

BROWNFIELDS JOB TRAINING SUCCESS STORIES



Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program

April 2011

U.S. EPA OFFICE OF BROWNFIELDS AND LAND REVITALIZATION

Harith Goodwin's Greencorps Graduation

Chicago, Illinois— As a participant in the Greencorps Chicago program (funded through an EPA Brownfields Job Training grant to OAI, Inc.), Harith Goodwin stood out. His fellow Greencorps Chicago trainees valued his opinion and trusted his leadership. As a result, he was promoted to crew leader and maintained this position throughout the program. While enrolled in Greencorps Chicago, he took full advantage of all the program had to offer in terms of technical skills training and work experience. Training in weatherization and

environmental health and safety prepared him for an excellent employment opportunity that would have been out of his reach if not for his participation in Greencorps Chicago. Today, Harith Goodwin works as an assessor and inspector for the Community and Economic Development Association of Illinois, Inc. (CEDA), one of the largest private non-profit organizations in the United States. His position is directly related to his training at Greencorps and a testament to his and Greencorps Chicago's commitment to improving the quality of life of trainees.



Harith Goodwin, Job Training Graduate, 2010

Trainees Provide Oil Spill Assistance

North Canton, Ohio— Eleven Stark State environmental brownfield technician students leapt at the chance to work 12-hour days, seven days a week as part of cleanup efforts at the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. North Canton, Ohio environmental cleanup company Sunpro advertised for workers trained in the 40-hour OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard and by the next day,

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EPA's Brownfields Program

EPA's Brownfields Program empowers states, tribes, communities, and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.



Locations of success stories featured in this newsletter

Known as the Brownfields Job Training Program prior to 2011, EPA's Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training program provides grants on a competitive basis to nonprofit organizations and other eligible entities to recruit, train, and place predominantly low-income and minority,

unemployed and under-employed residents from solid and hazardous waste-impacted communities. Residents learn the skills needed to secure full-time, sustainable, employment in the environmental field, including a focus on assessment and cleanup activities. These

grants help to create green jobs that reduce environmental contamination and provide more sustainable futures for the residents of communities most affected by brownfields. This fact sheet describes some of the accomplishments and successes of selected grantees.

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Oil Spill Assistance

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20 students had lined up for interviews.

Other Stark State brownfield students were offered positions with Sunpro to clean up spills in the Ohio area on an as-needed basis. The brownfield environmental technician program at Stark State is provided through a Recovery Act-funded \$422,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to train more than 100 unemployed and underemployed Canton residents over three years.

Chattanooga, Tennessee—

Immediately after Dee Craig graduated from the City of Chattanooga's brownfields job training class, he applied for a number of jobs in the City. He was offered temporary employment at an environmental

staffing firm in Nashville, Tennessee. He had one job with that company, cleaning a site containing illicit substances (a crack house). On June 22, Mr. Craig received a call from one of the Chattanooga emergency response companies he had applied with in February. Within two days he was on his way to Panama City Beach, FL to work on the BP oil spill. He worked as a crew leader, overseeing more than 10 workers who are cleaning up oil on the beach. He made \$14.00 per hour and worked 14 hour days, earning him overtime at \$21.00 per hour. After the BP spill, Mr. Craig began work in Michigan, cleaning up the spill in Kalamazoo. At 51, he was the oldest student to graduate from the City's job training program.

Former students respond to the gulf coast oil spill, laying boom to contain the oil



Shovel-Ready Placements Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Richmond, CA—

Last year, the City of Richmond, California was selected by the EPA for an American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) job training grant focused on brownfields cleanup. The city plans to train 128 students, place 102 graduates in environmental jobs, and track graduates for one year. The training program is part of the RichmondBUILD Green Careers Academy and consists of 250 hours of training in a variety of environmental, green technology, and construction skills. Graduates can receive

six certifications, including HAZWOPER; lead, asbestos, & mold abatement; solar technology & installation; and energy efficiency training. The primary trainers are staff from the Richmond BUILD program, as well as instructors from CAL Inc, a private environmental training firm identified through a competitive procurement process.

Earlier this month, 5 graduates of the program were hired by Global Diving, a private firm providing skilled technicians to clean up the BP Gulf Oil Spill. Those



Students in Richmond, California's Job Training Program

graduates are provided with free room and board, meals, transportation between Louisiana and Richmond every four weeks, a per diem, and \$17 per hour plus overtime and

double-time. Since they will be living aboard a ship in the ocean with free living expenses, most of that money will be coming back to Richmond and the greater Bay Area.

