

Rappahannock Goodwill Industries Success Story – George Washington

HH met the WIOA Program Coordinator at an outreach event in the local jail prior to his release. He had been incarcerated for roughly six years.

A month after his release, HH followed-up on the information received during the outreach event and was found eligible for WIOA services as an Adult. In his initial meetings with WIOA staff, HH maintained a professional and upbeat demeanor and had a visible drive to be successful and obtain long-term, successful employment, despite his incarceration.

HH had a definitive interest in obtaining his CDL-Class A and finding work as a driver. He was open and honest with his concerns about his past criminal history and it impacting his ability to find employment. The WIOA Career Services Specialist and HH spoke at length about how they would need to focus on his marketability and how to navigate speaking about his record with employers.

Despite his nervousness and worries, HH was extremely motivated to get through training and find work. HH began his training at the beginning of January 2020 with CDS Tractor Trailer Training. He excelled through his classes and was consistent in his attendance, all the while maintaining contact with the WIOA Career Services Specialist. He earned an “A” average equivalency on all of his tests and completed his training in roughly a month and a half. HH graduated at the end of February 2020 and received his CDL-Class A license.

The WIOA Career Services Specialist prepared and revised his resume to fit his needs and sent him a few resource articles about navigating your criminal record with employers.

HH received an offer from a trucking company to become driver and went through the training with the company. Unfortunately, he was unable to obtain the authorization from his parole officer to travel to all states. At the time, he was only able to obtain authorization to travel four states surrounding Virginia. The company had no choice but to let him go.

Despite the setback, HH did not let this stop him from finding employment. HH worked with a local temp agency to find work while searching for a driving position to fit his needs. He worked in the warehouse of a distribution center for a grocery chain, which helped him brush up on his skills with pallet jacks and other tools he would possibly be using as a truck driver. HH persisted through temporary work for a few months during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic while working with the WIOA Career Services Specialist on job search. He never lost his upbeat and positive attitude.

HH’s attitude and persistence led to securing full time employment in late June 2020 as a driver full-time—less than a year from being released from jail. He was able to obtain full travel authorization from his parole officer and is on the road to a bright future.

Rappahannock Community College Success Story - Northern Neck

Our personal lives have been mostly on hold during this quarter, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our work lives and careers have been moving along, but in a completely different manner. We look forward to returning to a more normal way of life.

While we may have been on hold, our frontline workers have not. All frontline workers deserve our thanks, our respect, and our support. Many of our WIOA clients have been frontline workers, including nurses, nurse aides, CDL drivers, and many more. One of our local nursing home facilities had multiple cases of the virus. Day in and day out, our clients worked directly with COVID patients. After working long, grueling hours, they went home to care for their families who also needed them. Some of the clients work full time, care for their families, and attend classes to further their education and careers.

We need to recognize our successful WIOA frontline workers. They make us very proud, and we should continue to encourage and support them in every way.

Rappahannock Community College Success Story – Middle Peninsula

LB came to the workforce program as a dislocated worker and was eligible for WIOA funding. He was always a pleasure to work with remaining focused and goal driven throughout his occupational skills training. WIOA assisted LB with HVAC training as he participated in the Advanced Certification program. One of his biggest goals was to walk in his graduation ceremony to receive his career studies certificate. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, he was unable to do so. The workforce development team is planning a small personal ceremony for LB once facilities fully reopen. LB expressed gratitude each time he had interactions with workforce staff as he worked towards his goals. He is now employed with a reputable company as an HVAC installer. The company shares that he is a positive and valued employee. Below is his story in his own words.

Approximately on August 22, 2017 I went to work like any other Tuesday Morning. I clocked in and headed to my designated area. After an hour into my shift there was a message over the intercom system stating we were having an emergency staff meeting. Little did I know my whole family's lives were about to be flipped upside down. In that meeting we were told the plant was closing down permanently and the first wave of shut down would be in 60 days. So many things started rushing through my mind. My wife was scheduled to retire on July 1, 2018 and my salary was the primary funds for my family. My health insurance would also be lost, and all I could say to myself is how am I supposed to start over at 50.

