add value to both employees and employers."

360 Solutions

Chip Wilson, founder and CEO of 360 Solutions, and his team created a comprehensive training program based on the Adult Learning Model and tailored it especially for SCSEP participants. Approximately 60 one-week training sessions have been implemented throughout the states of California, Colorado, Illinois, Kansas and Texas.

Components include: ***Taking Responsibility; Attitude; Charting Your Course; Effective Communication; Building Trust; Customer Satisfaction; Maximizing Your Time; Change; Working in a Diverse World; and Putting it All Together.*** Trainers first introduce

the main principle in a module, which is followed by an experientially-based classroom exercise that will help participants understand the concept and how to apply it in their lives. An action plan gives them opportunities to practice these new skills using a spaced repetition approach.

Says Wilson, "Many of the participants we train are very bright, talented and well educated, but they may not have had the best of luck in their lives. They may have suffered illnesses, divorce, or a host of other personal misfortunes and struggles, resulting in low self-esteem, a loss of confidence or a lack of purpose in their lives. Now, they need an opportunity or a break that will propel them forward.

Our focus, then, is on rebuilding people – rebuilding self-confidence, motivation, communication and other skills. We want participants to gain the self-esteem, mental preparation

and communication competencies that they need in their interview toolkit when they speak with a hiring manager. We want them to know that although they've been through some difficult seasons in their lives, they can say to that potential employer, 'I would be an asset to your company. I have the experience you need. I'm a confident, bright person who has had bumps in my life, and I'm ready to get back into the workplace and do a great job.' We want participants to feel that they add true value to the workplace, and that's

why we concentrate on rebuilding."

The training begins with participants ***Taking Responsibility*** for where they are in life on the first day of the workshop. Participants are guided in understanding how they avoid taking responsibility for themselves, how

they accept personal responsibility and, very importantly, how to 'claim ownership' for their lives. "Grasping these principles and accepting personal responsibility gives individuals the freedom and power to clearly define their life's purpose and to value and accept themselves at a deep level," says Wilson.

"Our focus, then, is on rebuilding people – rebuilding self-confidence, motivation, communication and other skills. We want participants to gain the self-esteem, mental preparation and communication competencies that they need in their interview toolkit when they speak with a hiring manager... We want participants to feel that they add true value to the workplace, and that's why we concentrate on rebuilding."

By learning and applying seven high-performance behaviors to their professional lives, the ***Attitude*** module supports participants in learning how to be

the type of employee that successful companies want to retain. Learning specific methods and techniques for becoming more effective





and valued employees helps participants develop their own action plans for professional growth and development. “We want participants to understand how their attitudes affect their performances in the workplace,” emphasizes Wilson.

Charting Your Course continues the central rebuilding thread by confirming SER National’s commitment to providing targeted training that will help participants



create their own blueprints for re-entering the workforce and becoming employees that employers want to keep. To bolster this effort, **Effective Communication** covers all essential aspects of verbal and nonverbal communications, as well as the art of effective listening, that participants will need to get a job and keep a job.

“Many of our participants have had trust broken down for them over the years,” continues Wilson. “They’ve been in jobs or situations in which it was difficult to build up trust. In **Building Trust**, we show them how to be a trustworthy person, how to trust others and how to create long-term, lasting professional relationships.”

The **Customer Satisfaction** module weaves these trust concepts into a broader domain, building a solid understanding of customer service as a strategic business strategy. Every aspect of customer service is thoroughly explored, including customer expectations, the customer experience and enhancing customer service skills. Exercises and role play further reinforce participant learning.

“Sometimes participants feel overwhelmed with everything that they have to do, and that ‘overwhelmed’ feeling becomes an excuse to avoid looking for a job. We cover all aspects of time management and prioritizing the use of time in the **Maximizing Your Time** module, so participants can learn how to

efficiently and effectively manage their time. We help them learn how to shift their job search from the bottom of their priority list to the top of the list,” adds Wilson.

The **Change** module builds on these ideas by introducing the concept of how to accept and adapt to organizational and life changes with professionalism, determination and optimism. Participants are guided in learning how to accept their role in initiating changes in their lives.

Closely connected to the issue of change is the idea of **Working in a Diverse World**, which addresses the art of working with all kinds of people, not just persons of different races and ethnicities. This module provides a social building block for understanding diversity, as well as one for developing skills to function effectively in environments and workgroups composed

of diverse individuals.

Finally, **Putting it All Together** helps participants package what they’ve learned throughout the week. “At the end of the week, we have found that participants are more confident and motivated than ever to find a job. They feel good about the week of training, and they feel good about themselves. They are very happy with the trainers and with SER National because they feel that everyone cares about them and wants them to be successful. Because they have gained new skill sets, they feel positive about what they can offer an employer,” says Wilson.

360 Solutions builds activities into the training program that address the spaced repetition concept – whatever we repeat over and over and over again, or think about over and over and over again, will eventually show up in our lives. Individuals may think or say to themselves that since the economy is slow, there is no possibility of landing a job. If that belief is repeated enough times, then, that is exactly what will happen. They will NOT get a job because they have planted that belief system firmly in their minds. Substituting positive, constructive mental patterns for negative templates is one of the 360 Solutions’ key instructional strategies.

Because participants may struggle with computer skills, they are first taught how

Participant Reflections on the SER National SCSEP Training Provided by 360 Solutions

“I can’t think of enough superlatives for this training! In particular, the module on Communication, which included Effective Listening, would be beneficial for every company and corporation in America! I’m especially looking forward to implementing the time management training into my life. I need to get organized, and the principles I learned will help me get there.”

“I LOVED the e-learning! Thanks, SER National!”

“I had so many AHA moments! I realized that my negative attitude was affecting my desire to find a job, as well as other aspects of my life. It seemed that the things I learned were what I needed to learn.”

“The e-learning was great because I can work on a course whatever time of the day or night that’s convenient for me. Even though I wasn’t a computer whiz to start, my trainer helped me get comfortable with the process.”

“Learning how to do a job search on Monster.com or CareerBuilder.com was really helpful for me because I had no idea how or where to start. My trainer was patient and worked with me until I ‘got’ it.”

“My trainer asked me what I liked to do when I wasn’t working. Well, that’s easy. I spend all of my time with my dogs. I love them and feel like they’re my children, since my actual children have grown up and moved out of the house. When my trainer asked if I had ever considered working in a pet store or an animal shelter, I was surprised that the thought had never occurred to me. It has been a wonderful week!”

Continued on page 14

360 Solutions

Continued from page 13

to log on to the computer. Upon mastery of the log on process, they are then instructed in accessing the e-learning platform, which is a comprehensive e-library of generally used computer software programs such as Word, Excel, QuickBooks, Access, etc., as well as numerous topics concerning customer service skills, motivation, sales, marketing and public relations. Participant passwords are good for one full year from the day of enrollment in the training, and as long as they remain SCSEP participants through SER, they are given unlimited access to the e-learning system.

The advantage of e-learning is that all study is individually paced



and can occur at any hour of the day or night from any computer. Participants always control their rate of study and can take as

many courses as they wish for as many times as they wish. When they finish a course, they can print out a certificate of completion for that specific course, which prominently features their name. "We have found that participants love the e-learning side of the training regardless of where they live. Especially for participants living in remote Kansas or Colorado, e-learning is a tremendous personal benefit," remarks Wilson.

360 Solutions caters lunch for participants during the entire training. While dessert wasn't built into the original budget, it didn't take long to realize that a small dessert served around 2:00 pm would be a huge hit with participants. In one Texas City, a participant offered to make dessert for the group. Each day she brought in wonderful homemade cookies, pies, cakes or brownies. They were her gifts to the group, and everyone loved her delicious desserts and appreciated her spirit of giving. As the class progressed, she realized

Wilson says of the SCSEP participants, "It's about what the power of the human spirit can accomplish."

that she would enjoy a job in a bakery or a grocery store.

"These are really good people," says Wilson of the

SCSEP participants. "When we began this program, I didn't realize how much it would change me personally. I've so been privileged to meet people who live differently than I do, and I want to continue to be personally involved in this program, whether or not my company continues this work. It's about what the power of the human spirit can accomplish."

SER—Jobs for Progress – Florida

Jose L. Cela, President of SER—Jobs for Progress – Florida, and his team concentrated their efforts on developing a training program for sites in Florida that would highlight and build on the many life experiences their SCSEP clients had acquired. Acknowledging that participants were encountering obstacles in their job searches, Cela and his team focused on providing their clients with a range of tools that would assist them in re-entering the workforce.

"We knew that although our clients had previously held jobs, they were uncomfortable with the interviewing process and with navigating computers, so we designed the training to center on these subjects and others that are fundamental to a successful job search," says Cela. "The four skill sets we emphasized were customer service; clerical; foodservice; and hospitality. Using these components as the foundation of the program, we customized specific training according to our clients' needs."

We spent a great deal of time on the foodservice component because many of our clients had worked at childcare or senior care facilities in foodservice capacities. Using industry-accepted standards, the training covered all aspects of foodservice rules and regulations. We knew that clients, without having undergone any foodservice training, could actually be employed at agencies that included foodservice activities, and we were determined to give them the proper tools to correctly and safely carry out their duties."



In all four areas of the program, participants 'learned by doing.' Trainers guided clients step-by-step through the processes and gave them individualized advice and coaching on how to improve their performances and master the techniques. Cela and his team assisted clients with lower reading levels and worked with

Continued on page 15



Spanish monolingual clients. Wherever necessary, the program was facilitated entirely in Spanish by Spanish-speaking trainers.

“We also spent a great deal of time on the subject of customer service and were fortunate to have a Home Depot Human Resources representative present in the Florida training seminars to assist with computer skills and to help boost client confidence levels. The representative was immensely helpful in walking clients through each sub-topic,” continues Cela.

“Clients learned to create email accounts and they practiced building profiles on Monster.com or CareerBuilder.com. These activities gave them added self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment, although not without some fear. In this age of identity theft, there was often great consternation when working on the computer, especially when it came to divulging personal information. Transferring life experiences to the computer screen was a tremendous achievement for clients.”

Acculturation was a major factor in developing and organizing the training content. Since many clients have come to the United States as adults, they actually have two distinct ways of handling situations. Although these differences are hard for them to reconcile, adopting and learning mainstream approaches are critical components of successful job searches. Fortunately, trainers found and accessed Spanish-language skills exercises that clients were able to practice on the computer.

“We found that including the SCSEP staff in the training when the topics related specifically to employment was a successful strategy because, ultimately, those persons would serve as liaisons with prospective employers,” states Cela. “The SCSEP staff was extremely effective in explaining the job application process to clients.

We have high hopes for our clients. It is a privilege to have given them tools to increase their opportunities to obtain fulfilling jobs.”

Julia Alonso - A SER National SCSEP Success Story

Julia Alonso had cared for her 106 year-old bedridden mother for years. She came to SER-Jobs for Progress – Florida with the hope that she could learn to perform vastly different duties and responsibilities other than those involved in patient care. She felt that life was passing her by and that she had little reason to apply makeup, dress up or involve herself in productive activities.

Armed with the desire to discover new professional avenues, Julia enrolled in SCSEP and took the customer service class in addition to the regular training. Her instructor soon noticed Julia’s quick intelligence and her desire to learn new information.

When she completed the training, Julia was assigned to the Social Security Administration as a clerical trainee, where superiors recognized and appreciated her strong work ethic and her aptitude for understanding and mastering new processes. Upon finishing that assignment, she was transferred to another host agency, where she very capably served at the front desk.

Realizing that Julia had been an asset to their organization, officials of the Social Security Administration called SER and sought to re-engage her services. Upon learning that she was undergoing on-the-job training at another host agency, the Social Security Administration created a job for Julia as a customer assistant. She is helping persons with disabilities, who arrive in wheelchairs, by taking them to the right area or section of the building.

Julia Alonso is a success story in many ways. She had the courage to branch out of her tiny world and expand her horizons. That she has found her ideal role in helping others is the perfect outcome.

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SER National Affiliate Highlights

“SER Affiliates are the ‘heart and soul’ of the work we do.”

- Ignacio Salazar, President & CEO

Central States SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. Chicago, Illinois

Rachel McDonald Romo, Executive Director

Central States SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. has been serving Cook County, Illinois for over 30 years. With an organizational budget of \$7,380,000, SER operates five offices in urban Chicago and its suburbs. Through the expansion of existing programs and the creation of new services, the number of individuals served has risen from 500 in 2002 to 10,000 in 2008, and the operating budget has increased from \$700,000 in 2002 to over \$7.3 million in 2008. Staff has grown from 12 to 75 employees.

Current programs include:

- **Year Round Youth** focuses on participants attaining educational credentials and higher education. It is funded through the Workforce Investment Act and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development.
- **Regional Youth Career Development Center – Region IV** makes services, such as career readiness and “soft skills” training, available for youths, ages 14-21. These youths can either be attending school, or they can be out of school.
- **21st Century Community Learning Center – The Poder Project** partners with six elementary schools and the Bilingual Parent Resource Center to provide after school and summer enrichment programs to over 500 youths and their families.
- **After School Matters – Mentors Empower Program at Little Village High School** provides youths with a support network of caring adult mentors and opportunities to participate in positive community and school activities.
- **GED on Wheels: Academic Credentials, Financial Literacy and Job Readiness** provides a safe, positive environment for youths to obtain academic credentials, financial literacy and job readiness training.
- **Department of Labor Youth Offenders Expansion Project**, or

Youth Empowered to Succeed (YES!) program, improves the long-term career prospects of young offenders by increasing both the educational attainment of juvenile offenders and the employment outcomes of young adult offenders.

- **Senior Community Service Employment Program** helps mature workers, age 55 and above, to acquire job skills and obtain gainful employment through specialized training and work experience opportunities with local public and private non-profit agencies.
- **Eliminate the Digital Divide – Little Village Community Technology Center** provides the first-of-its-kind technology training and access to individuals, communities and populations which may not have these resources readily available.
- **Garfield Workforce Center**, one of the five Chicago Workforce Centers managed and operated through a partnership between SERCO and Central States SER, served over 4,300 persons during 2006-2007.
- **TANF Work First, TANF with Job Placement and Food Stamp, Employment and Training** offers job readiness training and job placement assistance to customers receiving public assistance, such as food stamps. The program also provides them with a range of services, including work experience assignments, designed to address individual self-sufficiency barriers.
- **Workforce Services in Suburban Cook County** makes available

core and intensive workforce services, such as basic skills, job readiness training, resume writing, computer literacy and vocational training to underserved individuals, including Hispanics.

- **Healthcare Careers Pathways Program and Opportunity**

Chicago are programs in which Central States SER works closely with Daley College and West Side Technical Institute to offer contextualized literacy education in healthcare careers and employment opportunities to approximately 70 Chicago Housing Authority residents during the 15-month grant period.

- **MBCT (Medical Billing and Coding Technician) Training** instruction includes practical experience and hands-on applications through the use of medical office stimulation projects and related computer software programs.

- Central States SER partners with IBM to dedicate a new **IBM Senior Center** for SCSEP participants.



Photo by Luis Nuño Briones



Central States SER takes pride in being recognized by funding sources for quality program performance and consistently on-time deliverables. Funding sources include: Mayor's Office of Workforce Development; Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services; President's Office of Employment and Training; and the Illinois Department of Human Services. SER's positive program performance has brought about increased funding levels and new program opportunities.

Developing a wide network of industry partners has helped Central States SER successfully place its customers in jobs. Numerous employers in the Chicago area trust SER as a source for pre-screened, work-ready applicants. Customers have been placed in diverse industries such as health care, logistics and manufacturing because

SER takes the time to learn the unique job needs of the various industries and trains customers to master the hard and soft skills required to succeed in these positions. Industry partners

One young customer said it best,
"Come to SER with a past and
leave with a future."

acquire trained, skilled employees and customers build solid career paths.

Central States SER transforms lives through personalized career training, job placement and educational programs. From after-school youth programs to industry-specific career training, the dedicated and experienced staff goes above and beyond basic requirements to do whatever it takes to help youths and adult customers build self-sufficiency and upwardly mobile futures.

The road to empowering customers is paved with Central States SER's pledge to deliver expert education and training and the staff's commitment to exceed expectations in the area of service. SER believes that youths are not "at-risk"; rather they are "at-hope".

One young customer said it best, "Come to SER with a past and leave with a future."

SER Corporation of Kansas

Wichita, Kansas

Richard E. Lopez, President and CEO

The SER Corporation of Kansas was founded in 1974. It operates with a current annual budget of \$4.7 million. Two SER offices (Wichita and Kansas City) are located in urban areas, and five offices (Goodland, Dodge City, Hays, Abilene and Chanute) are located in rural areas.

SER provides job training programs and housing solutions, as well as home ownership opportunities, computer classes, ESL and U.S. citizenship classes. Senior Community Service Employment Services (SCSEP) and employment and training services for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) and round out SER's core programs.

- **The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** places low-income seniors in part-time community service training positions, enabling persons 55+ to transition to unsubsidized employment. Community service training assignments include social services, health, welfare, library, recreational and beautification projects. Mature workers can benefit the community, strengthen economic development and/or enhance environmental quality, while they gain economic self-sufficiency.
- **The National Farm worker Jobs Program (NFJP)** is a nationally directed program of job training and employment assistance for migrant and seasonal farm workers. It is authorized by Congress in the Workforce Investment Act to counter the impact of chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by migrant and seasonal farm workers who primarily depend on obtaining jobs in agricultural labor.
- **Citizenship Classes** prepare individuals for the United States Citizenship exam.
- **Computer Classes** are offered throughout the year.
- **English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes** are also offered throughout the year.
- **Rent Smart Classes** teach the rights and responsibilities of being a renter, as well as how to transition to home ownership.
- **Amigos de SER** is an organization of business and professional people working together to help the SER Corporation of Kansas carry out its mission of employment training and job placement for the socially, economically and academically disadvantaged individuals.
- **Amigos de SER Scholarship Program** was established by the Wichita Amigos de SER to benefit deserving Hispanic students.
- **Mesa Verde Single Family Housing Development Lease-To-Own Program** was created by the SER Corporation of Kansas to offer affordable single-family housing to residents of Wichita, Kansas. Homes will be funded by housing tax credits, with the City of Wichita providing infrastructure for the total development. The planned gated community will include 18 three-bedroom homes with basements and two-car garages, a training center, walking paths, and a rest area with benches.

During the morning hours after children have gone to school, inter-generational programs at the training center will serve parents with late work schedules and senior citizens. In the afternoon and evening hours, the center will provide a safe, child-friendly haven for students whose parents work late. Students can do homework and engage in after-school projects and activities. Parents who are available in the evenings will be able to pursue GED studies; English-as-a-Second Language classes; computer classes; Home Buyer training; Rent Smart training; Home Repair classes and other courses that they request.

The SER Corporation of Kansas has partnered with Mennonite Housing, which will serve as a training agent for SER staff. The organization will manage the leasing operation and assist SER with customer recruitment and intake, as well as provide the property maintenance, thus ensuring that the community is clean and well-kept at all times.



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Presbiterio de San Juan Head Start Program San Juan, Puerto Rico

José E. Ramos Delgado, Program Director

Presbiterio de San Juan, Puerto Rico was founded in 1968 and operates with a combined annual budget of \$4.1 million. The Head Start budget, alone, is \$3,730,124. Other programs at Presbiterio are United States Drug Administration (USDA) and Child Care, which account for the balance of the funds. The organization serves pre-school children, ages 3 to 4, and provides them with Early Childhood Education, various health services, nutritious meals, mental health services and special therapies, such as occupational and language therapies. Headquartered in urban San Juan, Presbiterio has 18 field offices serving other areas in Puerto Rico.

The federally-funded preschool center at the main Head Start office serves

approximately 100 children from 7 am to 6 pm each day. Although the office is situated in a very busy, high-traffic, tight-security zone of San Juan with absolutely no outdoor playground facilities, grassy areas, trees or flowers, the Head Start staff has created a child-

friendly, colorful, and fun indoor retreat for children to enjoy. An indoor playground, a basketball hoop and a jungle gym, complete with climbing areas and crawl spaces, give children a wide variety of recreational possibilities.

Although it may seem like a regular indoor playground, an immense amount of time and thought went into creating this special area. A professor of adapted physical education designed the space after conducting a great deal of research into what children needed the most in the realm of physical activity. Taking into account their gross and motor skills and other developmental needs, she added a cargo net to strengthen the children's large muscle groups. The range of physical activities were also planned to support the fight against childhood obesity. Numbers and letters on the walls and floors were prominently positioned to support classroom learning.

For the past 4 years, Presbiterio San Juan has been involved in a joint effort with other Head Start Programs, community action agencies and faith-based programs to encourage more male parent participation in the educational lives of their children. The US Health and Human Services (HHS) Department recently added a "Father Factor", or "Encuentro del Varón" program, which actively promotes a greater level of male parent participation in the education of their children and strengthens father-child relationships.





SER of Westchester, Inc.

White Plains, NY

Jennifer Aponte, Executive Director

Formerly known as the Hispanic Advancement Program, SER of Westchester, Inc. was incorporated in 1997 as a non-profit organization and operates with a current annual budget of \$352,500. The main office is located in an urban area, as are its three program sites.

SER of Westchester serves students in grades K-12, as well as out-of-school youths and adults to improve their basic educational and occupational skills. Offering an array of services tailored to meet the needs of this population, SER operates three programs in three different schools.

- **After School Programs** are offered to approximately 300 children in the Edison and Park Avenue Elementary Schools in Port Chester, NY. Students can take advantage of tutoring services, homework assistance and help with computer skills. They can also participate in a variety of sports and recreational activities, as well as culturally-based arts and crafts pursuits.
- **21st Century Community Learning Centers**, in conjunction with the Port Chester School District and the New Rochelle School District, provide quality academic enhancement and enrichment

activities through after school programming to over 500 Limited English Speaking youths. Additionally, parents can attend specialized educational or community workshops throughout the school year.

- **Student Transition Assistance Program** addresses the need for supplemental educational and social services for students



by providing them the kinds of intervention support that will help them succeed in school.

At Woodlands High School in Greenburg, NY, SER of Westchester assists 60 Temporary Assistance for Needy Children (TANF) eligible students in grades 9 – 12 with job readiness and support services.

SER also assesses

the educational needs of students and provides students and their parents a full school system orientations.

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SER National Welcomes New Leadership



Joe C. Ponce, Appointed to SER National Board of Directors

production, he was promoted to Assistant Plant Manager at the Metal Fabricating plant in Mansfield, Ohio. In 1997, Mr. Ponce became Plant Manager at the GM Powertrain Windsor Transmission plant in Ontario, Canada. In 2001, he became Plant Manager of the Detroit Hamtramck Assembly Plant, a position he held until 2003 when he became the Manufacturing Manager of the GM Powertrain Engine Group. He moved into his current position as Executive Director Labor Relations – UAW in 2006.

In 2003, Mr. Ponce received the HENAAC (Hispanic Engineering Achievement Award Corporation) Executive Excellence award, and in 2005, he received the SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers) Corporate Achievement award.

A Key Executive at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) since 2001, Mr. Ponce was instrumental in UTEP partnering with General Motors in the Partnership for the Advancement of Collaborative Engineers (PACE). He has served as the General Motors Key Organization Liaison for the three major Hispanic organizations that GM partners with on a number of initiatives – Mexican-American Engineers and Scientists (MAES), HENAAC and SHPE.

Mr. Ponce graduated from Kettering University (formerly General Motors Institute) in 1978 with a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering. He also attended Stanford University on a General Motors Fellowship, receiving a Masters in Business Administration Degree in 1984.

Joe C. Ponce is the General Motors Executive Director of Labor Relations and is responsible for managing GM's relationship with the United Auto Workers (UAW).

Mr. Ponce began his career with General Motors in 1973 at the Van Nuys Assembly Plant in Los Angeles, California, where he worked for approximately 19 years and was promoted to Director of Quality. In 1992, he moved to the GM Metal Fabricating Division at Marion, Indiana, and after a number of assignments in quality and

San Diego County SER Receives Grant from IBM for Computer Lab and Innovative Web-access Software



(L-R) Sal Martinez, President, San Diego County, SER Jobs for Progress, Inc.; Arturo Zertuche, Assistant Vice President/National Director of Operations, SER National; Tom Trotter, Chairman of the Board, SER National; Rocky Sanchez, Deputy Mayor, City of Oceanside; Todd Flora, Manager, IBM Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs.

SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. is pleased to announce that IBM has awarded an Innovation Grant to the SER Affiliate San Diego County SER - Jobs for Progress, Inc. Ten workstations and an innovative software program, **accessibilityWorks**, will be housed at San Diego County SER – Jobs for Progress, Inc.'s new computer lab. IBM, a historically strong supporter of San Diego County SER, has made several previous donations of equipment and software to the SER Affiliate.

The **accessibilityWorks** software, developed by IBM researchers, enables people who have vision, cognitive or motor limitations to customize the presentation of Web pages. Individuals can set preferences to magnify the text on a Web page, change the color of the text and background, eliminate distracting animation and significantly sharpen images. This cutting-edge software will even read Web text aloud to the user. Individuals can save their settings, so that all future Web pages can be accessed with the same convenient features.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony opened the new computer lab on Monday, September 22, 2008 at the San Diego County SER office. Participants from SER's Senior Community Service Employment Program demonstrated how the **accessibilityWorks** software helps them in a computer training class.

"On a national level SER is one of IBM's oldest and largest partners in human capital development, and IBM is pleased to be working with San Diego County SER," says William Ray, IBM's Senior Location Executive in San Diego County. "IBM has a strong commitment to supporting the communities which it serves by developing and applying innovative technology solutions that help people in our communities."

"This donation represents a major step in providing high quality technology training programs for the people we serve," states Sal Martinez, President of San Diego County SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. "With IBM's support, SER is able to offer computer training programs to our youth and senior citizens."

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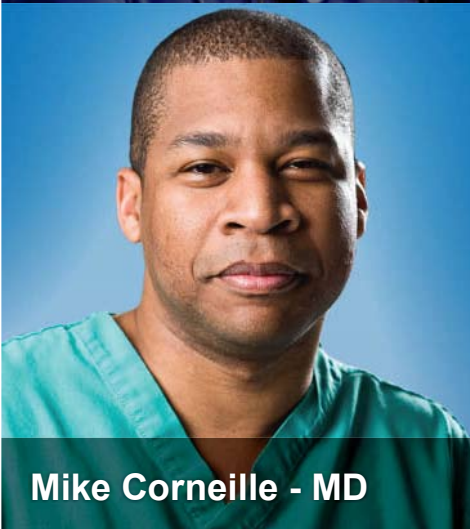
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Rudy Jackson, RN, is a patient care coordinator in the ExpressMed Clinic at the University Health Center – Downtown, the largest and busiest outpatient facility in San Antonio. Rudy, and the entire outpatient team at University Health System's 16 locations across the community, are committed to helping people get well and stay well.



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A stylized, colorful illustration of a diverse group of people in business attire. The illustration features a woman with long brown hair in an orange top, a man with short dark hair in a blue suit, a woman with short dark hair in a purple top, a man with short dark hair in a green suit, and a woman with short dark hair in a yellow top. The background is a mix of green and blue with some white lines.

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Photo by Luis Nuño Briones

SER National Board Member Rosa Rosales and LULAC National President

In 2006, Ms. Rosales was elected President of National LULAC, which at the time, made her the second woman to be elected to this prestigious position in 77 years. Currently, she is serving her third term as National President.

Passionate about her work in the field of education, Ms. Rosales serves on the Board of the LULAC National Educational Service Centers (LNESE), LULAC's educational arm devoted to providing high quality educational programming, leadership training, and scholarship opportunities to the Hispanic community. Her extensive community involvement is illustrated by her active participation on numerous civic and non-profit boards. She is also the Founder and Director of the National Association of Public Employees (NAPE), a San Antonio based union.

Ms. Rosales has received numerous honors and awards for her continued service to LULAC, including the American GI Forum Leadership Award; the LULAC Women of the Year Award; and the Cesar Chavez March for Justice Award.

Born in San Antonio, Texas, Ms. Rosales earned her B.A. degree in Liberal Arts from the University of Michigan. She has been married to Dr. Rodolfo Rosales for 39 years and has 3 sons: Rodolfo Rosales Jr., Miguel Angel, and Gabriel Yoatequia. She is the proud grandmother of Bianca Rosales.

Alamo Workforce Development Board Operator



Linda Rivas SER National Board Member and President of SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. of San Antonio, Texas

Linda Rivas has remained steadfast in her dedication to create a stronger community by developing new employment and educational opportunities for the people of San Antonio, Texas. President of SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. of San Antonio, a non-profit community-based organization committed to securing employment opportunities for individuals seeking work and upgrading the employability of workers in San Antonio, Ms. Rivas has worked

to increase business and economic opportunities for all members of the community. Within the first year that Ms. Rivas was appointed President of SER of San Antonio, the Alamo Workforce Development Board Area, known as Alamo WorkSource, ascended to a Number 1 status in performance measures for the state of Texas. SER of San Antonio received recognition for "Best Large Board Performance" in 2002 and 2005.

A member of the University Hospital System Board of Managers in Bexar County since 2004, Ms. Rivas has also served on the Alamo Area Council of Governments Board of Directors since 2006. She has forged strong relationships with various workforce development partners and is confident that these connections have contributed to the success of the local SER Affiliate.

Recognized as the "Latina Executive of the Year" by the LULAC Women's Commission in New York City in 2006, Ms. Rivas' awards are numerous. She was honored by the Alamo WorkSource with "The Distinguished Service Award" in October, 2005, and by the National League of United Latin American Citizens for "Leadership in Workforce Development for Texas and the Nation" in 2005.

Ms. Rivas holds a BBA from the University of Texas at San Antonio and an MBA from Our Lady of the Lake University.

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Linda Rivas, President
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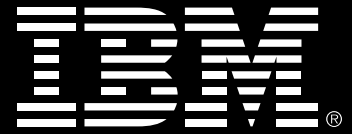
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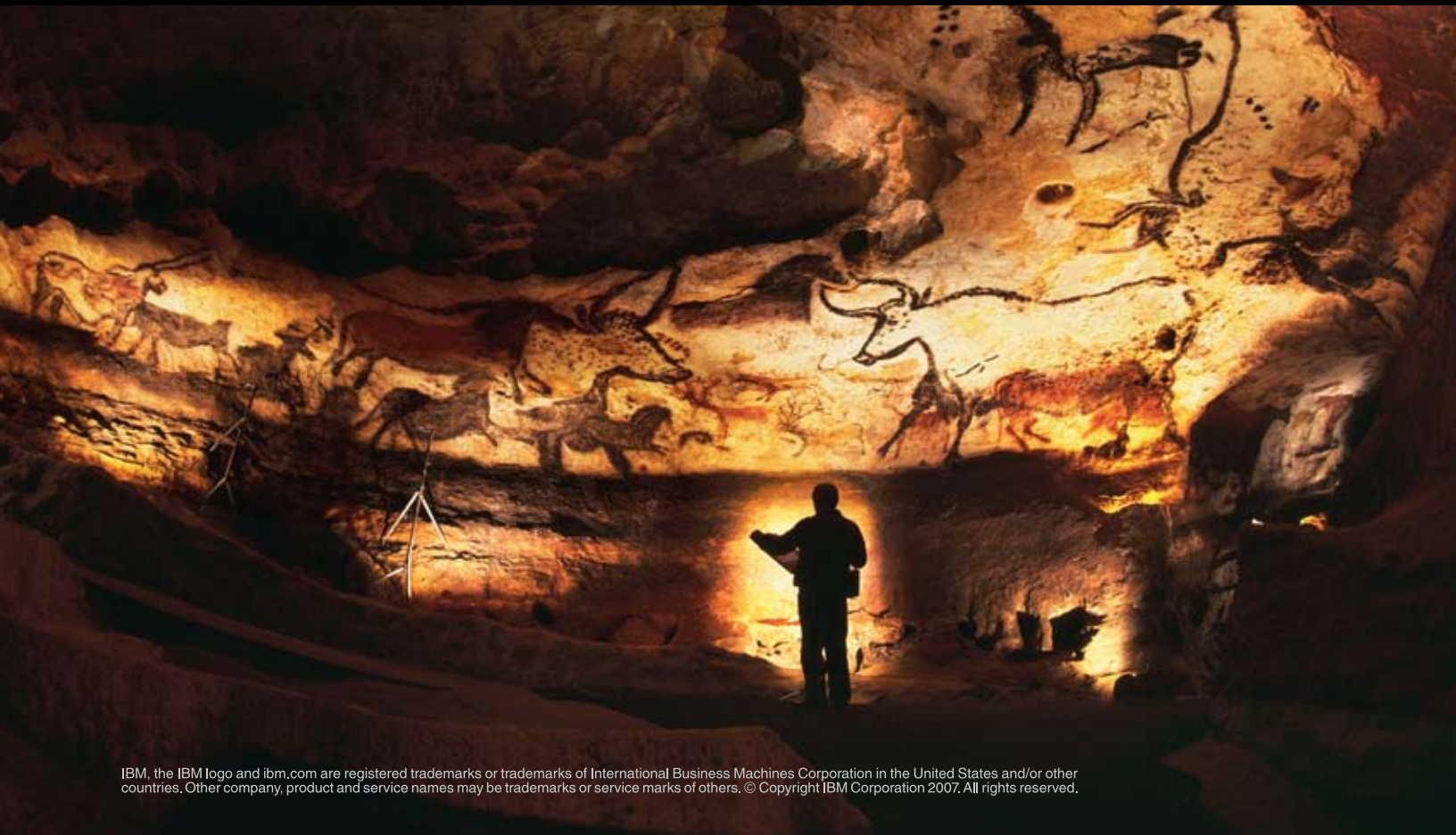
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