King County, Washington - Offering Ex-Offenders Second Chances Through Job Training



Graduates of King County Washington Jobs Initiative

King County, Washington— In Washington State, the King County Jobs Initiative (KCJI) helps formerly incarcerated County residents move beyond the stigma of jail time and into living-

wage “green jobs” focused on environmental cleanup. Currently, 100 percent of the program’s participants have a prior conviction. Program staff developed relationships with Work Release

and the Department of Corrections, the King County Community Corrections Alternative Program, jails and other groups. The program also enhanced its job clubs, training, and job readiness efforts with a focus on the employment barriers that former offenders face. KCJI is succeeding in overcoming the hesitation to hire workers with criminal records because of its close relationship with employers and its history of providing skilled workers. KCJI works with community-based organizations, community

and technical colleges, labor unions, employers and others to create customized training that meets employers’ specific job needs.

To date, King County has trained over 314 participants in environmental cleanup and placed over 218 into jobs with an average wage rate of \$17.66 an hour. The Program provides an advanced, 238-hour curriculum in topics such as HAZWOPER, soil vapor extraction, bioremediation, wastewater treatment, lead and

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Cleanup Job Provides Stepping-Stone to Environmental Career

Jacksonville, Florida— Lonnie Jones, a single working mother, completed the Brownfields training course with Florida State College at Jacksonville on May 28th, 2010. Shortly after graduation, she was hired to help with the Gulf of Mexico oil spill cleanup in Pensacola, Florida. Soon after, Applied Environmental Health and Safety in Panama City, Florida offered Lonnie a job as a Site Safety Supervisor. She earned \$20 an hour for the first 40 hours/week and \$30 an hour for overtime.

Lonnie is no longer working at oil spill sites, but she is still employed with Applied Environmental Health and Safety, working to help market their company’s environmental services. The company pays her \$16 an hour for marketing services and \$20 an hour for field work. Lonnie recently enrolled in school and is now working on a bachelor’s degree in environmental science.

*Below: Graduates from Florida Community College at Jacksonville’s Job Training Program
Above: Jacksonville’s Job Training Class # 3*



Offering Ex-offenders 2nd Chances

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asbestos abatement, and confined space. Graduates also receive Basic Science, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and construction readiness certifications upon completion.

King County has many success stories, but our most recent include Brownfield graduates who spoke recently at County budget hearings on the value of the program and how they have benefitted from the

Brownfields Job Training program. Daema spoke to the King County Council on how her life changed after she made bad mistakes early in life and subsequently enrolled in the King County Brownfield's Job Training program. Daema called the program "a lifesaver". She became employed with Walsh Construction in 2010 as an environmental technician and since that time has received additional training within the company. She is now self-sufficient and is able to care for herself and her daughter.

Another participant, Bryan, also spoke at the Council hearings on how much the program has changed his life after he had been incarcerated. He encouraged the council to ensure continued funding for the program. He currently works for Nuprecan with wages of \$32.00 an hour. Bryan on occasion will attend job clubs to encourage those searching for jobs and to remind program participants how fortunate they are to have received the brownfields training and to stay focused on their goals. His employer was quoted as saying

that he is an excellent employee and that he can have a great future with the company.

KCJI is highly regarded nationally and was chosen to represent the EPA's Green Jobs strategy at the "Good Jobs, Green Jobs" National Conference last May as a long-standing program with a proven track record. The program was also recognized at the state level with a "2010 Governor's Workforce and Economic Development Best Practices Award."

Graduate Returns to Train Others

New Bedford, Massachusetts—

Gerald Writenour participated in two rounds of job training courses, and was determined to take full advantage of the opportunities they presented. After completing the courses, he worked closely with his job developer and was able to receive an additional grant that provided him with resources to attend additional training. Ultimately, Gerald became an instructor for the OSHA 30-hour training course, and he now has over twenty years of experience in the field of quality control and safety. He is now an instructor for the Brownfields Job Training program.

"I have been pleased with the diverse training programs offered in conjunction with the Brownfields program, and equally pleased with the level of instruction provided by those teaching the courses. I'm grateful to many people from several organizations involved; The Greater New Bedford Career Center, New Directions, Bristol Community College, to name a few that I've dealt with personally and that have assisted me to be able to participate in the Brownfields



Gerald Writenour, former graduate turned instructor

Environmental Training program. In addition, I thank all those involved in helping me to receive additional grant funding to further my education and career in the field of safety and health."

"I know, as do other graduates from these types of programs, or as future prospective graduates from these programs should understand, there is an ever-increasing concern growing with regards to our environment, and therefore the outlook and prospect of employment within environmental related careers looks promising. And it will in most cases look even more promising for those individuals that seek out and take advantage of available educational programs, and acquire further knowledge."