In that meeting they said that on August 29, 2017 the Community College Workforce Alliance would be on the job to explain the different opportunities there were for Dislocated Workers. I originally went to Workforce for help with the unemployment process, but found they had so much more to offer. I then found out about the Grant-Funded training programs they had to offer. After talking it over with my wife and twin sons we made the decision as a family for me to pursue the training that could lead to my next career. Over the next 2 years (January 2018-December 2019) I was able to, with the financial assistance of the Workforce Innovation

Opportunity Act, complete the course work and become certified in HVAC and hold a CFC card. Workforce even helped me obtain a Job in the HVAC field while I was taking the courses. I would not be where I am today without God, my loving wife, 2 sons, and the WIOA.

One thing I would like to share with others that may be going through something similar would be no matter how old you are, no matter how hard the times may get that the light at the end of the tunnel is worth every minute of it.

Eastern Shore Community College Success Stories – Eastern Shore

Story #1

CC is an Adult who enrolled in the Electricity training in 2018. CC came into the program with an interest in starting a new career after many years as a laborer. CC obtained good grades throughout his training program and his instructors had high respect for CC's work ethic. The instructors reported to case manager that CC showed up to class regularly ready with necessary supplies and was eager to learn. CC was able to obtain his Electricity Career Studies Certificate despite the COVID-19 pandemic and all the challenges that accompanied it. CC is employed full-time and is currently seeking employment in the electronics field.

Story #2

PP is a DW who enrolled in a certificate program in the fall semester of 2019 at Tidewater Community College. PP was laid off as part of the Eastern Shore Community College Reboot Initiative in the spring of 2019 and did not know at that time what the next career step would be. PP researched the Geographical Information Systems Certificate at TCC and decided that is was the best next step for a new career. PP's program was three semesters with two classes per semester. PP obtained over a 3.0/4.0 scale in her program of study. PP completed her program spring 2020 and has graduated with her certification. PP is seeking employment in her new career field.

SkillSource Group Youth Success Story – George Washington

BB, 24 years old from Stafford, VA, came into the Virginia Career Works Fredericksburg Center in March 2020, seeking guidance on finding a better paying job and career goals. BB has a high school diploma, and has worked a handful of jobs making minimum wage. He is very people-oriented, and enjoys working with the public; however, he seeks a work environment where he may utilize his communication skills and strong work ethic to gain opportunities for advancement. His interests are varied, but he is leaning toward the Computer/IT or Business Management field. After speaking to the WIOA Youth Program Case Manager about the benefits of the program, Ben enrolled the next day.

BB had been arrested in 2015 while residing in his house with his parents and brother. His brother was in possession of drugs and BB was taken into custody at the same time. BB worked with a lawyer who advised him to plead guilty. He did, spending three months in jail for possession of something that, according to BB, was not his. BB began his probation and was given a shortened period after reporting in frequently and good behavior. BB verbalized he has since been living not only with the constant memories of jail, but also the stigma of having a felony, and that it would

limit his possibilities with many employers. He immediately researched an expungement and what it would entail. He has one more year in the waiting period to begin the expungement process.

After enrolling in the program, BB's WIOA Youth Case Manager worked with him on his resume, interviewing skills, and job search. Ben was open to a work experience and flexible to any work environment. He began with Md Tech Solutions, working as an instructor's assistant. In short order he was learning and training in the new business' recruiting and administrative areas on the ground level. The Covid-19 Pandemic began to affect businesses and the academy closed for a temporary period. BB then was able to attend two virtual Financial Literacy classes on Credit and Savings, and a virtual Leadership Workshop. He has also worked part time independently on tasks involving employability skills.

The WIOA Youth Program wanted to initiate a Facebook page for Young Adults and BB seemed a great choice to help it get started. BB began with a list of questions that would need to be answered, which he posed to his case manager and the program director. He then built the page, demonstrated it for the case manager, the program director, and senior officials at The Bay Consortium. He is currently serving as the administrator on a weekly basis. Aside from posting general facts about the program, BB is communicating with the Center Director regarding center virtual events and posting new dates on calendars. He has also started a video post of various young adults that have successfully completed or are currently participating in the program where they describe their experiences.

The Facebook page is growing each week, as he is reaching out to new people and businesses through different networks. His personality and confidence are shining, and he told his case manager recently, "I love being able to help so many different people and I am so glad I walked into the Center that day, you have changed my life". He is excited to begin the expungement process and his WIOA Youth Case Manager is by his side for guidance.

