

SER-Jobs for Progress Highlights:

- ♦ SER SCSEP and Coaching to Care
- ♦ Puerto Rican Unity for Progress

- ♦ Centro Latino
- ♦ SER-Jobs for Progress - Texas Gulf Coast

- ♦ SER-Jobs for Progress - Miami
- ♦ SER Metro-Detroit

SER America

Fall 2010

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SER America

SER America is a publication of SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc. Direct all editorial and advertising inquiries and correspondence to:
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SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc., acknowledges the support by the U.S. Department of Labor and the advertisement support of corporations who made this publication possible.

Publisher



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2009-2010 SER National Board of Directors with President & CEO



Front Row (L-R): Linda Rivas; Rosa Rosales; Alma Morales Riojas.
 Back Row (L-R): Joe Ponce; Alex Martinez; Hector Flores; Frank Casillas; Joe R. Campos, Chairman of the Board; Tom Trotter; Ignacio Salazar; President & CEO; Jerry M. Fuentes; Adalberto "Del" Cruz; and David Rodriguez. *Not pictured Lidia Medel Martinez, Dr. John Soto and Leven Weiss.*

Table of Contents

- 4 Chairman's Letter**
- 6 Message from President and CEO**
- 10 SER National Training Initiatives**
- 12 SER National Affiliate Highlights**
 - Centro Latino
 - Puerto Rican Unity for Progress
 - SER Metro - Detroit
 - SER Jobs for Progress - Miami
 - SER Jobs for Progress - Texas Gulf Coast, Inc,
- 21 SER National Welcomes New Board Member**
- 26 SER National Board of Directors**
- 30 SER Network Directory**





Message from the Chairman of the Board



Joe R. Campos
Chairman

SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.

As I proudly enter my second year as Board Chairman of SER National, I – along with my fellow board members – continue our commitment to provide meaningful and effective job training for our communities in need. It's a commitment SER has made good on for 45 years.

The secret to SER's track record of success has been a holistic approach: From offering literacy programs

early on, to providing more technologically advanced training to older workers today, SER has and continues to make a difference. A talented and devoted staff, led by President and CEO Ignacio Salazar, along with a network of effective affiliates, has played a major role in SER's achievement as a community based organization for more than four decades.

SER's goal is to place people in permanent, unsubsidized, and productive employment. SER provides the mechanism of change by teaching participants the job skills corporations need. If corporate America expects to succeed in our globally competitive economy, it is necessary for corporations to draw talented, capable people from the communities in which they operate – communities that are often home to a large and growing Hispanic population.

As an estimated 78 million baby boomers prepare to leave the workforce through retirement in the next 30 years, SER will continue to do its part to ensure that our communities are ready and skillfully prepared to fill those jobs. Many in the Baby Boomer Generation will have to continue working well past retirement age due to loss of investments during the economic crisis. In fact, only 40% feel they will have enough money to live comfortably, one-fourth of boomers do not think they will have enough money through Social Security. Many of these mature workers, who work well into retirement, may lack certain job skills or may need to polish others.

SER's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), funded through grants from the Department of Labor and offered by SER Affiliates across the country, will help

prepare these mature workers through community service and work based training. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides subsidized, service-based training for low-income persons 55 or older who are unemployed and have poor employment prospects.

Young people also must be prepared to enter the workforce. And SER will do its part to ensure that it is through future programs, such as SER University.

Today the Hispanic population is about 47 million and by 2050 it is expected to be about 128 million. In the mid 90's the Hispanic buying power was an estimated \$228 million. Hispanics are a major force in the American market place, as the Hispanic purchasing power is expected to reach more than \$1 trillion by 2011. Hispanics as an ethnic group have growing economic clout; Hispanic buying power is growing faster than that of non-Hispanics. While all of this is welcome news, I can't help but think: What if we didn't have such a high drop-out rate in our community, the highest of any other racial or ethnic group? Imagine what our buying power would be and the positive economic impact the Hispanic population would have.

As we know, education is the road that Hispanic America needs to follow if we are to continue being successful and help this great country of ours prosper. We have a good reason for making education a key issue. Business articles alert us of massive structural changes in the American economy in which once abundant production jobs that don't require a degree are disappearing, and workers without college degrees are losing ground rapidly. Today, education no longer means getting a high school diploma, it means getting a college degree. It means making sure that a Hispanic labor force is well trained to meet the demands of the future. It means a labor force that is ready, willing, and capable of handling the industrial technology of this new century and the service needs of corporate America.

America is becoming much more of a high-tech society and requires a certain skill level. SER provides vocational and literary skills to a growing number of people that allow them to compete in the market place and to enjoy life in the economic mainstream. Visionary leaders of America's large corporations know that America's economic future is a numbers game, with the Hispanic population playing a major role.

SER's strength is not in accepting or giving handouts, but in developing partnerships with organizations and corporations and training participants so that they are prepared to enter the workforce. Together, we all succeed.

Sincerely,



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Message from the President and CEO



Photo by Luis Nino Briones

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

Anniversaries are a good time to reflect, and as I look back at SER's 45 years and the contributions to literally millions of citizens, their families and communities across the country, I am proud to be associated with the SER Corporation. SER makes a substantial difference in the quality of life for so many Americans each year and that is reason to celebrate.

What started as the vision of leaders of the American GI Forum, LULAC and other Latino leaders today has grown to a nationally recognized organization that, through 180 locations in 17 states, has served millions of people over the past four and a half decades. Each year, more than 1 million people walk through the doors of SER affiliates and walk out with the skills and training that will help enrich their lives.

Over the course of SER's history, we have seen many changes across this country. Hispanics became the majority minority group ahead of demographers' predictions. There have been bright spots: The number of Latino college graduates has gone up, and Latino-owned businesses continue to grow at a frenetic pace. Yet there are challenges ahead: The number of Hispanic student dropouts is still too high and Latinos suffer from high unemployment rates.

Through it all, SER has been fighting on behalf of Latinos, African Americans and others, helping to build a better America. Therefore, it is appropriate that our theme for this year's conference is "Celebrating 45 years of Service, Employment and Redevelopment," as there is much to acknowledge.

Today, we are proud that:

- SER has served as a national community based partner to the U.S. Department of Labor for every administration dating back

to President Lyndon B. Johnson. While funding has fluctuated over the years, SER's commitment to helping the Hispanic and minority community has been steadfast.

- SER has earned national credibility and name recognition when it comes to cultivating America's greatest resource: people.
- SER is not only financially sound, but in the best financial position it has been in its history, thanks to the work and oversight of a dedicated board and finance and audit committees.
- The annualized budget for the National SCSEP program has grown to almost \$50 Million serving thousands nationwide.
- Our recent Coaching to Care program emphasizes the need for trained Hispanic professionals in the area of healthcare.

The financial support of sponsors and grants from the Department of Labor have made it possible for SER to do what it does best: deliver customized programs for youth, adults and seniors that will allow them to succeed and contribute to society in general and their communities in particular.

As the needs of the country and those we serve have changed, so has SER. Affiliate SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast Inc., for example, now trains low-income individuals for green jobs, a growth industry, through its Green Jobs Training Center, opened earlier this year. SER-Jobs for Progress of San Antonio has made an imprint in the San Antonio area by developing an effective system of providing workforce development services to more than 150,000 clients annually. SER Metro-Detroit continues to be on the cutting edge of workforce development initiatives with an array of services in various states. Also, SER of Miami continues to be a model SCSEP provider of services to the elderly population.

The SER of tomorrow will be a bigger force and leave an even larger footprint, as we embark upon the goals detailed in our five-year strategic plan. Our vision is to have an impact at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, and to that end we are developing and enhancing our charter alternative school initiatives, and our post-secondary SER University. Also, we are working on our Job Corps initiative to become an effective provider of these services to our deserving youth population.

Looking back on all of SER's accomplishments, I am proudest that as a national network we have credibility and are the largest national network of affiliated workforce development programs that serves the Hispanic and minority communities. I'm grateful for an extremely talented and dedicated staff and board that continue to bring new ideas, diversity of thought and changes to SER, allowing it to evolve into the organization that it is today, an organization of which we can all be proud.

And looking ahead to the next five years and our upcoming 50th anniversary, I envision almost doubling the number of affiliates throughout the country. I imagine SER affiliates in the Carolinas, Virginia, and Georgia, among other areas where there's been substantial growth in the Hispanic population. We need to be there to help those communities grow faster, be better, and dream bigger so that together, we can build a stronger America.

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SER National Training Initiatives

Young and mature alike can find assistance at SER affiliates across the country. With affiliates in 17 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, people get help with everything from financial literacy and confidence-building skills to a myriad job training opportunities.

SER National and its affiliates touch the lives of more than 1 million people each year, contributing to stronger communities.

Likewise, public and private agencies across the country are reaping the benefits of partnering with SER and its highly successful Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). SCSEP helps train or retrain mature workers with the goal of placement and unsubsidized employment.

In Grand Junction, CO, Community Hospital has hired seven SCSEP participants and is considering hiring more. And one California school has been so pleased with participants' strong work ethic, old-fashioned work values, and a spirited desire to be a part of today's workforce, that it has hired almost a dozen SCSEP participants.

These are just two of many partner host agencies nationwide that have discovered that these mature workers are willing and able to make a difference in today's diverse market of technology-centered and fast-paced marketplace.

Under a new program launching this year, SER will help fill the needs of the healthcare industry by readying Latino job seekers for health-related careers. The Coaching to Care program seeks to find employees who may want to transition to healthcare, where there is growing demand.

Coaching to Care Facilitates Healthcare Career Exploration for Hispanics

In June 2010, SER National was awarded a \$2.2 million grant by the U.S. Department of Labor for an innovative Coaching to Care program, featuring individualized counseling and advanced computer-based technology. The national initiative is designed to facilitate healthcare career exploration by U.S. Hispanic job seekers.

Coaching to Care will allow more than 550 career coaches to help 28,000 prospective and currently employed members of the workforce explore healthcare careers through the use of state-of-the-art interactive online resources. SER has partnered with local community-based organizations and workforce centers to expand the outreach and impact of its unique initiative.

"Healthcare service providers, even during this incredibly difficult recessionary period, are hiring at an incredible rate," said Ignacio Salazar, President and CEO, SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc., "It is anticipated that jobs in this sector will grow faster than any other industry in the next decade with a projected increase of 22 percent or 3.2 million new jobs by 2018. The demand for a qualified and skilled healthcare workforce representing the diversity of the American society is now greater than ever."

The demand for healthcare services is growing because of aging baby boomers, and recent federal healthcare reform legislation

expanding access and coverage for more U.S. Americans. Increased access to healthcare services is placing a greater demand to fill the growing number of jobs and careers in that industry.

While employment opportunities in healthcare have increased, Hispanics remain underrepresented in the healthcare workforce, particularly considering population growth trends. In 2010, the U.S. Census reported the Hispanic population had reached 50 million, an increase of 42 percent over the 2000 census. These two factors created the perfect conditions for SER to tap into its core constituency — Hispanic job seekers — to fill the cultural and linguistic skills needed to serve a diverse population, while allowing it to continue delivering its nationally renowned workforce and employment training services.

"Hispanics have the nation's highest participation of all workers 16 years of age and older and are prime candidates to fill the growing need in healthcare related jobs and careers," said Guadalupe Preston, Executive Director, Central States SER of Chicago. "SER's experience in workforce development and training, combined with state-of-the-art interactive computer software and internet technology, will allow us to identify those candidates who can best fill critically needed healthcare jobs."

Through Coaching to Care, SER will effectively deliver healthcare career exploration services through its participating affiliates, and nationwide network of partners in the following areas: SER of San Joaquin Valley, Fresno, CA; Central States SER, Chicago, IL; SER Metro Detroit, Detroit, MI; La Alianza Hispana, Roxbury, MA; Latin Business Institute, Garden Grove, CA; SER Florida, Miami, FL; SER Santa Fe, Santa Fe and Albuquerque, NM; Southeastern Massachusetts SER, Fall River, MA; Puerto Rican Unity for Progress, Camden, NJ; Hispanic American Organization, Allentown, PA; and SER of the Texas Gulf Coast, Houston, TX.

At the program's core is a combination of individualized coaching and advanced computer-based technologies, which leverages the fast growing use of the Internet by U.S. Hispanics. Additionally, online Career Enhancement Tools will augment each participant's individual employment plan by aiding English proficiency, literacy, innumeracy, and computer skills in order to expand the pool of job seekers wishing to enter the healthcare fields — from entry level to higher skilled positions.

Through a new 2010 program, SER's network of community-based affiliates and its partners will be leading the charge to help Hispanic candidates learn about the variety of jobs and careers in healthcare. The success of the initiative lies in the program's ability to deliver high-tech online tools and the mentoring skills of professional and dedicated career coaches to prospective healthcare workers. Coaching to Care staffs and their community partners also will identify those who are already employed and wish to upgrade their qualifications or transfer their job skills into the healthcare arena.

"There are current employees who possess valuable job skills, many of which are transferable to the healthcare industry," said Alex

Continued on page 11



Martinez, Executive Director of SER Santa Fe. “They may wish to use Coaching to Care and our Career Enhancement Tools to make themselves more suitable to healthcare employers; whatever their needs may be, our aim is to interest and educate members of our surrounding communities of the vocational and professional healthcare jobs available to them.”

Through its Coaching to Care approach to workforce development, SER is addressing the employment challenges within the healthcare industry by matching the high number of jobs it needs to fill with a core of motivated and healthcare oriented employees.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Puts Older Workers in the Labor Force

Like SER National, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is celebrating its 45-year anniversary this year. SCSEP grew out of the older workers component of Operation Mainstream, a pilot project established in 1965 under Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act. Operation Mainstream provided job opportunities for chronically unemployed, low-income adults. In 1973, the older worker component of Operation Mainstream was converted from a pilot project to an ongoing program, SCSEP. The 1978 Comprehensive Older Americans Act Amendments re-designated the SCSEP as a Title V program under the Older Americans Act.

The focus of the SCSEP is to foster and promote useful part-time opportunities in community service activities for persons, who are low-income, unemployed, 55 years old or older, have poor employment prospects, and have the greatest economic need. The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), Department of Older Worker Programs of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) administers the program by means of grant agreements with eligible organizations, such as public and private agencies and organizations.

Workers age 55 and older are the fastest-growing segment of the American workforce and will make up almost 22 percent of the U.S. labor force by 2014, according to the DOL.

“As our population ages, older Americans will play an increasingly important role in local, national and international economies. They will shape America’s products and services, and help ensure our continued leadership in the international marketplace,” Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis said during National Employ Older Workers Week, Sept. 19-26.

Community Service is an important and unique part of SCSEP. It includes, but is not limited to social, health, welfare, and educational services (particularly literacy tutoring), legal and other counseling services and assistance, including tax counseling and assistance, financial counseling, and library, recreational, and other similar services. The participants of SCSEP train in non-profit organizations or government agencies, performing community service in a variety of settings to gain and/or update their employment skills with the goal of empowering them to return to the workforce with self-

assurance and self-respect.

Vaughn Next Century Learning Center (VNCLC), located in the city of San Fernando in Los Angeles County, is one of SER SCSEP’s host agencies that has partnered with SER- Jobs for Progress Fresno – SCSEP- LA Area.

A school with 2,200 students from Pre-K to 12th grade, VNCLC has been recognized as a California Distinguished School and a National Blue Ribbon School. The people at the school care not only for the students, but also for the staff and volunteers who assist with many aspects of making the school successful.

Part of the uniqueness of the school is how VNCLC makes the SCSEP participant feel a part of the local culture, thus making it a productive place for both academics and workforce development.

VNCLC has had such a positive experience with SCSEP participants and their performance in fact, that school officials have hired 11 participants, proof that the program works and works well.

“The SCSEP participants add value to our schools, they contribute to our culture,” said Ms. Maricela Sandoval, School Administrator. “The students, as well as the faculty appreciate each of the participants and the contribution each one makes.”

Added Martha Ramirez, Parent Coach for the Vaughn Schools: “I like to work with your participants because they are here on time, they follow the rules, and they are eager to learn.”

Likewise, participants are thrilled to be a part of a host agency that not only cares about training them to re-enter the workforce, but gives them the opportunity to apply for job openings at the site where they are

training.

“They helped me a lot, and I learned from them, said Victor Manuel Gonzalez. “They even hired me!” Mr. Gonzalez is now a food service employee in the school’s cafeteria.

“Ms. Ramirez helped me and worked with me,” said Emma Rosales, another previous SCSEP participant, who now works in the school’s cafeteria as well. “I thank God that I found this program.”

Martha Jimenez, SER SCSEP Case Manager for the area, said she enjoys working with VNCLC because the school’s staff appreciates the contributions of the elder workers. “In less than a year from the moment he was hired, one of the eleven hires was promoted to supervisor,” she said. “When you speak with Ms. Sandoval or with Ms. Ramirez, you know that they care.”

Community Hospital in Grand Junction, CO, is another host agency that has hired SCSEP participants.

“Community Hospital really cares for the participants,” said Ms. Rita Arvizo, SER National SCSEP Case Manager in Grand Junction. “The hospital is looking into hiring another SER SCSEP participant, bringing the hire number to eight.”

Bev Stephens, Director of Volunteer Services for Community Hospital, said hiring SCSEP participants is a no-brainer. “Why not hire them? They are trained by us, they are qualified for the position and they are dependable,” she said. “It is a win-win situation for everybody involved.”

Secretary Solis would likely agree. Employing “these vital members of America’s workforce,” she said recently, “is the right thing to do for older workers, and the right thing to do for the nation as a whole.”





SER National Affiliate Highlights

Centro Latino

Centro Latino, a SER Affiliate in Tacoma, Washington, hasn't let the challenges of these difficult economic times stand in the way of making progress. After purchasing its building in 2008, Centro Latino finished a major renovation project last June and celebrated with a Grand Re-Opening last October.

"Centro Latino's Board of Directors and Staff remain committed to making sure that Pierce County Latinos in need have a place to turn," said Kate Smith, Executive Director.

Centro Latino, which officially opened its doors in April 1983, received its first grant of \$60,000 under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) that same year.

In the 27 years since, Centro Latino has broadened its services to incorporate individual, family and community development. "It is our belief that the success of our children depends on their doing well in school, which is directly related to the educational and economic well being of the family as a whole," said Ms. Smith. "We cannot permanently raise the quality of life for Latino youth and their families if we do not first create stable social support systems for these same families."

It is this conviction that guides Centro Latino in its mission: To create an environment in which the rapidly growing Latino community has opportunities allowing them to effectively participate in and contribute to the success of Pierce County.

In addition, Centro Latino is working to secure new funding for a project titled Pathways to Employment, which will provide an employment-focused ESL curriculum, as well as computer literacy to increase the likelihood that clients might successfully gain and retain employment. This project would also include the addition of an employment specialist to work with employers in supporting the efforts of Centro's employment and

training programs, resulting in recruitment of qualified Latinos to fill available positions.

Centro Latino SER provides services targeted at low-income, limited English-speaking Hispanics, who have the desire to pursue a better life through education and skills development. In 2009, Centro Latino provided services to thousands of people through the following programs:

Family Outreach, Domestic Violence

advocacy and Sexual Assault training and education – 628 families received support services through this program and six individuals received 48 hours of culturally competent psychological counseling for trauma related to

sexual assault. Additionally, 956 families received assistance during the Digital Television transition, 72 families received bilingual tax preparation services, and 100 families in need received food baskets during the holidays.

Parenting and child development – 160 families received in-home, evidenced-based parenting education, childhood development assessments, and referrals through the Family Support Partnership.

Youth service – 404 Latino students in Pierce County high schools and middle schools received 766 hours of tutoring and mentorship in the After School Program and Summer Leadership Program.

Adult Employment & Training – 353 adult students enrolled in and received 8,672 hours of English as a Second Language instruction; 34 individuals received beginning and intermediate computer literacy classes in Spanish; and 446 individuals sought job-search assistance through employment case management and resume/cover letter building instruction.

Youth Employment & Training – 88 low-income, at-risk youth (in school and out-of-school) ages 14-24 received employment training and job-readiness services.



Student getting help with resume writing

Centro Latino Summer Youth Program

Despite some surmountable odds – teen mom, junior high school dropout and with a misdemeanor record – Maira* was determined to make a better life for herself and her small son. And Centro Latino was just the place to help her reach her goals. The 19-year old enrolled in Centro Latino's WIA (Workforce Investment Act) Program in June 2009, after having just moved back to Washington from Arizona. Maira, whose father is from Mexico and mother from El Salvador, was living with her large, seven-member family, including her son, all of whom were all supported by her father's small income.

Maira and her younger sister both participated in Centro Latino's Summer Youth Program, learning interviewing skills, local community resources, how to put together a resume and cover letter and even what it means to eat organically and locally. Program participants toured community colleges, a community center, a community garden and Marlene's Market & Deli, which specializes in whole, organic foods.

Last fall, Maira, who is now living on her own, began taking GED classes at a local community college through the use of vouchers and monthly bus passes provided by Centro Latino. Although she struggled with math, Centro Latino provided her with in-house tutoring to increase her skills and confidence. Additionally, Maira obtained a Flaggers Certificate, affording her the opportunity to earn some income working part-time on various road projects.

In July, Maira received her GED. Currently, she is working in a warehouse, and with the accomplishments and self-assurance she's gained with the assistance of Centro Latino, she plans to enter nursing school this fall. "We know Maira has a bright future, and we're pleased we were able to play a small part in helping her achieve her goal," said Kate Smith, Executive Director. "Go, Maira!"

**Name has been changed*



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Puerto Rican Unity for Progress

A once thriving manufacturing center and a diverse city, Camden, New Jersey, is known by many Americans as a dangerous city, thanks largely in part to an unflattering national media spotlight. However, one shining beacon that has been burning bright for more than three decades and deserves recognition is SER Affiliate Puerto Rican Unity for Progress (PRUP).

From working with young people through a variety of education and training programs to helping the elderly navigate the morass of health care systems, PRUP has a proven track record of serving Camden County residents.

To better serve its clients, PRUP recently relocated to its new \$3.2 million dollar headquarters, which houses its Case Management and Youth Services and Resource Center. The move, executed with the assistance of the Camden Redevelopment Agency, is part of revitalization efforts underway in downtown Camden. PRUP, a SER Affiliate, obtained 11 parcels of land from the City of Camden on Broadway and Pine Streets for the purpose of building its new headquarters, which is equipped with state-of-the-art computer labs and classrooms. PRUP is proud to say that the new office will build capacity in the agency's ability to better serve the residents of the City of Camden.

For more than 33 years, PRUP has successfully provided direct social services to the low-income population of Camden County, with a special emphasis on the Hispanic population. The services PRUP provides to the community include, but are not limited to: securing adequate and affordable housing, obtaining employment, referring clients to education and training, obtaining assistance with needed legal documentation and entitlements, as well as assisting the elderly

with financial independency. PRUP's service population includes more than 2,000 families with roughly 4,600 dependent children annually. Each year, 90-120 youth regularly attend the after-school program activities that include Youth Work Readiness, Youth Computer Literacy, Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention Programs, Youth

Impaired Driving Prevention Education, and the Summer Recreation and Education program.

PRUP is currently implementing a countywide health initiative targeting Hispanic immigrants residing in Camden County. PRUP case managers are working with The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and Susan G. Komen for the Cure, along with hospitals and other providers, to provide bilingual workshops on breast cancer, diabetes, asthma, hypertension,

and navigating health systems. PRUP also offers services related to physical and mental health such as: health services and mental health referrals, as well as assistance in obtaining Medicaid, Medicare, NJ Family Care health insurance, Pharmaceutical Assistance to the

Aged & Disabled (PAAD), and Life Line telephone assistance services for the disabled.

PRUP has managed public funding grants for the Division of Youth and Family Services, Department of Community Affairs, Center for Hispanic Policy Research and Development, the Division of Grants Management, SAMHSA, and the Camden County Department of Health & Human Services, without interruption. PRUP is a well established partner of the State of New Jersey, with a consistent track record of establishing realistic goals, achieving its goals and objectives within programmatic timeframes, and investing public funds wisely in accordance with established rules and practices of public administration.



The new \$3.2 million dollar Puerto Rican Unity for Progress (PRUP) headquarters will better serve the residents in Camden, New Jersey.



One of the three state of the art wireless computer labs at PRUP in Camden, New Jersey.



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SER Metro-Detroit

SER Metro-Detroit, Jobs for Progress, Inc., likes to point out that its mission of cultivating a qualified, skilled and adaptable workforce for Metropolitan Detroit and the global economy is reflected in its name: Service, Employment and Redevelopment. This multi-service corporation is committed to the development and utilization of the nation's workforce by promoting upward mobility and economic self-sufficiency for Metropolitan Detroit residents through a comprehensive service delivery system in the areas of Literacy, Education, Employment, Community Development and Economic Opportunity.

SER Metro- Detroit continues to be on the cutting edge of workforce development initiatives with an array of services that meet the needs of not just job seekers, but their children and families. Some of the affiliate's key programs include:

YouthBuild

YouthBuild is an education and training program for young



YouthBuild students proudly show their certificates.

people across the United States made possible by a grant from the Department of Labor (DOL). While acquiring leadership skills and participating in community service, at-risk youth build and renovate affordable housing within their communities. "President Obama and I are delighted to be able to increase funding for this promising program, which does so much for youth and their communities," said Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis when unveiling the program this past summer. "The YouthBuild program not only assists young people in obtaining education and skills, but also gives them a sense of accomplishment and empowers them as they give back to their communities."

A comprehensive program, Detroit area youth talk about goals, dreams, family, and love with youth development specialists and other staff. Half of the students wear work boots and hard hats, ready to go to their assigned construction site. They have been helping to build 150 apartments for homeless veterans. Some of them are homeless themselves, but they are committed to helping these veterans. In addition to learning valuable skills, they will earn nationally recognized credentials from The National Center for Construction Education and Research, NCCER.

The other half of the students carries books and walk towards YouthBuild's GED room. They know that a GED will help them

obtain employment, but some also have other motives: Melvin Torres wants to be the first GED graduate in his family. Vencella Williams wants to provide a better life for her children. Everyone has a different reason; dreams that one day will come true.

SER Learning Academy

SER Metro-Detroit began to operate the SER Learning Academy (SLA) in 2008 as part of efforts to keep youth in school and transform their paths for the future. The SER Learning Academy, in partnership with EMG/Empowerment Academy, was established as a virtual high school for youth

ages 16-19. The school is unique in that it is tailored to the needs of each student, combines classroom instruction with technology, and enables students to learn a trade while in school. Students participate in academic instruction on State approved software in a



SLA students learning the construction trade.

technology based classroom for half a day, and receive vocational training during the remainder of the school day. Students may elect to participate in building trades, computer technology or patient care technician training. The 2009-2010 school year ended on May 27, 2010, with a number of successful graduates donning caps and gowns and preparing for higher education and/or employment.

Center for Working Families

The Center for Working Families is one of the most popular programs at SER-Metro Detroit. This program is open to individuals and families looking to improve their overall situation and has proven to be extremely beneficial to the community. The purpose of SER Metro Detroit's Center for Working Families is to help the people living in Southwest Detroit reach financial stability, self-sufficiency and advance economically. The program "bundles" several services, including: Income Supports, Financial Coaching and Employment Services. Since 2008, SER Metro's Center for Working Families has grown to become a point of reference in the Community and beyond. Proof of the program's success are overall increases in net worth, dramatic decreases in debt, higher credit scores, increased number of homeowners and a decline in foreclosures.

POWER Court

SER Metro-Detroit, in partnership with the Wayne County Friend of the Court and (SMD Board Member) the Honorable Judges Maria Oxholm and Lita Popke, have embarked in a new referral initiative that addresses the barriers of non-custodial parents who appear before the court for non- payment of child support. Under

Continued on page 17



the acronym of P.O.W.E.R. (Providing Opportunities for Work, Education and Respect), the Court seeks to provide educational, parenting and employment services to the payers who cannot afford their child support payments. Those who qualify could choose to join one of SER's Programs, such as YouthBuild or Center for Working Families, instead of serving jail time. The ultimate goal of POWER Court is to build a generation of financially and emotionally involved parents by providing resources that help ensure non-custodial parents are able to make financial contributions and establish emotional bonds in the best interest of their children.

Year Round Youth

Since 2009, the Youth of Promise Leadership Program (YPLP) has promoted the development and success of more than 200



YPLP youth at Henry Ford Community College

high school students in Southwest Detroit. This program, funded through the Workforce Investment Act, aims to foster and promote the attainment and development of life and work skills, leadership, and academic enrichment. One of the main components of YPLP is its focus on career development and exploration. Youth analyze their career goals, learn how to create a resume, participate in mock interviews, and network with local community and business leaders at events, conferences and town hall meetings. YPLP youth are given the opportunity to participate in a six-week paid summer employment experience. Currently, SER Metro Detroit is hosting 17 of these students in-house, while the other 81 were placed in positions working at different organizations and businesses all over Southwest Detroit.

Regional Energy Efficiency Partnership Training Program

Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Regional Energy Efficiency Partnership Training Program (REEPTP) is comprised of a consortium of community stakeholders that includes educators, labor organizations, community based organizations and an employer advisory board committed to helping Michigan decrease its unemployment rate by providing training that utilizes sustainable and energy efficient building practices that will lead to green jobs in the construction and building trades. With an extensive partnership that includes a community college district, unions and others, REEPTP targets individuals displaced from the automotive industry, minorities and women by providing them

with career planning, training, supportive services, on-the-job training, job-placement assistance and retention services. Program participants received training that will help them find green jobs or become electricians.

Jobs, Education and Training Program (JET)

The Jobs, Education and Training Program (JET) was implemented in Michigan in May 2007 and was designed as an enhancement to previous welfare reform efforts. Participants for JET are referred



A participant receives a referral for health care services.

from the Department of Human Services office. JET participants receive an intensive assessment, an Individual Service Strategy plan, counseling/coaching, professional development/job readiness training, basic skills enhancement and individualized job search services. This program is funded by the Detroit Workforce Development Department. SER Metro JET participants also have the opportunity to access services through SER Metro's Center for Working Families. JET participants are empowered with the skills and knowledge that will help them to remain attached to the labor force, and reduce their chances of reapplying for public benefits, thereby improving the participants' quality of life, and that of their families and the community at large.

SER Health Care Careers for Life Center

As the name suggests, the SER Health Care Careers for Life Center offers career ladder training for individuals that is designed to prepare students for intensive, high paced health care training. Beginning with the month-long Bridgeway Program, the center provides training preparation through classes such as Medical Terminology, Medical Law and Ethics, Contextualized Health Care Math and Reading, Exploration in Health Care Careers, Computer Basics and Employability Skills. Students who graduate from the Bridgeway Program are enrolled in the state Certified Nurse Assistant Program (C.N.A), an intensive program that includes classroom and hands-on training through a clinical assignment at a local nursing home. After successful graduation, students are scheduled to take their state license exam. The program, which has had 64 students, has a 95% completion rate, with 16 students earning state licenses and others preparing to take the exam. Additionally, 25 students have enrolled in continuing Patient Care Technician (P.C.T.) Program, with a 72 percent completion rate.



SER—Jobs for Progress – Miami

For more than three decades SER-Jobs for Progress Miami has served as one of Florida's leading providers of workforce development services, with emphasis on counseling and education, career guidance and placement. Founded in 1978 in the Little Havana neighborhood of Miami, the organization's area of service now reaches from southern Palm Beach County to the Florida Keys, 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 work, SER Miami assists more than 20,000 people a year at its three locations.

SER Miami staff is committed to the not-for-profit organization's mission of enabling individuals and families to become self-sufficient through education, workforce development and employment. They envision helping to make Florida's job market the strongest in the nation.

When SER Miami first opened, it served low-income high school students under an U.S. Department of Labor grant. In 1981, SER Miami began offering vocational training programs, which eventually developed into an education division. Known today as Advanced Technical Centers, the school's accredited by the Accrediting Board of the Council on Occupational Education and licensed by the Florida Department of Education.

SER Miami operates three locations, including its main office in Miami Springs; a one-stop career center in North Miami Beach; an Adult Vocational School co-located with main office; and Counseling office inside Homestead Senior High School.

In addition to serving low-income families, welfare recipients, dislocated workers, high school students and dropouts, and senior citizens, SER Miami 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 Joe Cela, SER Miami President. "Both our board and staff reflect that concept. We are committed to employing the best people residing in the communities we serve."

SER works closely with workforce agencies, the various economic

development agencies, employers, schools, community groups and faith-based organizations, to evaluate the systems and operations that are in place and make changes, if needed, to improve the delivery of services to the employers and to the applicants seeking employment with those services.

"We are committed to streamlining services for jobseekers, engaging the employer community, and building a solid one-stop infrastructure by strengthening partnerships across programs," Mr. Cela said.

Like many other SER Affiliates, SER Miami received a Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) grant from the Department of Labor. Three SCSEP participants were successfully placed in part-time jobs after participating in the Improve Yourself Image workshop. The brainchild of SCSEP Coordinator Tery Somoza, the workshop taught participants how to put their best foot forward during their training and the all-important job interviews.

Elena Chomat, Maryann Sankovic Weidmann, and Ana Chang picked up beauty and fashion tips, boosted their self-esteem, and ultimately landed jobs at their respective training sites.

Ms. Chomat, 78, works as a part-time office clerk at Children and Families CMC in Westchester. She credits the SCSEP program and the image-building workshop with her success. "All the steps you taught me, I will apply them daily, because my appearance is important," she said.

Ms. Sankovic Weidmann, 59, had been looking for employment for almost three years before learning about SCSEP. She now works as a part-time clerk typist specialist at Children and Families Center in North Miami Beach. The part-time job allows her time to dabble in her artistic passion of painting.

Ms. Chang, 63, had been training, learning about computers and clerical work, at the Little Havana Activity Nutrition Center in Miami when she learned of a job at the center. Today, she works 20 hours a week, providing her time to continue her to give back to her community as a volunteer.

Ms. Somoza loves that she is able to help SCSEP participants. "It's a privilege for me to help people and I don't consider my job to be work," she said. "I'm a senior myself, and I often place myself in the senior's position; and I treat them how I would like to be treated."



Participants attend SER's training in high tech computer lab.



SER-Jobs for Progress – Texas Gulf Coast, Inc.

The February 2010 opening of the new SER Green Jobs Training Center in Houston's East End marked the beginning of a very good year for SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc. Not only did the new center open in the heart of the Hispanic community, but SER reopened its satellite Galveston office. SER's office in Galveston, which had been shut down since Hurricane Ike, is located in the Island Community Center and is among other agencies that provide social services to local residents. This new location has proven to be an excellent choice as it provides SER's SCSEP participants a multitude of wraparound services and easy access to the one-stop career center.

"We are ecstatic at all the new opportunities that have come our way over the last year and a half," said Nory Angel, SER Houston's Executive Director & CEO. "We not only opened two new offices, but we are serving over 1700 people per month at our new Green Training Center."

In January of 2010, SER received several green training grants including the Department of Labor's Pathways out of Poverty Grant (\$3.1M), which allowed for the creation of the Green Jobs Training Program. To date, SER has assisted more than 400 low-income individuals to overcome a multitude of barriers, from low literacy and limited English proficiency to ex-offender and homelessness, and provided them with green job training in Weatherization, Green Construction Skills, Solar Panel Installation, Home Energy Rating and Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning.

SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc., is one of Houston's most established non-profit agencies, focusing on enhancing the quality of life in the Hispanic and other communities in need through employment and training services. SER Houston's staff is driven by a shared vision to be the premier workforce and social service provider of the Texas Gulf Coast.

That vision was tested in 2008, when SER Houston, like many non-profit organizations, experienced a major loss in funding due

to the economic downturn and a reduction in one-stop contractors by the local Workforce Investment Board. The SER Board and leadership responded to this financial challenge by revisiting and redefining its vision and strategic direction, eventually venturing in a new direction, the aforementioned Green Collar Job Training. SER

Houston's ability to adjust made it possible to diversify its funding and to expand its programs and services over the past two years as a result.

Moreover, SER Houston's Senior Community Service Employment Program, started in 2003 in Galveston County and 2006 in Harris County, continues to serve people in those areas. Sammie Eskridge of Galveston was one of SER SCSEP's participants. She spent four years as a retiree and learned about the program while volunteering. Ms. Eskridge had a nursing background and wanted to continue providing service to

people. She was placed at The Children's Center, Inc. for training and after a year, she was hired fulltime. Joseph Sterling benefited from training provided at SER by 360 Solutions, a SER National SCSEP training provider. While visiting the local grocery store, he noticed a local trucking company was hiring. He applied for a position as a driver and has been working fulltime ever since.

SER's outreach efforts have drawn more than 1,700 people to its Houston office each month to inquire about services. Its website and online job bank attract more than 3,000 people monthly and its Facebook page has more than 200 fans.

Additionally, SER's contribution to the community was recently recognized by the East End Chamber of Commerce, which awarded the organization its East End Good Neighbor Award

for making a "significant contribution to the East End business or residential community."

"SER Houston faced possible extinction two years ago. Thankfully that experience taught us the importance of diversifying our funding, having a strategic vision and direction, and the courage to step into the unknown and create something new," stated Ms. Angel.



Headquarters Grand Opening. (L-R) Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee; Congressman Gene Green; Executive Director & CEO Nory Angel; Chairman of Board Owen Sonik and Green Construction Instructor Sergio Grado.



SER Affiliate Celebrates 45 years in Houston. (L-R) Chairman of the Board Owen Sonik; Executive Director and CEO Nory Angel and presenting award SER National Assistant Vice President Arturo Zertuche.

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SER National Welcomes New Board Member

Francisco Fernando Ivarra was born in Edinburg, Texas. As a member of a migrant family, he traveled the mid-west, southwest and west coast migrant stream. With the untimely death of his father in 1957, Francisco was obligated to help his mother raise his five younger brothers and sisters.



Francisco F. Ivarra

Immediate Past National
Commander, American GI Forum

After working in fields, helping his mother with the family, and doing his schoolwork, Francisco was finally able to graduate from high school. After high school, he continued to be an inspiration and a positive role model to his family. In 1968 he volunteered for Vietnam where he served with the American Division 196th Light Infantry Brigade (1st/23rd Infantry). He is a combat veteran, Purple Heart recipient and a member of various military and Hispanic organizations.

After returning from
Vietnam, Francisco attended

Western Washington University where he received concurrent B.A.'s in Sociology and Ethnic Studies and an M.A. in Sociology and Anthropology. In 1974, he was selected as one of only 300 students

to receive a Bilingual Bicultural Fellowship from the United States Department of Education.

In 1978, he completed his Ph.D. course work in Comparative American Cultures from the University of Washington. He began his teaching career at Fresno State University, served as an Education Administrator and was selected by Stanford University and the National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct Ethnic Studies Research. In 1988, he became a member of the Executive Board for the California Association for Bilingual Education. During his educational career, Francisco has held numerous positions as an instructor and administrator in the community college and university systems, and has served as a highly respected diversity consultant to educational agencies. An advocate for veterans since returning from Vietnam in 1969, Francisco joined the Department of Veterans Affairs as a PTSD Counselor in 1995. A year later, he was selected and graduated from the nationally recognized Menlo Park VA PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) Training Program. In 1996 after researching and publishing on the affects of PTSD on Hispanic veterans, he was the first Hispanic selected by the Department of Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health System to be part of their national PTSD research study on Vietnam Veterans.

Francisco has been a member of the American GI Forum, the largest Hispanic veteran's organization in the United States for forty years and served as the National Vice Commander of this organization from 1996-1998 and as the National Commander from 1998-2002 and again in 2009-2010.

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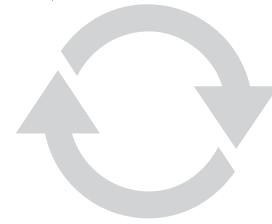
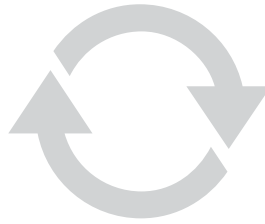
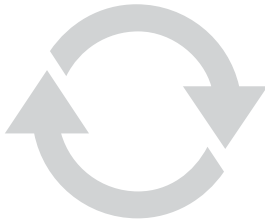
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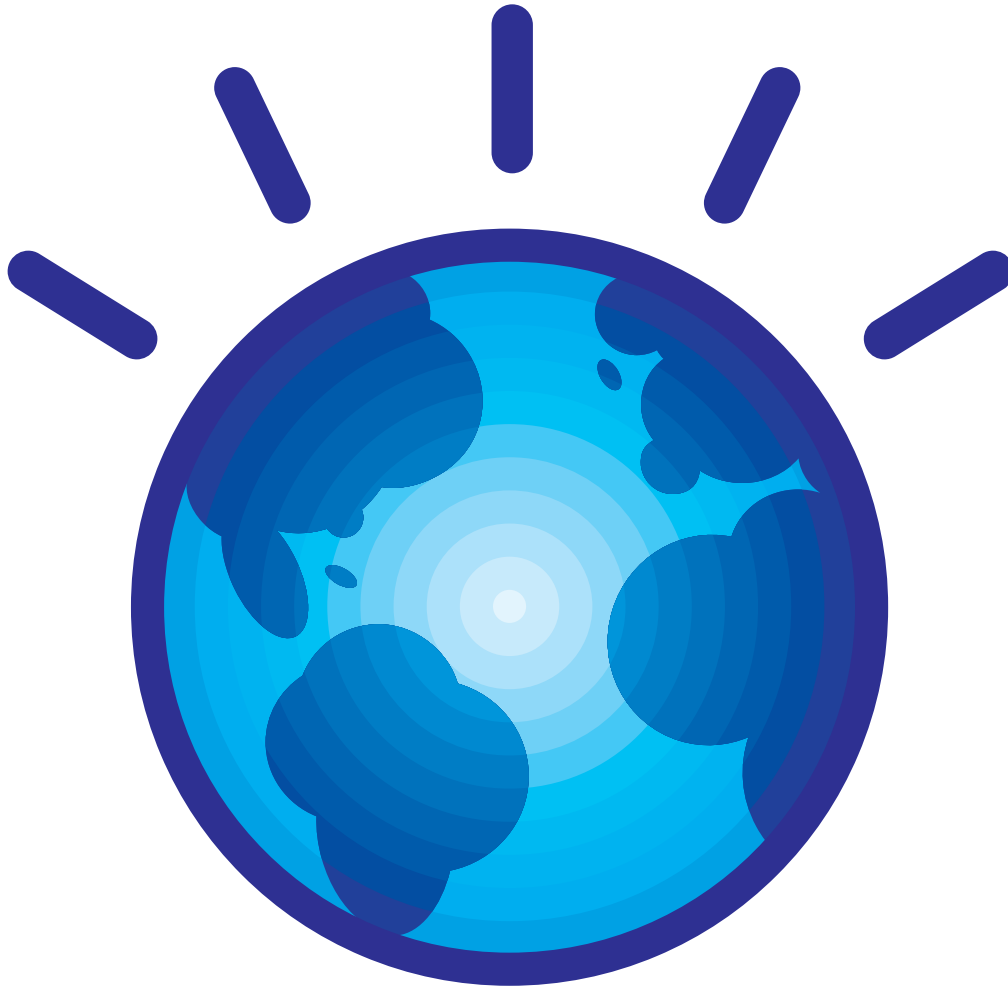
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