—Gerald J. Writenour

Brownfields Training in the Rocky Mountain Region

In 2003, the Fort Belknap Community Council was awarded a Brownfields Job Training grant for \$200,000. The remote location of the Tribal reservation contributes to an extremely high unemployment rate, which was estimated at 71%, compared to 4% in the surrounding counties.

In order to make this a successful endeavor, the Council formed partnerships with Fort Belknap College, Montana Tech, White Clay (cultural) Society, Buffalo Chasers Society, Portage Environmental, and many local Tribal programs such as TANF, Voc-Rehab, and a childcare program. A total of 123 participants completed one or more courses. Twenty-four individuals obtained employment specifically related to their Brownfields training; 10 individuals obtained unrelated employment.

Building on these and other efforts in the remote mountains, plains, and tribal territories of EPA's Region 8, the Brownfields Office



Students of Fort Belknap's job training program

has contacted all tribal and community colleges in the Region to publicize EPA's job training grant opportunities. With help from the Region's green jobs coordinator, the office compiled a list of all the workforce investment boards, job service assistance centers, and state workforce centers and made efforts to contact them via phone or email. Many of those contacted viewed the program's "CLU-IN" training webinars. The Region is hopeful that these efforts will spur additional communities to apply for grants to provide brownfields-related training, perhaps including regionally relevant topics such as redevelopment of mine-scarred lands, meth-lab cleanup, or renewable energy system installation.

Stories from California's Graduating Bioneers

Long Beach, California—

The Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network's Bioneers Program is preparing to train its fourth class since receiving a job training grant from EPA in 2009. The Bioneers program includes the following types of training:

- Life skills training addressing communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, motivation, teamwork, critical thinking, anger management, time management and financial literacy.
- Industry certifications, including first aid/CPR, OSHA 30, HAZWOPER 40, confined space entry, and asbestos/lead/mold abatement.
- Fitness and nutrition training (2 weeks) to prepare trainees for the physical demands of working in the field.
- Job readiness activities, including mock

interviews, job search techniques, resume preparation, completing job applications, and communication skills training.

Bioneer Profiles

Rafael Serrano came to the center at the age of 24 to “turn his life around” and learn more about “Green Jobs.” He was excited when he was chosen for the Program and excelled in class. Rafael was chosen to be one of the Class Valedictorians at graduation March 11.

By March 15, Rafael had gained employment with IQ Personnel, an employment agency with strong ties in the environmental remediation and safety industry. He is still working towards a full-time, permanent placement. He is currently working part-time as a Hazmat Technician, using his Bioneers training on a daily basis.

Louis Thomas is a 20-year-old man who recently completed the Bioneers

Academy training. Louis completed every module of the program successfully. His determination to secure employment paid off when he was hired on October 18, 2010 with Brookfield Homes, a housing development company, as a Site Laborer on the Coronado Workforce Housing Project in Long Beach, CA. He is earning \$12.00 an hour and is working full time and receiving a full benefit package. Louis' supervisor recognizes Louis' attention to arriving to work early and ready to begin, seeking more work when needed, and respecting his break and lunch time frames in being ready to return to work. Louis continues



(Above) Louis Thomas' and (below) Rafael Serrano's Job Training graduation

his involvement with the Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network as a speaker at graduation ceremonies, where he encourages graduates to embrace what the training provides as it well prepares you for work.

Environmental Contractors Take Interest in Job Training Program

EPA Region 2 has longstanding work relationships with engineering, construction, and consulting firms doing cleanup and redevelopment work at both brownfields and Superfund sites. Often these contacts can be leveraged to connect local residents with cleanup jobs in their own communities.

Hiring Needs

When a need arose in early 2010 to hire a technician to work on Superfund projects, the engineering firm CDM coordinated with the Region 2 Brownfields Job Training Grant Coordinator and was referred to the St. Nick's Alliance Workforce Development Program. Located in Brooklyn, NY,

the alliance center provides training, career development, and support services to local residents.

Allan Hunter was a recent graduate of the 12-week, full-time Environmental Response & Remediation Technician Program at St. Nick's. The program provides 390 hours of classroom training and nine recognized

certifications applicable to work in environmental response and remediation services. In addition to the nine certifications, Allan also completed the EPA Region 2 Environmental Sampling training, which provided a foundation in field techniques that is applicable to much of EPA's Superfund work.