Md Tech Solutions has recently re-opened and expressed to the Case Manager that they would like BB to return and complete his work experience. They are writing a job description to offer him a full-time position on the staff. BB will be able to work with people, computers, and possibly move into Business Management in the future.

Rappahannock Community College Youth Success Story – Northern Neck

For some clients, the chart of progress looks less like a steady climb up a mountain and more like an EKG. A. began her educational journey with RCC while enrolled in the Middle College Program in 2010. She completed her two required classes in one semester and graduated from the program that December with her high school diploma and a silver CRC. She entered the work field doing entry-level hospitality jobs for several years and struggled financially. Over a year after she had her son she decided that it was time to pursue her dream of working in the medical field and returned to RCC. A month after WIOA enrollment, she gave birth to her daughter. Feeling overwhelmed with two young children and unable to drive to King George for her desired phlebotomy classes, she chose to participate in Job Readiness workshops for the first semester. Her son was then involved in car accident and was hospitalized for several weeks. A. stayed by her son's side until he recovered months later. She was still anxious to begin her

postsecondary education. She was finally able to begin her phlebotomy classes at the Warsaw Campus the semester after her son recovered. The case manager assisted with her obtaining FAFSA funds for tuition with WIOA paying for supportive services. A. worked continually towards her Phlebotomy Career Studies Certificate taking one to two classes per semester while working full time and caring for her children. A. faced multiple illnesses with her children, her employer going under financially, and car issues but she never gave up. The case manager continued to provide encouragement, guidance, community resource information and assistance with a resume. A. successfully completed her certificate with a 3.06 GPA and gained full-time employment as a Phlebotomist at a local hospital. Her financial situation has now stabilized, her children are doing well and she has her dream job. Finally, her progress chart is starting to look like she is steadily climbing the mountain of success.

Rappahannock Community College Youth Success Story – Middle Peninsula

K. enrolled in WIOA on March 3, 2020. He was very eager to begin welding classes. His severe reading disability had made secondary school difficult and he was anxious to taste success with a hands-on program. He was attentive in class and his instructor stated that he was progressing well. Then COVID-19 stuck and, only two and a half weeks into his course, his class was placed on hold. Months of waiting ensued. In the meantime, the case manager stayed in contact with K. and provided job readiness and financial literacy information. K. waited patiently while reviewing the materials that the case manager provided. Finally, on June 30, 2020, K. was able to return to class. Smaller class sizes, social distancing, and increased sanitation procedures have been put in place. Once again, K. showed his enthusiasm for welding in class. He is resuming his welding dream and has gained some great leadership development skills.

Eastern Shore Community College Youth Success Stories – Eastern Shore

Story #1

RR moved to the Eastern Shore and began attending a local high school at the beginning of her senior year. She moved from a difficult situation she had endured since a child, and even had to live out of her car for periods of time during her junior year. Despite the hardships, she approached her senior year with a positive, hopeful outlook. Her high school career coach gave her a tour of the school and showed her the technical classroom in which she hoped to continue developing skills. However, she needed too many core courses to graduate, which prevented her from enrolling in the technical program. She moved forward with her required courses, and started to make friends. She was cleared for a medical condition and able to obtain her driver's license again. This allowed her to begin employment at a local company. Although her school attendance began to dwindle mid-way through her senior year, she stayed on track, thrived in her stable living condition and enjoyed earning a regular paycheck. She graduated in June 2020 and continues to work full-time. RR is planning to attend the local community college in the fall to study nursing.

Story #2

SS is an OSY currently enrolled at a four year university pursuing a degree in kinesiology. SS participated in the summer youth employment activity at Bayside Rehab to gain valuable work experience for her future goals. SS is currently working at Walmart to earn money to return to

school in the fall. If all goes as planned SS will acquire her Bachelor's degree next spring and has already begun the application process for a Master's degree program. SS' ultimate goal is to earn her Doctor of Physical Therapy (DTP) degree to work as the team trainer for a professional basketball team to gain experience. SS ten year goal is to serve as the president of the National Basketball Association's Athletic Trainer Association.