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Environmental Contractors

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Based on the full suite of environmental certifications and training provided to Allan along with the appropriate health and safety, medical monitoring, and job readiness training he had received, CDM hired Allan and he started working almost immediately. Allan started as a Technician Level 3, which is a position with significant opportunities for career

growth. Allan has been actively working on a number of EPA Region 2 projects including the Raritan Bay Slag Sediment Project, Federal Creosote, brownfields, and others.

CDM reports that this has been a win-win relationship for both the firm and the employee. Allan has proved to be a dedicated worker and has worked well with field teams. He has been an asset to his new organization and his

work reflects well on the job training program at St. Nick's Alliance in Brooklyn.

Annual Brownfields Grantee Meeting

EPA Region 2 also invited CDM to participate in a panel discussion with EPA-funded job training grantees to provide an employer's perspective of the program. In an open discussion, CDM representatives provided feedback to the grantees on the hiring process,

technical experience of the student graduates, and recommendations for additional items to be added to the program curriculum. The national job training program is working to encourage similar discussions throughout the country, where job training grantees can speak directly with environmental contractors.

Burgeoning Entrepreneurs in St. Louis, Missouri

St. Louis, Missouri—

Around the time the economy started to slow down, Archie L. saw his hauling business come to a virtual stop. To try to make ends meet after shutting the doors of his one-man business, Archie took work as a security officer for a local church group. But, he never lost his dream to have his own business. In the hauling business he saw “potential for a small business person with the right set of credentials to succeed in the environmental field”. With his many years of both life and work experience, Archie came to the Brownfields Job Training Program through a referral from his church. Archie worked and studied very

hard and on July 2, 2010 successfully graduated from the training program. Since graduating, Archie has successfully bid on a few small jobs (less than \$10K), has utilized the services of some of his Brownfields classmates, and has successfully registered his company with the secretary of state.



Brownfields Job Training Graduating Classes from St. Louis, Missouri

Letters from our Job Training Graduates



Dennis W. Thomas during HAZMAT training

On September 13th 2010, I began my first day with the Brownfields Job Training Program. At that time, I was under-employed and working part time. After successfully graduating from the Brownfields Job

Training Program on October 29th 2010, my work hours increased to a fulltime job with unlimited opportunities for advancement within the environmental field. The professionalism, positive reinforcement, effective

teaching and training from the FSCJ (Florida State College at Jacksonville) staff influenced me. My work ethics improved and my enhanced awareness of safety challenges resulted in me advancing to a level where I became “part of the solution, not the problem”. I believe that if it had not been for the consistent and concentrated HAZMAT training, I would not have been prepared for the EPA HAZMAT finals. I know that at this time within life, I am prepared to face environmental challenges and to face these challenges safely.

Please continue with the training and even

more success within the Brownfields Job Training Program. The program instructors said that we, as students, should give back to the program. Those words stuck with me and now it is my turn to give back. Therefore, I have been promoting the program to employers here in the local area, including JAXPORT, the military base, and other environmental companies. I will be joining the program team, as a volunteer, to share my experience and expertise with the next training class.

—Dennis W. Thomas,
HAZWOPER trainee
at Florida State College

Finding Living-Wage Jobs in Region Six

New Orleans, Louisiana—Iryn Rowan completed the Goodwill/Limitless Vistas Southeastern Louisiana brownfields job training in May 2009. After graduating from high school, Iryn had worked at several low paying jobs and had been unemployed for six months before receiving brownfields job training. After completing the program, Iryn was placed in a subsidized pre-apprenticeship program and hired at the Waterford Nuclear Plant in Taft, Louisiana as a pipe fitter.

His hourly rate was \$15.00 an hour and his take-home pay including overtime has been as high as \$1600.00 a week. Iryn often expressed that the program had a profound impact on his life. He said he “needed to turn (his) life around and find a career.”

Currently, Iryn is well underway to establishing a career as a plumber and is employed with NA Mechanical where he does both commercial and residential plumbing and pipe fitting. He makes \$15.50 an hour. He has

been with this company for approximately nine months.

Camden, Arkansas—Since being awarded two grants from the U.S. EPA, the City of Camden, Arkansas job training program has graduated 61 students. Of those 61 graduates, 45 are currently employed.

The first class was offered during the day and was only available to unemployed residents. Not many people knew about the program and

only six students signed up for the class. One of these students, Ron Jones, was a single parent with three children living with his mother. An asbestos contractor working at Lion Oil in El Dorado hired all six graduates at \$14 per hour immediately after graduation. Although Ron did not have a car and had to ride with fellow graduates to get to work, he turned out to be one of the best hands and eventually ended up as a supervisor for that same job.

For more information on the Brownfields Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Program, please visit: www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm