

THE CHANGE AGENT

Adult Education for
Social Justice: News,
Issues, and Ideas

CAREER PATHWAYS

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These learners are enrolled in a Culinary Arts Integrated Education and Training program at Genesis Center in Providence, Rhode Island. They gain literacy and numeracy skills as they prepare for a career in RI's robust hospitality industry. The training program lasts 13 weeks and includes an internship with a local employer. Participants can also earn the ServSafe Manager Certification. Are you interested in career pathways for culinary workers? Research it and create a graphic showing what the career pathway looks like. See the pathways for other careers on pp. 7, 8, 9, 13, 23, and 28 of this issue, and use one of those as a model, or make up a new model.

ENGAGING, EMPOWERING, AND READY-TO-USE.

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The Change Agent is the bi-annual publication of The New England Literacy Resource Center. Each issue of the paper helps teachers incorporate social justice content into their curriculum. The paper is designed for intermediate-level ESOL, ABE, GED, and adult diploma classes. Each issue focuses on a different topic that is relevant to learners' lives.

In New England, online access to *The Change Agent* is available free of charge through NELRC's affiliated state literacy resource centers. Email changeagent@worlded.org to learn how to access the site.

Submissions: For the theme of our next issue, see the "Call for Articles" on the back cover. Note that we feature writing by adult learners. For submission guidelines visit: changeagent.nelrc.org/write-for-us or contact us at 617-482-9485 or changeagent@worlded.org.

Subscriptions: Individual, bulk, and electronic subscriptions to *The Change Agent* are available. See the back cover and/or our website for details.

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Cover: Photo by RI Local Initiatives Support Coalition (RI LISC). Thanks to Genesis Center, an LISC Bridge to Career Opportunities site in Providence, RI, for permission to use this photo.

Proofreading and editing help from: Sydney Breteler, Todd Jailer, Maya Ludkte, Andy Nash, Leah Peterson, Steve Quann, and Luanne Teller.

The Change Agent is published by the New England Literacy Resource Center/World Education 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210 (617) 482-9485

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WORLD EDUCATION

A Note from the Editor:

This issue of *The Change Agent* is full of change agents—students who are taking charge of their lives, and struggling to improve the life of their families and their communities. They are working with their adult education programs to find a career path, and they are making choices (sometimes difficult ones) and setting priorities so they can reach their goals. There are many ways people act as “agents” of “change” in the world, and for this issue, we created a special “change agent” pathway (p. 50). As always, we are inspired by students’ courage and discipline as they explore possible routes to better work and careers, improved lives, and stronger communities.

Many thanks to our wonderful editorial board, which met in Boston but had members from all over the country participating by phone. Their expertise as students, teachers, career coaches, professional developers, and administrators shaped the content and direction of this issue and helped bring in meaningful and relevant content that will support students on their career pathways!

Finally, I am pleased to announce this brand new 48-page booklet, which profiles eight IET programs from around the country. Published by NCTN, it is available for free at collegetransition.org.

— Cynthia Peters, cpeters@worlded.org



The Editorial Board:



The Boston-based editorial board (from left): Cynthia Peters, Change Agent Editor; Amina Jana, Notre Dame Education Center (NDEC) student; Darren Stephens, NDEC Career Coach; Andy Nash, NELRC; Paula Jurigian, NDEC Program Director; Sandy Goodman, World Education; Ebony Vandross, World Education.



Joining by phone (from left) Pat Bel-lart, ED of RI Regional Adult Learning; Melissa Sadler-Nitu, Director of Alamo IBEST, Texas; and Pam Shore, Career Pathways Coordinator, Dover Adult Learning Center, NH.



Also by phone from the Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR, (from left) Bella Lin and Yeny Fuentes (both students), and their teacher Jason Garvey.

Career Pathway Q & A

Cynthia Peters



What is a Career Pathway?

A Career Pathway is a plan that takes you through the steps you need to reach your career goals. For example, let's say you want to be a nurse. You might start by finding an English class or a basic skills class that integrates medical vocabulary to help prepare you for your career. When you're ready, you could get the training to be a Certified Nursing Assistant or a Medical Assistant. Now you could work in the medical field and continue taking classes. When you test in to college-level English and Math, you could take courses at a community college. You could become a Licensed Practical Nurse, and get a new job with higher pay. Over time, you could take more courses and become a Registered Nurse (RN), which means more pay and more responsibility. After working as an RN, you might decide to become a Midwife, a Nurse Practitioner, or a Doctor of Nursing.

Is it always called a "pathway"?

No. Sometimes it is called a career ladder (p. 51) or a career lattice (p. 8). Sometimes the graphic image looks like pyramid (pp. 7, 13, and 23), and other times like a highway (p. 28). Sometimes it is a simple chart (p. 9).

What is the role of adult education in helping me on my Career Pathway?

Many students attend adult education classes because they want to get better jobs. Many programs offer classes that integrate job training with basic skills. They offer learning opportunities that also prepare students for work.

Who decides what pathways are available?

The local and regional labor markets play a big role in determining which career pathways an adult education programs offers. Local industries identify the kinds of workers they need and the

skills they want their workers to have. Adult education programs build classes to meet the needs of nearby industries and to support students to get jobs in those industries.

How do employers decide where to grow and what they need from workers?

Under a capitalist economic system, people start businesses in areas where they think they can make money. For example, if housing prices are going up, a person might choose to become a real estate developer. If lots of people develop or renovate homes, they will need construction workers, electricians, and plumbers, etc. The labor market will have high demand for these kinds of workers.

What else affects the labor market?

We do! For example, more people are concerned about the environment, so there is a greater market for people to sell and install solar panels. Many people care about public health, so there are new models for how to do outreach, such as Community Health Workers (see pp. 12-13). Some people want to be their own boss, so they become entrepreneurs or set up worker-owned co-ops. Many people want to make our society more fair and equitable, so they volunteer for and work for mission-driven organizations, which helps create jobs in those areas (see p. 50).

Q & A: Your Turn!

What do you think the primary role of education should be for children & adults?

Who (or what) should be responsible for training workers?

Develop and share (and try to answer!) more questions about career pathways.

From Impossible Journey to Successful Career

It takes a village.

Sidonie Gbazale

A Dream Resurfaces

As a child growing up in the Ivory Coast, my dream was to be a midwife. However, for financial reasons, I had to drop out of school. I thought I would not be able to pursue my dream. When I immigrated to the U.S., I did not expect miracles because I did not speak English. Still, I enrolled in ESL classes in Providence, Rhode Island, to begin my new journey.

Once I started feeling more confident in English, my dream of becoming a midwife resurfaced. My teachers encouraged me to get a high

school diploma through the National External Diploma Program (NEDP), which I accomplished in just three months. With a high school credential in hand, I had more employment options. I enrolled in a skills training program, became a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), and I moved on to a better job.



"Midwife" comes from the old English "mid" (with) and "wife" (woman). Source: <weknownyourdreamz.com>

Career Steps

What steps has Sidonie taken so far to realize her dream? List them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What steps do you think she will need to take to reach her ultimate dream? (Hint: see the career pathway on p. 7.)

1. _____
2. _____

Getting Support to Go to College

The next step in my journey was to find a way to enroll in college to study nursing. It was then that I met the Transition to College (TTC) team at Rhode Island Regional Adult Learning (RIRAL). TTC played a significant role in my education. Through this program, I worked closely with teachers who encouraged me to excel in subjects where I had previously struggled. Moreover, they provided the guidance necessary for me to enroll in the Community College of Rhode Island Nursing Program. The TTC team was with me every step of the way – checking to make sure I took the right courses and getting help when I needed it. Believe me, navigating the sea known as the U.S. higher education system would have been much rougher if I had not received support from TTC.

After years of working hard and receiving the guidance to pursue my education, working as

Believe me, navigating the sea known as the U.S. higher education system would have been much rougher if I had not received support.

a CNA, and raising a family, I finally passed the nursing entrance exam and am proud to have “RN” at the end of my name. I faced many hurdles along my way, which I believe contributed to making me the strong woman that I am today. Not being a native English speaker was one of the biggest barriers I faced. In addition, being a mother of five who also needed to work full time meant that I could not always study as much as I needed to. Thankfully, I was able to overcome all those hurdles to becoming a nurse.

Despite the many challenges, I learned to adjust by working harder than I ever had in my entire life. Over time, I excelled in my courses and even started helping other struggling nursing students. After years of hard work, sacrifice, and countless challenges, I graduated as one of the top students in the nursing program and landed a job as a nurse in a local nursing home shortly after graduation. Moving from an entry level job, to a better job, to a great career in nursing took time, a village, and a strong commitment for a better life.

Still Working on My Dream

Regarding my dream of becoming a midwife, I am still working toward it. Unfortunately, for now, due to the various financial responsibilities that I have, I am going to be working to support my family. But hopefully in the near future I will be in a better financial situation, and I will return to school.

Sidonie Gbazale is from the Ivory Coast in West Africa. In 2010, she graduated from RIRAL's Transition to College program and went on to complete her degree in nursing at the Community College of Rhode Island.



Healthcare Occupations with the Most Projected Job Openings in the U.S. 2010-2020

	Job growth number (in 1000s)	Job growth percent increase	Job openings due to growth & replacements (in thousands)
Registered Nurse	711.9	26.0	1,207.4
Home Health Aides	706.3	69.4	837.5
CNAs and Orderlies	302.0	20.1	496.1
LPNs and LVNs	158.5	22.1	369.2
Physicians	158.3	24.4	305.1
Medical Assistants	152.9	30.9	243.8
Pharmacy Techs	108.3	32.4	166.3
Dental Assistants	91.6	30.8	154.0
Pharmacists	59.7	25.4	139.6
EMTs and Paramedics	75.4	33.3	120.8

Make several true statements about the information in the chart. Explain how RNs could have higher job growth in numbers than Home Health Aides but a lower percent increase. **Source:** Bureau of Labor Statistics

Look at Language

Read the pull quote. Find three words that Sidonie uses to create a metaphor that describes her experience going to college. Write a new version of the sentence using a different metaphor.

What does she mean when she says it required a “village” to help her become a nurse? Who was in her “village”?

Who is in your village? Write about what supports you have and some specific ways they support you. What supports could you add to your network?

Look at the career pathway on p. 7. What steps should you take if you want to become a nurse?

My Beautiful White Blouse

Hoai Do

When I was a child, I went to the hospital with my mother one day to visit my aunt. After seeing a nurse in a beautiful white blouse, I told my mother, "I want to become a nurse when I grow up." When my mother asked for an explanation, I told her, "Because they look like little angels."

I grew up in a poor family in a poor country. We worked very hard and still were not able to make enough money to buy food. My career goal

seemed like nothing more than a dream. Fortunately, my uncle's doctor gave me a scholarship so that I could study.

Those days were difficult... But I still felt happy because of my white blouse.

I went to a medical secondary school, and it was there that I had the most beautiful days of my childhood. Every morning we were awakened by loud music in the gymnasium before we went to the lecture hall or to train in the hospital. I still remember how happy I felt the first time I tried on my white blouse! But those days were also difficult. We were only given two meals a day consisting of white rice, a little bit of soup, and some vegetables. But I still felt happy because of my white blouse.



Making your dreams come true isn't easy. After graduation, I worked for six months without getting paid. I woke up every day at 5:00 a.m., made food for my family, and rode my old bicycle six miles to the hospital. The workday began at 7:00 a.m. and ended at 5:00 p.m. I worked at that hospital for 20 years until my family decided to move to the United States.

Now, I work at a nail salon and go to school to learn English.

Now, I work at a nail salon and go to school to learn English. When my English improves, I hope to go back to nursing. I know that it won't be easy. Although I have a lot of knowledge from my experience working in nursing, I still need to improve my communication skills and learn vocabulary. However, I have learned that you are never too old to learn. I believe that my hard work and interest in English and nursing will help me to succeed.

Hoai Do studies ESL at the Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR. A 49-year-old mother of four, Hoai became a U.S. citizen in 2016 after living in the U.S. for five years.

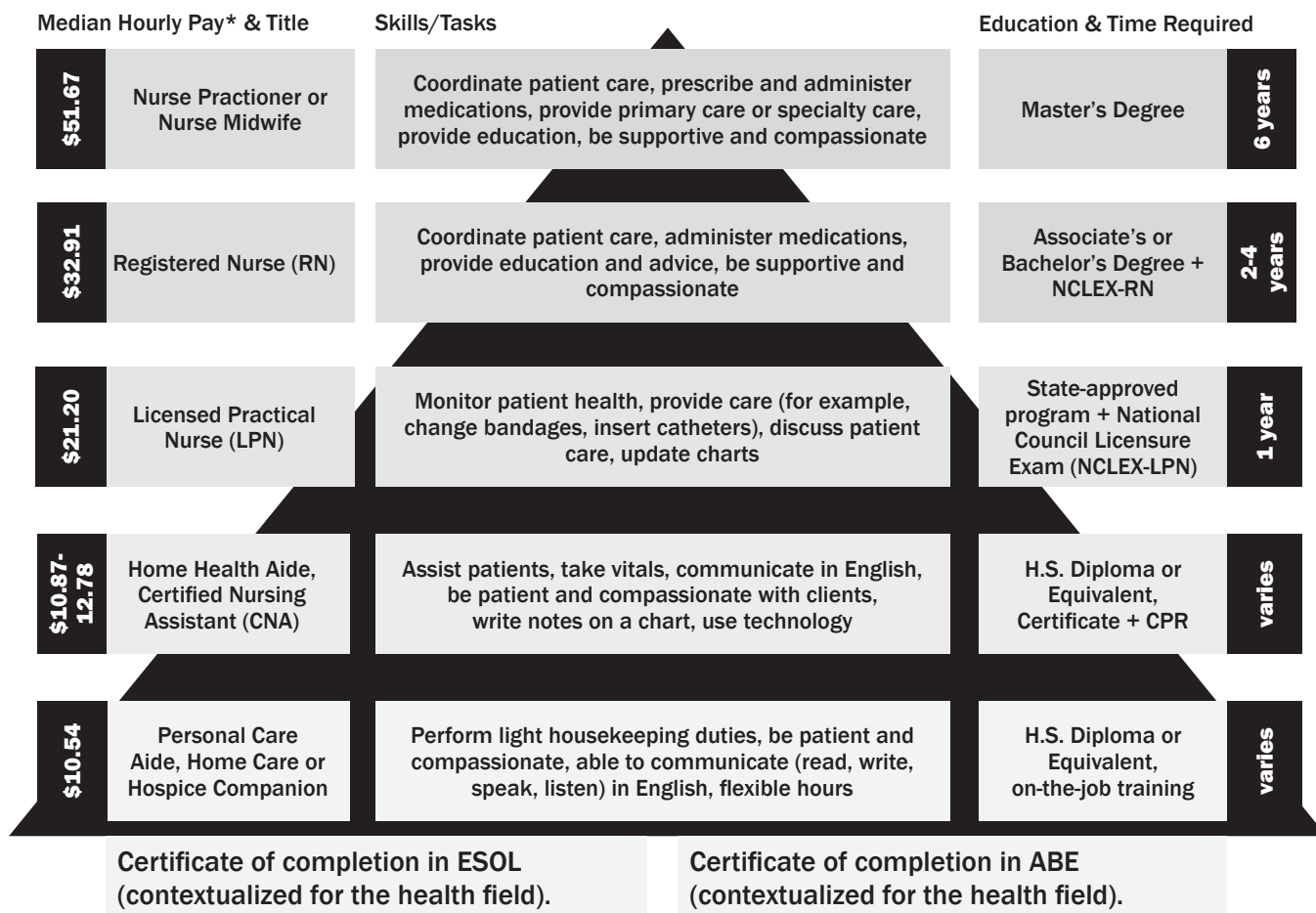
Take It Further

What is the sequence of events that led to Hoai Do becoming a nurse?

Read the article on pp. 4-5. How are their stories similar and how are they different?

What is your dream? Do you have a memory from childhood that inspired your dream? Write about it.

Nursing Career Pathway



* According to www.bls.gov. Sources: Melissa Sadler-Nitu, Alamo Colleges IBest Program; <centraliowaworks.org>; <www.onetonline.org>

Pyramid vs. Lattice

For another model, see the Career Lattice Pathway on p. 8. How would you describe the difference in these models? Which model would be more useful to you? Why? Make your own career pathway graphic.

Discuss the meaning of “median” vs. “mean.”

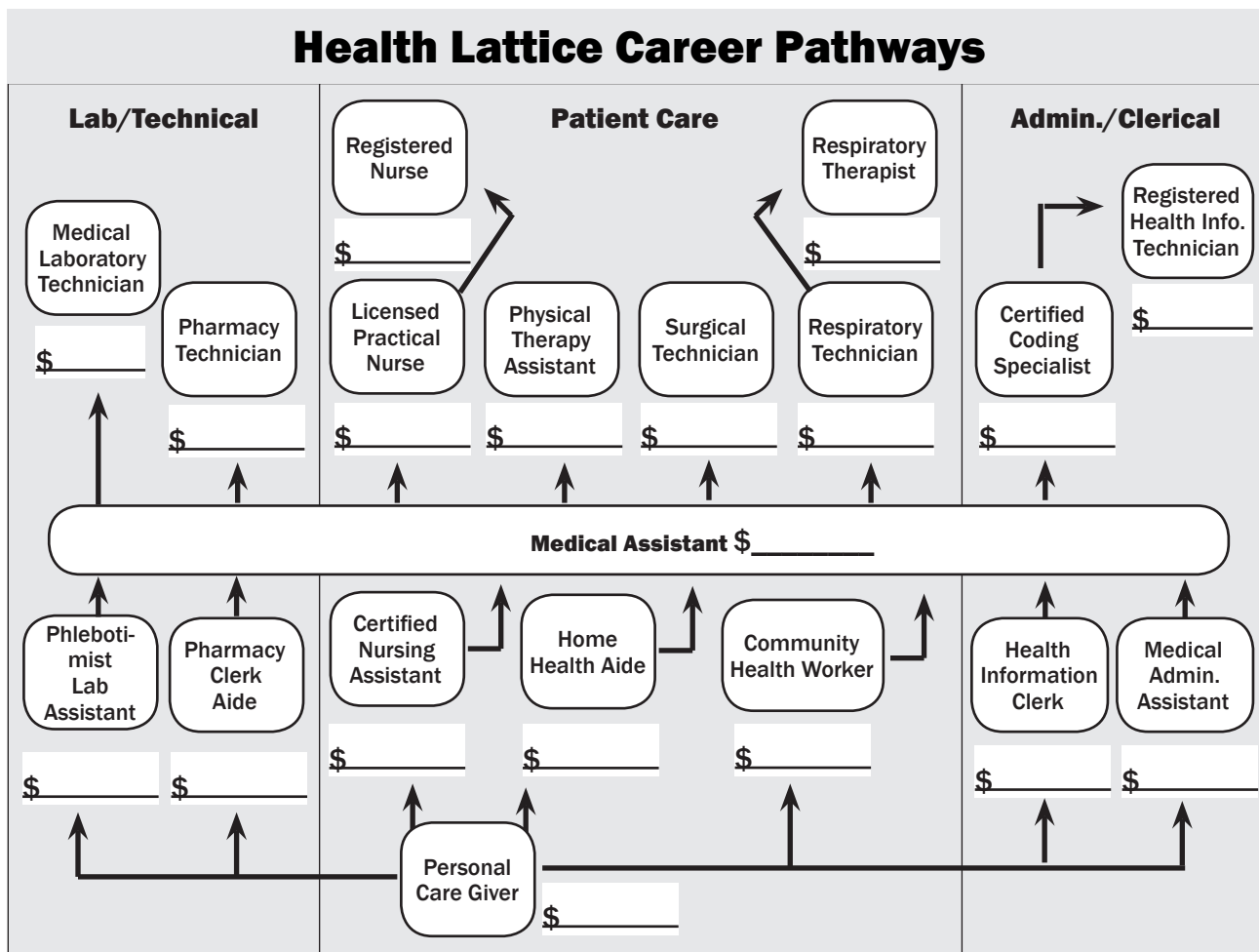
NOTE: “Vs.” is short for “versus.” It means “against or in opposition to.” You can use it to describe sports teams: *Tonight’s game is the Red Sox versus the Yankees.* Or to describe two options: *When I consider the bus versus the train, I pick the train!* In legal cases, use the abbreviation “v.,” as in: *“Brown v. Board of Education” was a Supreme Court decision that struck down segregation.*

Explore “Lattice” Pathways

BEFORE YOU READ: What is a lattice? How is a lattice different from a pyramid? Look at the pyramid-shaped Nursing Career Pathway on p. 7. Which approach—the pyramid or the lattice—is most helpful to you?



Photo by Flying Stag via Wikimedia Commons



STUDY THE CHART: According to this chart: 1) What are the three main areas of work in the health field? 2) What jobs does training as a Medical Assistant help prepare you for?

RESEARCH: Pick a pathway and research on <bls.gov> the median hourly pay for each job along the path. Write the dollar amount in the space provided. Share what you find with others, and see if you can fill in the whole chart. Find a medical assistant training program near you. How much would it cost? How long would it take? **Source:** Adapted from <blog.bamasf.com>

Becoming a Paramedic

Chrishana Burton

I've always wanted to explore the medical field, but I wasn't sure where to start. I've done some research and decided I'd like to start out as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and then work my way up to paramedic.

There are many reasons I am excited about becoming a paramedic. I will be able to read heart monitoring machines, run IVs, and give medication. To me, this is very exciting. I like being in a

The opportunity to save someone's life: what's better than that?

fast-paced environment, and this has "me" written all over it. Also, the opportunity to save someone's life: what's better than that?

Despite all this career excitement, I've also discovered some cons to this field: like possibly being exposed to contagious diseases and viruses. There is also the risk of being injured by combative patients, as paramedics often arrive at the scene before the police. Also, being a paramedic, you are always on call. Some paramedics work more than 40 hours a week. This leads to less family time which is very important to me. I want to be there for my daughter while she is growing up. I don't want to miss the little things, like who her friends



are, where they like to hang out, and what hobbies she is interested in.

However, what matters most to me is being able to provide a childhood for my daughter that is better than the one I had. I want her to be proud of me. So I am will-

ing to take on this very demanding career. I will have to prepare myself mentally and physically. I really cannot see myself staying in the dead-end retail world that I'm currently in. I demand to make a difference in this world by doing something that's beneficial to both my family and me.

I cannot see myself staying in the dead-end retail world that I'm currently in.

Chrishana Burton is a student at the Mid-Manhattan Learning Center in New York City.

Emergency Responder Pathway

Title	Work	Credential
EMT Basic	EMTs take care of patients at the scene of an incident and transport them to the hospital. They can assess a patient's condition and manage respiratory, cardiac, and trauma emergencies.	Certification, which takes about 6 months of part-time classes.
Advanced EMT	In addition to the above, Advanced EMTs can administer intravenous fluids and give some medications.	Certification as an EMT plus 188 additional hours of training.
Paramedic	In addition to the above, Paramedics can give more medications, perform endotracheal intubation, interpret EKGs, and use other monitors and complex equipment.	Technical certificate or Associate's Degree, which takes 1-2 years.

Can I Still Be Somebody?

Zenaida Garcia

I came from Puerto Rico with my three kids in 1996. I was running away from a ten-year marriage filled with domestic violence and abuse. I did not speak proper English, so I signed up for an English class at Genesis Center in Providence, Rhode Island. For about two years, I studied English and computer skills, and I also entered a teacher assistant program and volunteered at Alfred Lima Elementary School.

Retail Work Was Stressful

I applied to the School Department to work as a teacher's assistant, but I did not get the job. I wanted to keep studying English, but the state wanted me to work. So I got a job in retail. I was super scared and stressed out. I didn't feel ready for that kind of job. My hair started falling out. But I stayed six and a half years.

My English improved, but not enough to please the customers who insulted me for not understanding them. People would say, "If you don't speak English, go back to your country!" or "What are you doing working here, if you don't understand English?" I would just smile and say, "Have

a nice day!" I met other employees who were also struggling with the language and cruel situations with people. We supported each other, trying to live the American Dream. Employees can get fired, but customers—you can't fire customers.

Many times I would drive home crying after work. But I never gave up! Some customers would lift me up by saying things like, "You are a good cashier," or "You are doing a good job." They told me not to listen to those mean customers.

Cancer, Debt, Depression

In April 2008, my mom, who was living with us, got cancer. She had less than a year to live. I had three kids and no family to help me take care of my mom. My oldest daughter had to help me with my other two kids. One January morning, in a snow storm, my mom passed away. I had never seen it snow like that. It was beautiful. We traveled to Puerto Rico to bury her.

Then my two sisters died of cancer eleven months apart. I took a genetic test, which revealed that I had a good chance of getting cancer too. I decided to have a hysterectomy. I went into severe

ZENAIDA'S STORY IN PICTURES AND CAPTIONS...



I ran away from a ten-year marriage filled with domestic violence and abuse.



I got a job in retail. I was very scared and stressed out. My hair started falling out.



My mother and sisters died of cancer. I was depressed and in debt.

depression. With the loss of my job, the death of my mother and my sisters, being in debt, and having health issues, I found myself in an abyss.

Starting Again

I was referred to The Providence Center, and I began to find myself again. Their dedication and compassion helped me get through my mental health issues. Groups like In Shape, Women's Group, and Mental Wellness helped me come back to life. I was inspired to go back to school.

I chose Genesis Center again, because it was familiar and I felt welcomed. Now I'm in a College and Career Readiness class for ESOL learners. Mr. Buchalter, my teacher, helped me find my gift. He says I'm a natural writer.

I asked, "Do you think at my age I can still be somebody, after four years of unemployment, severe depression, anxiety, insomnia, co-dependency, fibromyalgia, and being a victim of domestic violence and sexual assault?" I wondered how a person like me, with all these problems, could go to college. I wanted to bring my self-esteem back. That's what I missed the most.

I told him, "You opened my eyes and found something good in me that I didn't know about. You made me think about what I really want. One day, I'm going to write about my life—about all my struggles and my path to success."

Still Struggling

Meanwhile, I am in a program called Medical Assistant Plus. In this program, I am learning office skills, clinical techniques, and software specific to the medical field. The program is designed for people who speak English as a second language. But I am frustrated. I am struggling. This is not what I really want to do with my life. I feel like I am doing it just because it is available. My mind is rushing. It is here; it is there. Right now, I have to choose a path going forward, and I don't know what to choose.

AFTER YOU READ: Look at the Mental Health Career Pathway on p. 13. What experience does Zenaida have that might make her an excellent Community Health Worker? What advice do you have for Zenaida as she decides her path?

From San Juan, Puerto Rico, Zenaida Garcia studies at Genesis Center in Providence, Rhode Island, where she lives. Through writing short stories about love, life struggles, and her path to success, she wants to help women survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse. She plans to go to college to become a peer specialist.



...CONTINUED



I went to the Genesis Center. I am doing better. I am studying to be a Medical Assistant.



But I want to be a writer and tell my story. I want to share my struggles and my success.



Right now, I have to choose a path going forward, and I don't know what to choose.

Putting Experience to Work

Latino Health Access

Community Health Workers (also called *promotores*) are experts from the community. They speak

We go to the streets every day to find women like us.

Santa Ana, California, describes how she reaches out to survivors of domestic abuse:

We go to the streets every day to find women like us. Women who are suffering violence in secret like I was. We offer tortillas. When women come to get free tortillas, we tell them, "Tortillas are part of our culture but violence is not." ... My objective is for any woman in

the same language and share many of the same problems as the people they are reaching out to. Norma, a Community Health Worker from

need to know that she does not have to take the violence, and that I will be there for her when she is ready.

Tere, another Community Health Worker, is a mother from the community, just like the people she is trying to reach. She says:

I give information with my own words, my vocabulary, and they feel that I am really talking to them. Some people have a lot of education, but not many. There are people who cannot fill out a form. I know what it's like because sometimes I have trouble filling out forms. I normally say, "I'll help you if you like." I do not ask if they can read or write. ... I know I have

When they feel confident, they start to open their hearts.



Latino Health Access in Santa Ana, California, employs Community Health Workers to deliver much-needed health services to people in the community. Photo (used with permission) from: <www.latinohhealthaccess.org>.

many things in common with the people I am reaching out to. When they feel confident, they start to open their hearts, their trust, and their doors to us. It is what happened to me when I told my group about the loss of my baby. I saw their sad faces. A mom approached me and thanked me because it had happened to her. And another mom told me, "I thank you because I lost my baby at four months, and I could not talk about it." I said, "That happened to me when I lost my baby. I could not talk about it. I felt that it blocked me." When someone listens to you without judging, you feel like you are part of a family that you do not know. They open their hearts and they don't judge you. Then you can confide in each other. But if you feel judged, you immediately block yourself. We promotoras, we know about loss and pain, so people feel like they can approach us.

Source: Excerpted from *Recruiting the Heart, Training the Brain: The Work of Latino Health Access (LHA)* by America Bracho, et al., Hesperian Health Guides, Berkeley, CA, 2016 <www.hesperian.org>. Thanks to LHA and Hesperian for permission to excerpt.

AFTER YOU READ:

- 1)** What are some specific ways Norma and Tere reach out to women in their community?
- 2)** Read the articles on pp. 10-11 and pp. 14-15. What experiences do these writers have that might make them excellent Community Health Workers?
- 3)** Look up what you would need to do to be a Community Health Worker in your state. (It is different in every state.)
- 4)** Share a situation in your life when it would be helpful to have a community health worker.

Mental Health/Community Outreach Career Pathway

Median Hourly Pay* & Title	Skills	Education & Time Required
\$28.56 Social Worker	Trained to treat mental, emotional, and behavioral problems, able to problem-solve, communicate, manage time, navigate health, school, and government systems	Bachelor's and/or Master's in Social Work 4 years
\$21.34 Health Educator	Trained to educate people about health, communication skills, leadership skills, organization and interpersonal skills, computer skills, critical thinking	Bachelor's Degree 2 years
\$17.95 Community Health Worker	Rooted in and connected to the community, strong communication skills (eg., reading, writing, listening, and speaking in more than one language)	H.S. Diploma or Equivalent, 1-year certificate or Associate's Degree 3-7 wks
\$13.74 Substance Abuse Counselor	Trained in counseling and experience with substance abuse, strong communication skills (eg., reading, writing, listening, and speaking in more than one language)	High School Diploma or Equivalent, Certificate 1 smstr
\$12.91 Peer Specialist	Lived experience of addiction, and/or mental or physical health problems; strong communication Skills	High School Diploma or Equivalent, 40-hour certificate various

* According to www.bls.gov. Sources: <www.payscale.com>, <healthcareersnw.org/career-paths/mental-health>

A Path through the Pain

Joseph Brooks

BEFORE YOU READ:

- 1) What have you learned from painful experiences? What skills have you gained? Could you use them on your career path?
- 2) Read the box below to make sure you know what LGBTQ stands for.

Trauma and Poverty

I have never had a comfortable life. I grew up in poverty, wearing hand-me-downs. In my life, I have been through many traumatic situations common to LGBTQ youth who experience neglect and abuse. I lived a life of drugs and criminal behaviors which was my way to cover up my sexual orientation. Now, being six months clean from drugs and crime, I know what I'm meant to do with my life and my career.

A Voice for My Community

I want to be a substance abuse counselor. I want to be a voice for the LGBTQ community. I want to



help addicts learn that there is a positive way out of the shadows of this disease and into the light of numerous possibilities. I want them to learn that it is possible to get the love and support they need to succeed in whatever they choose as their career path.

LGBTQ stands for...

Lesbian: women who love and are attracted to women

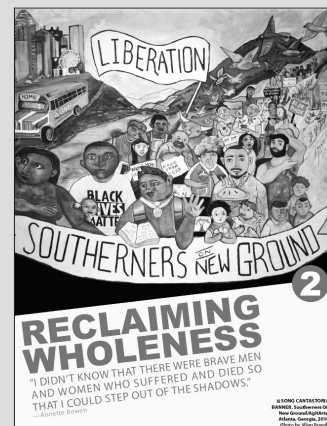
Gay: men who love and are attracted to men

Bi-sexual: people who are attracted to either sex

Transgender: people who are a different gender than the one they were assigned at birth

Queer: formerly an insult, queer is now a term that describes anyone outside of rigidly defined gender/sexuality “norms”

See the “Reclaiming Wholeness” section (pp. 17-28) of Issue #44 of *The Change Agent* for more definitions and discussion.



I want to help them learn these things before they learn the hard way – by being put in prison or an institution, or suffering a terrible ordeal. I want to provide outlets so that they can be their better selves. I want to “pay it forward” and be an advocate for these young people.

My Career Path

While I am serving my prison term, I am staying away from drugs and the people who use them behind the wall. I am attending substance abuse classes taught by my role model, Walter R. He

Most important for my career path is my personal experience with addiction.

gives me resources so I can learn how to become a licensed addiction counselor. He also advises me on finding grants and scholarships that I might be eligible for. I have taken a Sociology class and earned three college credits. These credits will go toward an undergraduate degree in Behavioral Sciences and Addictions. Most important for my career path is my personal experience with addiction. That is something they can’t teach you in textbooks.



To all the people out there reading this, remember: There is more to life than drugs and wild nights. Find the people out there who are positive and supportive of you moving forward in your life. Befriend those people. Stick with them!

Joseph Brooks was recently released from the Worcester County House of Corrections, and he now lives in Boston, MA. He is a sincere, goal-oriented individual with a passion to help those who are struggling with addictions. He wants to be a role model for LGBTQ youth so that he can finally give back.

A Peer Specialist Has “Been There! Done That!”

According to the article, name four specific experiences that Joseph Brooks has that will prepare him for his career path.

Look at the checklist on p. 19. List some more skills that Joseph Brooks might have due to past experiences. How would these help his work as an addiction counselor?

Why do you think it might be true that people working with peers report:



Improved
quality of life



Decreased
depression



Better relationships
with providers



Less substance
abuse



Higher rates of
employment

Source: www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/peer-support-get-facts

From Mom to Event Planner

Nuzhat Jahan

Time for Something New

I am a homemaker. I have successfully raised my kids and family. Now I have time to try something new that I can enjoy. In my country, Pakistan, I was a pharmacist, but I cannot continue this career because I have forgotten a lot of it, and it will take a lot of time and money to become retrained in the United States. However, I am exploring a new career pathway. I have experience managing a household and hosting events. People have appreciated and complimented me on my work. Therefore, I want to pursue a career as an event planner.



My Experience as a Homemaker

As a homemaker, I developed the skills necessary to be an event planner. For example, while managing my family's home, I developed good time management skills. I also learned how to be extremely organized. When my son graduated from high school, I set up a grand party for him. I invited over 200 guests to a fancy hotel. I hired a caterer to serve the food, and I did all the decorating. I put flowers and candles on each table, and I made goodie bags for the kids. I was able to get my son and his friend to prepare speeches for entertainment. The party combined traditions from Pakistan and the U.S., and it was a huge success.

Event Planning: A Growing Occupation

Over the years, the event organizing industry has grown enormously due to an increased demand for these services. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment of meeting, convention, and event planners is projected to grow 10 percent from 2014 to 2024, faster than the average

for all occupations." People are sometimes very busy, so they enjoy having the help of a professional when they have to plan a wedding, birthday party, school reunion, graduation party, or anniversary.

Training and Beyond!

To become an event planner, I will take an online course in event planning, which will teach me how to plan any event, from birth-

day parties to corporate meetings. Online education and personal mentoring will help me start a career as a professional event planner. This course is a four-month program. Initially, I want to work with the local community and then I hope to join a company to fulfill my goals.

I am happy that I have chosen this career because it will satisfy me and provide a source of income. Who knew that being a mom could have so many benefits! It surprises me to realize that being a mom has helped me to develop life skills that I can use to find a career pathway.

AFTER YOU READ: Nuzhat is explicit about some of her homemaker skills. Based on her article, infer some additional homemaker skills she has. Fill out the chart on the p. 17.

Nuzhat Jahan has lived in Branford, CT, for over 15 years with her husband and two sons. She has been an ESL student at the East Shore Region Adult and Continuing Education (ERACE) since 2014, taking a variety of classes from Advanced ESL to Academic Reading and Writing to The Working World. She is originally from Karachi, Pakistan.



Family Skills Are Work Skills

Fill in the chart below using examples from your life. Use general things you do (like the first two examples) or specific things (such as, how Nuzhat Jahan organized a large graduation party for her son). List the skills that you use (or used) to be successful.

What are some of the things you do for your family?	What are some of the skills connected with this activity?
Example 1: I take turns with neighbors walking our children to school.	Good time management and communication skills; able to use a calendar to schedule responsibilities; able to manage a large group and have a contingency plan
Example 2: I prepare _____ meals per day, _____ days per week.	

Take it further: Use the information from this chart as well as the chart on p. 19 and create a resume. Add work experience you have outside the home, too!

Fight your Fear

Vera Khlaif

BEFORE YOU READ: Discuss the idea of transferable skills.

I always knew that I wanted to come back to work. I wanted a job for the income, and I also wanted to rediscover myself! But how? I took many years off of paid work to stay home and raise a family. This gap allowed me to look after my kids and take care of the home. But after my kids went to school,

I never had a resume before I joined this program.

After a year of living with my fears and a lack of self-confidence, I met my son's teacher while I was volunteering at his school. She talked to me about a non-profit adult education program that could help me re-start my career and improve my English language skills. I found it online, and I realized the center was just ten minutes from my house! I drove there somewhat afraid, and I met Gina (the director) and James (the teacher). They welcomed me, and I felt comfortable and relaxed. They made me feel that they were there to help me. Then, I did the exam to know what level I would join. I was placed in a class, and for eight months it was the best experience in my life since I came to the United States.

In our journey of studying, we met several guest speakers. They shared with us their success stories, and they inspired us to fight our fears as we try and change our lives. I learned that I could transfer the skills that I built while I was staying home raising my kids. These skills include financial management, organization, scheduling, and most importantly, patience! I never had a resume before I joined this program. I learned about how connections and networking are important these

days. In addition, we went to many job fairs where I had the chance to interview with hiring managers.

I am a totally new person after this program! I have more confidence and great energy, and I'm ready to work and engage with my community. After I worked on my strengths and weaknesses in the Pathway Career Program, the picture of my dream job became more clear. I want to be around people, working in customer service or in administration. I am working hard to find a job that will match my skills and experience.

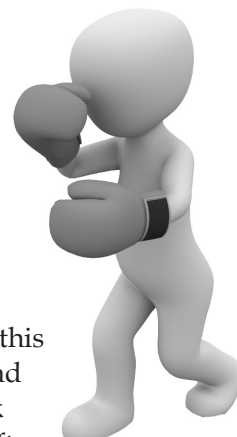
Finally, I highly recommend these adult programs for people who want to refresh their skills or jump into a new job or industry. It is going to be a great opportunity.

Vera Khlaif is a student at North Shore Community Action Programs, in Peabody, MA. She is Palestinian, and she moved to the U.S. in 2008 from Kuwait. She is making the transition from being a stay-at-home mom and preparing to re-enter the workforce.



AFTER YOU READ:

- 1) How did volunteering lead Vera to more resources?
- 2) What guest speakers would you like to hear from? Draft a letter inviting them to your class.
- 3) Make a resume! Use the worksheets on pp. 17 and 19 to get ideas about what you can put on your resume in addition to your paid work.



Things I Have Done



Consider all you do outside of the traditional workplace. Include work you have done for your family, your community, and your place of worship. Put a check mark next to all that apply.

Working with People

- ☐ Take care of a sick relative
- ☐ Give medicine to a child
- ☐ Care for child who is disabled
- ☐ Help at a school event
- ☐ Make phone calls, use social media
- ☐ Visit friends and family in nursing homes
- ☐ Take care of children
- ☐ Teach or coach a sport
- ☐ Organize parties for family or friends
- ☐ Teach at my place of worship
- ☐ Help children with their homework
- ☐ Participate in events in my community
- ☐ Volunteer at a library
- ☐ Work with other parents in the schools
- ☐ Go on field trips for teens and help out
- ☐ Play music or dance for others
- ☐ Other _____

Working with Data

- ☐ Write checks and balance a checkbook
- ☐ Do a budget for my family
- ☐ Record income, maintain sales records
- ☐ Handle the finances for a small business
- ☐ Read a map, follow directions
- ☐ Apply for a loan or credit
- ☐ Fill out forms and applications
- ☐ Enter data onto a computer
- ☐ Select and price items to be purchased
- ☐ Choose colors for sewing, crafts, decorating projects
- ☐ Other _____

Working with Things

- ☐ Take care of plants, garden, farm
- ☐ Cook, prepare meals for large groups
- ☐ Clean and repair things at home
- ☐ Arrange flowers
- ☐ Care for animals
- ☐ Type, file, office work for an organization
- ☐ Use a computer
- ☐ Take photographs
- ☐ Operate TVs, modems, computers
- ☐ Build furniture
- ☐ Repair equipment, repair appliances
- ☐ Use tools, operate equipment
- ☐ Drive buses, vans, taxis
- ☐ Cut grass and other landscaping tasks
- ☐ Cut down trees
- ☐ Give haircuts, or do hair styling
- ☐ Take care of cars
- ☐ Other _____

Working with Difficult Situations

- ☐ Support someone in a health crisis
- ☐ Advocate for yourself or someone else to get health insurance coverage
- ☐ Survive homelessness, addiction, abuse
- ☐ Procure benefits from government agencies
- ☐ Interrupt a fight or mediate a conflict
- ☐ Provide court support or navigate the criminal justice system for yourself or others
- ☐ Handle bullies or support someone who is being bullied
- ☐ Other _____

Adapted from *Integrating Career Awareness*, p. 45, published by the National College Transition Network and SABES <www.sabes.org>, 2009. Download the complete curriculum and find other related resources here: <www.collegetransition.org>.

Working Like a Donkey

Xiomara Argueta de Lobo

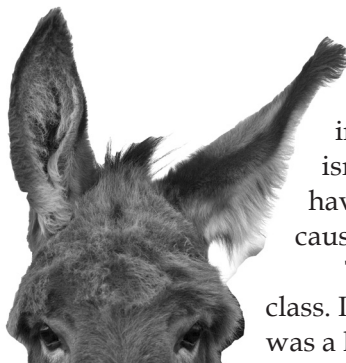
I remember my first day in the chicken plant. I wanted to give up. I was surrounded by chickens and large, noisy machines in an enormous, freezing factory. I didn't think that the work was for me, but I picked this job because it was okay that I didn't speak much English. Also, it paid a decent wage and had benefits, and it gave me time to go to school.

I started out working on a line where I had to separate the wings from the breasts. After a few months, my boss recognized my efforts, speed,

My boss recognized my efforts, speed, and responsible behavior by giving me a promotion.

and responsible behavior by giving me a promotion. I started working as Process Control (PC) and Oven Operator. I like these positions because I get to work with numbers. I check the weight and temperature of the chicken to verify that it meets USDA standards. However, my main goal is to get my GED so that I can study accounting and eventually find a good job in an office or perhaps manage my own business.

In my country, I was a sales manager for a jewelry store. That position offered me great benefits, a good salary, and lots of free time. I also



went to university and got degrees in accounting and hotel and tourism management. But those degrees haven't helped me here one bit because of my lack of English.

That's why I'm going to English class. I've enjoyed studying ever since I was a little child even though my parents didn't want me to go to school. When I

was ten years

old, I started working every day before and after school in my school's cafeteria so that I could pay for my school supplies.

As you can see, my career path started a long time ago.

School makes me happy. It helps me prepare for the future. I know that with the help of God, my teacher, and my efforts, a better future awaits me. I'll never forget what a co-worker told me. She said, "Mija, you are so intelligent. If you study, you won't have to work like a donkey like me."

Xiomara is a student at the Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR. She is married and loves to paint. She is from El Salvador and has lived in the U.S. for 7 months.

School makes me happy. It gives me an opportunity to prepare for the future.



You May Not Need a GED

If you're like Xiomara, and you have a college degree from your home country, consider getting your transcript evaluated (see box on p. 33) to see which credits will be accepted by a U.S. college. Then, prepare for the TOEFL (an English test required by some U.S. colleges), or for the Accuplacer (a test that determines if your English and Math skills are at college level). You may be able to go to college without getting a GED. Talk to a counselor to be sure.

Becoming a Barber

Jeffrey Johnson

When I was younger, people always asked me, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I grew up watching judge shows on television, and so I wanted to become a judge. I soon realized that was too much. First, you had to become a lawyer, and then a judge. So I decided for my career, I would like to become a barber.

I have many memories of going to the barbershop as a child. My mother would take me. I remember how much I liked

seeing all the people there sharing stories about the neighborhood. I remember the feeling and smell of the lotion the barber put on me at the end of my haircut. But most of

all, I remember my grandfather was the barber. He used to cut my hair. Becoming a barber makes me think of my grandfather. He passed away in 2014 after being a barber for many years. Now it is my dream too.

I know that to become a barber I have to pass a test to get my license. I have come to TASK, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, to keep up my reading to help me pass the test. In my high school there was a beauty/barber course, but at the time



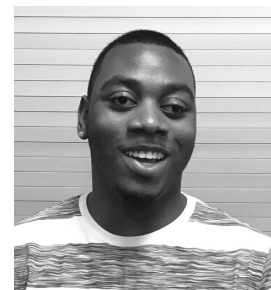
it was too much bookwork for me. Now I feel I am more focused and ready to do it.

When I first got to TASK, I felt lost. I didn't know what was going on. I found out that working one-on-one with a tutor in a small room is the best way for me to learn. It helps

me focus and not get distracted by other people and things, like my

phone. I feel like I am making progress here. I can read longer stories now and am figuring out how words work. I really look forward to being able to pick up books about slavery, civil rights, and important people in history. My work at TASK is preparing me to get my driver's license and one day become a barber. Until then, I will be at TASK five days a week working towards my goals.

Jeffrey Johnson is a 20-year-old student at TASK. He graduated in 2016 from Burlington County Special Services. He lives with his family in Trenton, NJ, and he likes to listen to rap music in his free time. It is a good feeling to be recognized by The Change Agent for his writing.



I found out that working one-on-one with a tutor is the best way for me to learn.

I remember how much I liked seeing all the people there sharing stories about the neighborhood.

Our Education and Our Dreams

Jeffrey Johnson is in school to become a barber. What are some *other* benefits he is looking forward to as a result of his education?

When you were younger, what did you want to be when you grew up? What inspired you to have that dream? And what happened to your dream? Write a short essay about it.

From Laborer to Architect

Damon Poirier

Not Easy Being a Laborer

When I was about fifteen, I started working for my father. He's what you might call a hard "Type-A" personality. So that's probably the hardest (and

I am not going to lie. It kind of stinks being the one who is at everyone else's beck and call.

maybe also the best) part of my job: my dad has high standards about hard work!

It's not easy because I'm a laborer. That means I pick up after other

people on the job site, and I get their tools for them when they ask. I am not going to lie. It kind of stinks being the one who is at everyone else's beck and call and who is the only one pushing a broom. Other major defects with this type of work are that when the weather is cold there is less of a chance there will be work. We also have to make our lunches and eat cold food on the job site. If work is far away, we stay in hotels. Sometimes, we have to drive two hours to get to the job site. I really don't like long car rides.

My Plan: School and Skills

Recently, I have been thinking to myself that I need an education to move up in the field of construction and to make more money. Ultimately, I would like to be an architect. Here is my plan:

First, I am improving my basic carpentry skills, such as using a screw gun and cutting sheetrock. I need to work on my router skills, and I need to learn how to make cuts at the right angle. I have a bit of trouble reading a tape measure at times, but practice makes perfect. Everyone knows the way to succeed is to never give up.

Meanwhile, I am going to school to get my GED. After I have my high school equivalency, I

will work on getting into a college that has a good architecture program. It will take at least 4-5 years of undergraduate school to prepare for a career in architecture. I may need to get a Master's degree, and I will need to pass the state licensing exam. Nooo, it will not be easy. Not much in life is! But I will be 100 percent focused on my education.

Learning from a Strict Dad

If I want to be a successful architect, I must keep my mind set on my goals and follow all the necessary steps. One of the most helpful people as I follow this career path will be my father. Yes, he is strict, but the reason he is so strict is because he is trying to create a successful business. I understand why he pushes me as hard as he does, and I thank him for that. I am so glad I can learn from him.

One of the most helpful people as I follow this career path will be my father.

Damon Poirier is a GED student at Rhode Island Regional Adult Learning (RIRAL) in Woonsocket, RI. He is working as a laborer for his father's construction company where he is learning many skills in the construction trade, including carpentry, hanging drywall, and roofing. In five years, he sees himself in college studying architecture.



Compare and Contrast

What is similar and what is different about Damon's story and the story on p. 24 by Carlos Contreras? Make a Venn diagram to organize your thoughts.

Construction Career Pathway

A Growing Field

Median Hourly Pay* & Title	Skills/Tasks	Education & Time Required
\$40.16-42.93 Civil Engineer, Project Manager, Construction Manager	Have a high level of reading comprehension, critical thinking, and leadership; able to coordinate multiple people and projects; understand personnel and budget management	Bachelor's degree + license + possible advanced degree 4-6 years
\$30.07-34.25 Supervisor at a construction site	Be a highly skilled communicator and leader with strong organizational and interpersonal skills; able to use CAD and MicroSoft Office	Journeyman level of expertise + experience and/or Bachelor's degree varies
\$19-26 Journeyman Laborer, Carpenter, Plumber, Electrician, Mason, Telecommunications	Install and repair; have excellent math, reading comprehension, listening, and time management skills	Successful completion of apprenticeship or training program, receive license varies
\$18.22 Laborers, Equip. Operator, Painter, Roofer, Construction, and Maintenance	Operate, monitor, and repair equipment; know geometry and algebra; read technical documents and have good communication skills	Apprenticeship, some post-secondary educ. H.S. Diploma or equivalent varies
\$15.49 Helper, Entry-Level Trainee	Use general mathematics and equipment; able to troubleshoot, actively listen, read technical documents, and communicate well	H.S. Diploma or equivalent, on-the-job training varies

* According to www.bls.gov. **Sources:** <centraliowaworks.org>; <www.bls.gov>.

Apprenticeship: “The Other 4-Year Degree”

Research how to get an apprenticeship in a unionized building trade. Whether you are interested in being a Boilermaker, a Bricklayer, a Pipe Fitter, or an Iron Worker, unions in



many areas offer apprenticeships. Usually, you need a high school diploma (or equivalency) to apply. Each year of your apprenticeship, you earn more and more money until you are a qualified “journeyman,” and you earn full wages. (*Question: Look up the root of the word “journeyman.” How could you say it in a gender-neutral way?*)



My Life in Concrete

Carlos Contreras

Written in loving memory of my father, Frank (Mighty Mouse) Contreras, my main teacher in the trade.

Starting from the Bottom

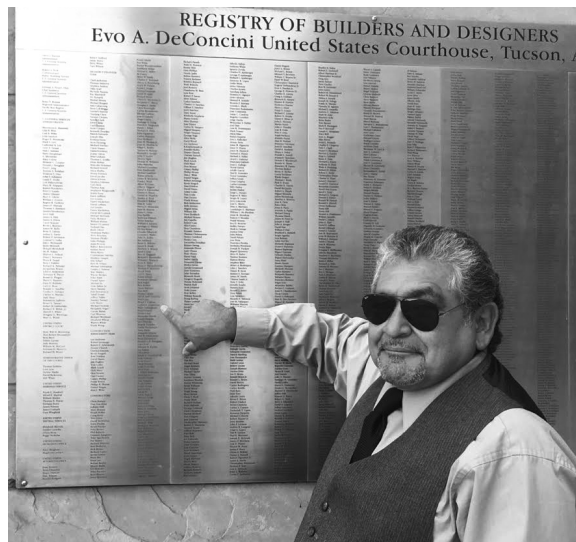
Let me tell you how it began. My life in concrete started one summer when I went to work with my father. I was young, so it was fun for me. We started work at 5:00 a.m. We poured the concrete and then sat around for about an hour waiting for it to “set up” (get hard). That’s when we had lunch. By the time we were done with lunch, the concrete was set up. Then we would start finishing it, which meant working on my knees.

He told me I could work my way up at the pace I wanted to.

I worked that summer, and it was great. I had a lot of fun and the money was good. It felt good to contribute to the household. The summer ended, and I decided I didn’t want to go back to school. I wanted to work. My parents were upset, but they said ok. My father took me to work with him, but instead of working in concrete, I started as a laborer doing pick and shovel work. He told me that’s where I was going to start—from the bottom. He told me I could work my way up at the pace I wanted to.



Finishing concrete can be hard on your knees!



Carlos Contreras points to his name on the plaque outside the U.S. District Court in Tucson, AZ.

I labored for four years. Being a laborer meant digging ditches and leveling the dirt where you pour the concrete. It was fun. Then I started setting forms. You set forms around the foundation of the building that the concrete is poured in. That was also fun. I swung a sledge hammer all day, pounding in steel stakes that held the wooden forms in place. I did that for about four years, as well.

Now I drive around town and see my work everywhere.

Becoming a Finisher

Then I started finishing concrete. That’s when the fun really started because you get to go to different

job sites. For example, worked at the U.S. District Court and at the University of Arizona. I poured the concrete for the Student Union and the Main Library. It was fun because at the end, I got to see my finished work. This work lasts forever, and when you go by places where you worked, the memory returns.

My father and my uncles taught me the trade. They always told me to work smarter not harder. After they were done with me, I was one of the best concrete finishers in town. Everybody knew me. I could go to any company and get hired.

I worked for about five companies in the time I was finishing concrete. Each one paid me more money than the previous one. One of the jobs I did is the Tucson Federal Building. My name is on the brass plaque by the door along with everyone else that worked there.

Knees Gave Out, Time for a New Career

I am very satisfied with the career path I chose. Finishing concrete is and always will be a favorite part of my life. Sadly, my knees gave out and I

couldn't finish concrete any more. Now, I'm on a new path. I got back into school; I'm getting my GED and I'm aiming to get a degree in Social Services work. I picked this path because I can relate to many individuals I will be working with. I can have empathy and compassion and I want to give back to my community. I am very optimistic about what the future holds and I cannot wait for the next chapter in life!

Carlos Contreras is a student at Adult Basic Education for College and Career (ABECC) in Tucson, AZ. He is a single father of a 12-year old boy, and Carlos wants to show him that education is important. Carlos is active in the student leadership council at El Rio Learning Center. Volunteering in his community has made him want to continue his education in social services to be a better advocate and resource for those in need.

AFTER YOU READ:

- 1) Carlos is changing careers. What skills from his "life in concrete" might be transferable to a career in social services?
- 2) Concrete is a hard, fixed substance. Is there any irony in the title "My Life in Concrete"?

Some Careers are Hard on the Body

In the pictures below, what activities does each worker do? Which do you think is hardest on the body? Why? Considering the wear and tear on the body, what are the pros and cons of each job? What kind of job would be right for your body?



Learn more about workers' rights to safety on the job. See "Workplace Safety: Learn It, Teach It." Available for free at <changeagent.nelrc.org/in-the-classroom/lesson-packets>.

Look for our "extras" at <changeagent.nelrc.org/issues>; read an essay by Salisa Chuon, "From Assembly Line to Accounting," about wanting work that is easier on her body.

Socorro Means Succor

In the small town of Socorro, Texas, community-wide cooperation helps immigrants get free English and career classes.

Anthony Fraga

BEFORE YOU READ: Look up the words *socorro* (in Spanish) and *succor* (in English).

Big Success

Andres Talavera, a proud father of two daughters, wanted training that would help him find work so he could support his family. Thanks to the Community Learning Center (CLC) in Socorro, Texas, he started with ESL classes, moved on to GED and citizenship classes (he is now a U.S. citizen), and has just completed the Computer Maintenance and Repair course. In June, he received the industry-recognized A+ Certification and the Network+ Certification, which should help him find entry-level work installing and maintaining personal computers, as well as designing and troubleshooting all wired and wireless networks.

In addition to Andres, the CLC graduated 12 students in their HVAC* certification program, 13 students in their Computer Maintenance program, 16 students in their Microsoft Office program, 6 students in their Law Enforcement program, and 7 students in the Building Maintenance and Electrical certification program.



Photos: Community Learning Center in Socorro, TX.



Small Budget

How does a small program with a limited budget do it? Career Pathways and Transitions Coordinator Rosanne Loya says, "We wouldn't have the success without the cooperation of many people in the community." For example, adult basic education students enjoy the use of the HVAC lab at El Dorado High School, and the Building Maintenance and Electrical Technology students use the Electrical Technology classroom at Americas High School. Our students will also benefit from the district's Medical Magnet School where they will have the opportunity to receive their Certified Nursing Assistant certification and/or Medical Assistant certification this coming school year.

At the CLC, we have been able to creatively expand our career pathways program without having to invest in infrastructure. The Socorro program is free to participants, so students gain much-needed skills without paying high tuition costs typical of post-secondary schools. In Socorro, Texas, where residents desperately need skills and employers desperately need skilled workers, the program could not have come at a better time. Ms. Loya goes on to say, "In this economically disadvantaged community, we are happy to do our small part to help our students earn industry- and state-recognized credentials that will help them build their economic self-sufficiency."

**HVAC stands for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.*

Andres graduated on June 8, 2017, and he now has an unpaid internship in the Engineering Department of the City of El Paso. He is gaining experience in the field, adding to his knowledge of computer maintenance, and getting the opportunity to network with city engineers.

AFTER YOU READ:

- 1) In your own words, explain how the community cooperates to provide support for the students.
- 2) Look at the Information Technology Career Pathway on the p. 28. What will Andres need to do to advance in his career?

Anthony Fraga is the director of the Community Learning Center at the Socorro Independent School District (SISD) in Socorro, TX. SISD's creative approach has led to state recognition by the Texas Workforce Commission for the past two years.

More Partnerships!

The Tutorial Center in Bennington, VT, also uses community cooperation to help students succeed. At their Youth Agriculture Project (YAP), students don't just grow food, they work with local farmers, sell produce to local hospitals and Meals on Wheels, and enjoy partnerships with nearby towns. Students contribute to the health of their community while they gain basic skills and job experience. Find out more at: tutoringvermont.org/yap. Read student stories: pp. 46-49, Issue #39 of *The Change Agent*.



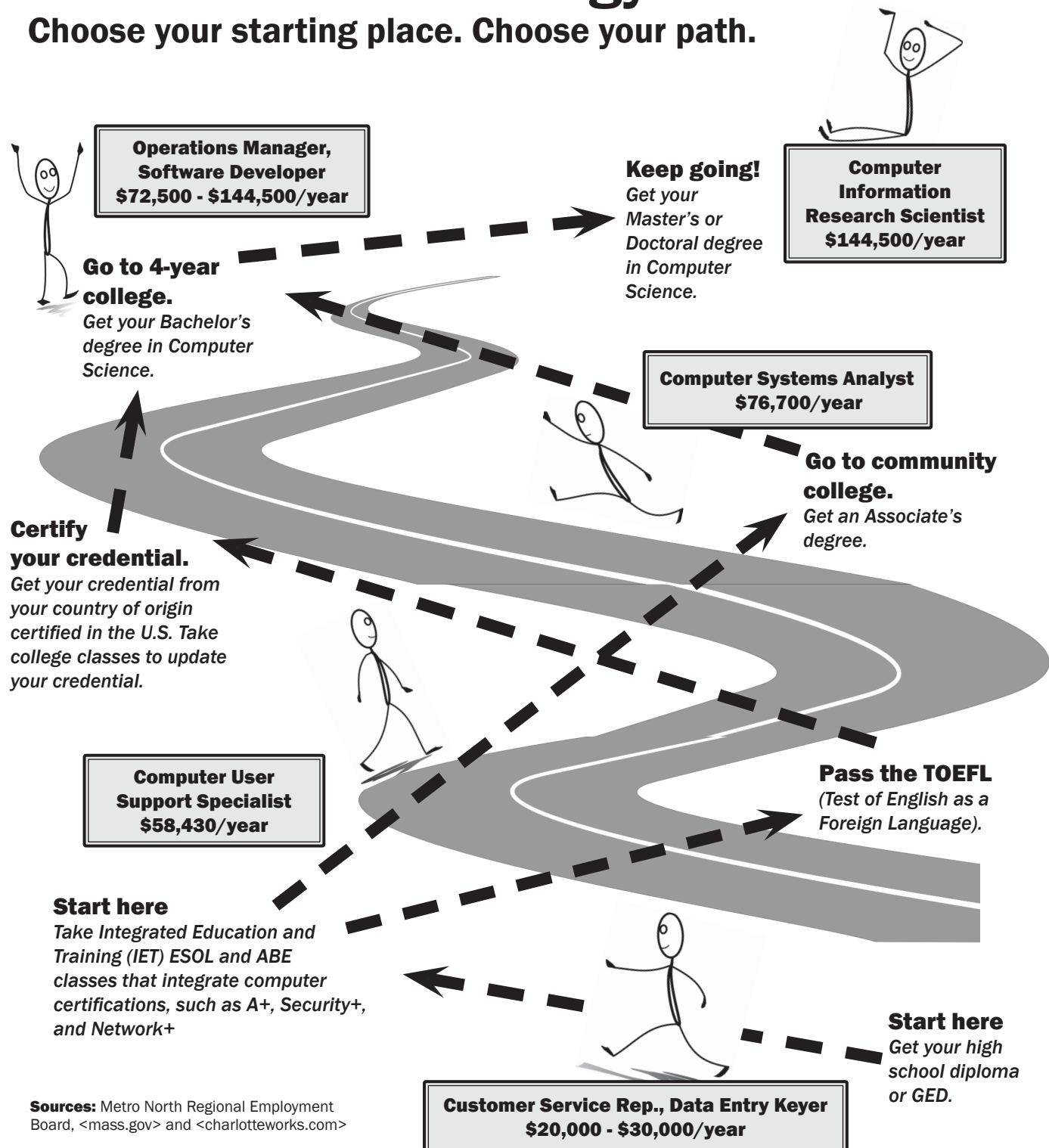
Learn English While Getting Trained and Certified!

Workforce Training	Industry-Recognized Certificate	Potential Jobs
HVAC	HVAC Level 1 NCCER	Entry-level HVAC service technician- refrigeration, electricity, heating, air conditioning/air distribution systems, piping, soldering and brazing, trade mathematics.
	HVAC Level 2 NCCER	Commercial air systems, air quality equipment, ventilation, electric systems; troubleshoot control circuits, gas heating, cooling, heat pumps, installation and maintenance practices, duct systems, plumbing, ironwork.
	EPA 608 Certification	Certification Refrigerant technician, three levels enable work on appliances of different pressures and sizes.
	OSHA 10 Certification	10-hour training on workplace safety and health hazards.
Computer Maint./Repair	A+ Certification	IT helpdesk, tech support, IT consultant, field technician, systems analyst, entry-level PC computer service job- installing, maintaining, customizing and operating.
	Security+ Certification	Security+ Certification IT security-managing, operation, compliance, and security; detecting vulnerabilities, threats, and hackers. Network security specialist; security analyst, information security officer, tech support specialist.
	Network+ Certification	IT networking industry- designs, manage, install, and troubleshoot data networks and software. Network and computer systems technician or manager, security officer, Network administrator, systems engineer.
Bldg. Maint. and Electrical	OSHA 10 Certification	10-hour training on workplace safety and health hazards
	Electrical Apprenticeship License (TDLR)	Electrical apprentice, step to becoming a journeyman or electrician.
Microsoft Certification	MOS – Word, Excel and PowerPoint	Skills in Microsoft Office are often required in office jobs, such as in management, business, IT, marketing and communications. Data entry, administrative assistant, customer service representative, typist, occupancy specialist.

Many adult education programs (like the CLC in Socorro) teach English in the context of workforce training. Are you interested in any of the above? Can you find a class near you?

Information Technology Career Paths

Choose your starting place. Choose your path.



Sources: Metro North Regional Employment Board, <mass.gov> and <charlotteworks.com>

The Highs and Lows of a Dream Chaser

Alberto Batt

BEFORE YOU READ, consider this vocabulary:

Music producer: writes, produces, and records songs for other artists or for their own projects.

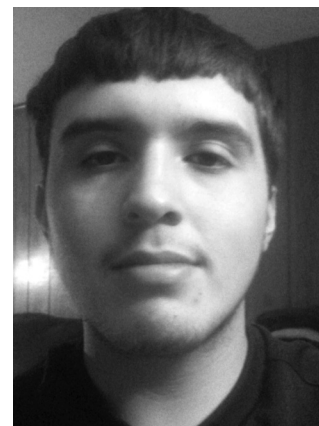
Record label: a company that records and markets music and music videos.

Beat pad: a device that allows you to mix tracks.

Synths: short for synthesizer, which imitates and combines the sounds of different instruments.

808: a drum machine.

Do you want to know the highs and lows of a dream chaser? I am working towards becoming a producer for a few famous artists in the music industry. Then I want to become an independent



artist and start up my own record label. All of the hard work I've been putting into producing and rapping is well worth it because I love what I do. I've made myself understand that there is no stopping and no limitations.

Making music is the key to my happiness. I love it so much more every time I touch that beat pad and start looping different vocals with synths and 808s. It's a process I know so well, but sometimes it can be frustrating. I put my all into it, and it still won't sound how I want it to sound.

I just keep on messing with it until the beat sounds like glory. Sometimes the rhythm doesn't mix well, and I have to

persevere to make all the sounds connect equally. All I do is strive for greatness! There isn't any changing this goal I have set for myself. Only God knows and will help me through this journey.

I still have a long way to go. And after I achieve my current goals, I'm sure I'll have even more new goals. For example, I would like to start up a program to teach others how to make beats and how to make music in all aspects. Hopefully then I'll have a better chance of getting my vision out to hundreds and thousands of people. I want to make others feel more inspired and help those who helped me during my highs and lows.

Making music is the key to my happiness.

Take it Further

Listen to this 3-minute audio recording of three producers talking about what it means to be a music producer: <www.recordingconnection.com/reference-library/recording-entrepreneurs/what-does-a-music-producer-do>

Find out more about careers in music here: <www.careersinmusic.com> and here: <www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2015/article/careers-for-music-lovers.htm>.

What are the highs and lows that Alberto experiences while chasing his dream?

List the steps he is taking to achieve his dream.

What is your dream? Is it the same as or different from your career pathway?

Alberto Batt was born in Tucson, AZ, and is a student at El Rio Learning Center. The Notorious B.I.G. says, "We can't change the world unless we change ourselves." Alberto keeps working on himself in order to change the world for the better.

Caring for People with Disabilities

Alicia Pemberton

BEFORE YOU READ: Share what you know about diabetes and dyslexia.

Back in 2003, I worked as a babysitter, and while I was doing that work, I developed a passion for caring for children and adults with disabilities. This passion gave me my career focus.

My neighbor asked me to watch his three children. He informed me that his oldest daughter had diabetes. I learned that everything she eats must be sugar free, and he showed me what to do if her blood sugar went to high or too low.

Once, while she was in my care, she was playing with her brother and sister, and she just

Amen. It made me feel good that I was able to save this little girl's life.

fainted. I didn't panic, because I knew what to do. She had a diabetic attack, and right away I did what I was told to do. I took the medication and injected it under her tongue. I

waited 15 minutes, sat her up, called her name, and she came to. Amen. It made me feel good that I was able to save this little girl's life.

Another time, I was working with a young boy, and he had dyslexia. When he was reading me a story, I noticed he was reading the book backwards. I took the book from his little hands and turned the book to the front. I worked with him every day. I used a Dr. Seuss book to teach him to read from front to back. After some time, he got it! It made me feel that I accomplished something. I didn't give up or get frustrated. I stayed focused. This little boy still needed special teachers to help him with his dyslexia, but I was there for him and showed I believed in him.

I am so proud of myself that I was able to care for these children. Look at them now! Some of them are grown and graduating from school. So when you feel a little different and feel you can't

do it, read my story.

You can get an education whether you have a disability or not. If you want it, believe in yourself, and watch how your career is going to turn out.

These experiences have been a blessing because they made me want to work with children and adults who have disabilities.



Alicia Pemberton is a student at the Mid-Manhattan Learning Center in New York City.

Read Deeply, Learn More

What experiences make Alicia want to pursue a career taking care of disabled children and adults? According to the text, how do these experiences affect her?

Look up the Americans with Disabilities Act. What does it prohibit? What does it require employers to do?

What sort of “accommodation” might a person with diabetes need on the job? What about someone with dyslexia?

Read the article by Jessica Lopez on p. 31. When she goes to college, what sort of accommodation could she expect? Search on the Internet to find out.

Share your own stories of coping with a disability—yours or a loved one's.

Dyslexia Won't Get in My Way

Jessica Lopez

BEFORE YOU READ: Share what you know about dyslexia. Has it gotten in your way? Or in the way of someone you know? What did you do about it?

I chose my career pathway based on something I truly love to do and something I would be happy to do for the rest of my life: working with children. My career path involves getting my high school equivalency so that I can go to college. My goal is to get a Bachelor's degree with a major in Early

Taking care of children is what I truly love to do.

I've always loved being around children and working with them would be an honor. For years, I watched my own family and struggle to maintain jobs while seeking and maintaining child care for

Childhood Education. I would also like to complete a minor in Business Management so that I will have the skills and knowledge to open my own business one day.

their children. I made it my business to help out whenever I could. Not only do I enjoy children, I also enjoy knowing that I am helping a friend or family member in need.

Taking care of children is what I truly love to do and everyone around me would agree that I do it well.

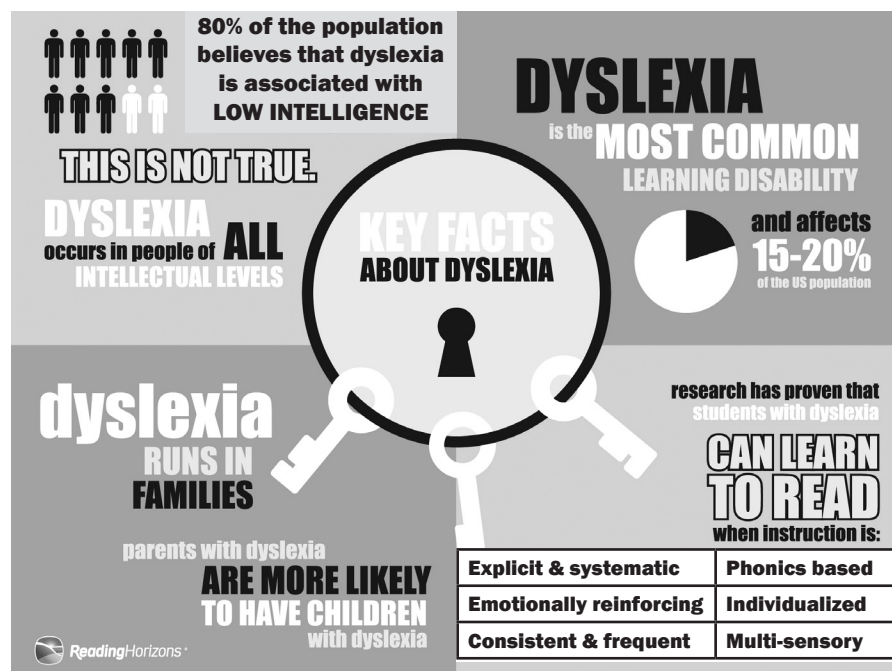
For years, I have struggled academically due to a learning disability called dyslexia. I have suffered greatly because of the many setbacks this disability has caused. But I have stayed with my education. I believe in myself now more than ever, thanks to this education program which supports me and guides me on my journey to success.

I am very satisfied with the career pathway I have chosen because it will allow me to do what I love most. Even though the road may be chal-

lenging, I am ready to pursue it because I know the results will be fulfilling. There is a saying, "To teach a child is to touch the future." I believe that this is true. And this is what makes my career more rewarding than any compensation in the world.

AFTER YOU READ: Conduct research on going to school with dyslexia. What supports, if any, can you expect from your adult education program or your college?

I believe in myself now more than ever.



Jessica Lopez is a student at the Mid-Manhattan Learning Center in New York City. (Infographic, left, from Reading Horizons.)

I Was a Dentist in Syria

Aziz Sammoud

It was a hard day when I left my country Syria. My wife was seven months pregnant. The war was getting closer to us. We left our house and rented another one near the clinic where I worked as a Dentist. Then, after two weeks, a military tank

It is difficult to lose your home, family, job, and memories. I felt like it was the end of my life.

came towards our new house and shot two shells. I was in the house with my wife, two daughters, and my sister-in-law. We were on the fourth floor, the tank shelled the second and third floors. We were very afraid. The

explosion was powerful, and the smoke was everywhere. We were coughing and breathing hard.

My wife was bleeding. We escaped to the bathroom because it was safer. My daughter Ritah hugged me tightly. Then the electricity went out. We could hear the sound of gunshots. After four



Aziz Sammoud with his family.

hours, silence prevailed. That night was the longest night of my life. In the morning, we could not go out of the house because many soldiers were still outside. We stayed the whole day and night inside the house. The next day we moved to the farms near our city. We lived for ten days under the trees. After that, we reached Damascus, the capital city of Syria. But Damascus was not safe either, so we decided to leave our country.

I will never forget that day. It is difficult to lose your home, family, job, and memories. I felt like it was the end of my life. My wife, children, and in-laws made the difficult decision to move to Egypt. We stayed there for three years. Then we moved to the U.S. For about six months, I have suffered learning a new language. This is the first time I ever had to speak English.

I have a challenge. I have to decide if I want to continue to work as a Dentist. I need to study again and go to dental school for three years at least. The time and money that it would take weigh on my mind, but the encouragement I receive from my family and friends make me think



Syrian refugees arrive at the Greek Island, Lesbos. According to the United Nations, 11 million Syrians have fled their homes since the war started in 2011. Almost 5 million are refugees, and more than 6 million are internally displaced. Photo by Ggia via Wikimedia Commons.

it is something I could achieve. The first step to achieving this goal would be to master the English proficiency test, TOEFL. (See box below right for more on the TOEFL.) From there, I can look at having my transcripts evaluated and hopefully with some dental courses in Texas pass the dentistry exam. I am hoping to find work in a dental office

**I have a challenge.
I have to decide if I
want to continue to
work as a Dentist.**

as a Dental Assistant or a Dental Surgery Assistant rather than continue working in a factory like I am now. Working within a dental office will help me practice

my skills as a trained Maxillofacial Surgeon. I just recently received my Dental Assistant license for Texas and I am excited to use it!

Day after day, it is getting better. Hopefully, I will stand on my two feet again. Sometimes, when I look at my life, I feel like I have nothing, but then I realize that as long as my family is happy and healthy, I have everything. I have made it through some difficult years, but all of this has prepared me for a new life in the United States. It is difficult not to be working as a Dentist, but I know I will make it back there again.

Aziz Sammoud is from Douma, Syria, near Damascus. He came to the U.S. 10 months ago, and he lives in northern Texas with his wife, sister-in-law, and three children. He is a student in the Richardson Independent School District's Adult Education program.



Read this map! Name four countries that border Syria. (There is a fifth. Can you label it? If not, look it up.) Which city is the capital of Syria? (How can you tell?) Name four bodies of water.

Share what you know about the war in Syria. Learn more by looking up and sharing a recent article on Syria.

TOEFL stands for "Test of English as a Foreign Language." Find out more about what it is and who should take this test.

Becoming a Dentist in the U.S.

According to Aziz, what steps does he need to take to become a Dentist in the U.S.? Infer how his experiences in Syria and as a refugee prepare him for these challenges.

How could he get his transcript evaluated? Look up a translation and evaluation service (such as <www.wes.org>) and write a brief explanation of how it works. Make a Powerpoint or poster to share this information with other students.

What could you do to have your college credits evaluated?



Photo by Capt. Charles An, public domain

No Risks, No Rewards

Anonymous

BEFORE YOU READ: Share a time you have taken a risk and received a reward.

“Welcome to the United States,” the immigration officer told me as he informed me that I had passed my entrance interview. I had tears of happiness in my eyes because after many years I would finally be reunited with my husband. Soon, I realized that my new life wouldn’t necessarily enable me to “live happily ever after.” The real

I was pregnant, without a driver’s license, and I couldn’t speak a word of English.

world is totally different than a fairy tale. In the real world, life is hard. My first year in America wasn’t easy. I was pregnant, without a

driver’s license, and I couldn’t speak a word of English. My husband was busy and I often found myself confused and lonely at home. For a while, I regretted my decision to come here. I loved my job as a Preschool Teacher in my home country, and I was constantly homesick and worried about my future.

After my daughter was born, my mom came here to help me take care of her so that I could start working at my uncle’s busy restaurant as a server. I worked 12-hour shifts, six days a week. My lack of English made it really hard for me to understand the customers. It was so challenging, but my husband and I knew that we needed to save money for our daughter’s future.

Sometimes, God makes you strong in special ways. One day, I overheard two coworkers talking. One said, “My God, I can’t stand that stupid woman anymore. She can’t even understand simple sentences.” The other replied, “She will work in this restaurant forever.” I went home hurt and angry that night, but I told myself to stay

strong. The next day I told my husband that I wanted to go to school to learn English. He asked me, “How can you go to school? You don’t have a driver’s license.”

Passing the written driver’s test was so hard for me. I studied every night after working 12 hours, and I learned the manual word by word. Often, I only got 3-4 hours of sleep at night. My willpower helped me to pass the test within two months.

Going to school every day before my shift at the restaurant made me feel more confident and independent. I didn’t feel angry or hurt anymore, and in fact, I even appreciated overhearing what my coworkers said because it pushed me to improve myself. Eventually, my uncle surprised me by promoting me to the position of Manager. He told me that I was the hardest worker in the restaurant and that I deserved the opportunity.

Life has continued to get better since I arrived here four years ago. I plan on getting my GED this year and then enrolling in college after that. I look forward to being a preschool teacher again.

Anonymous is an ESL student. She hopes to obtain her GED in the near future so that she can enter post-secondary education.

AFTER YOU READ: What challenges did this writer face? What choices did she make as she faced each challenge? How did she set priorities?



Going to school every day before my shift at the restaurant made me feel more confident and independent.

Why Not?

Jazmin Jara

Sometimes we say, “I don’t have time. I can’t do it. My life is too busy.” But if we are honest, we know we need to do something for ourselves. And why not?

When I came to the U.S., I was just focused on getting a job and making money. When the

I looked around and started to think what am I doing for me?

years passed by and my family started to grow, I looked around and started to think what am I doing for me? Am I really happy? Can I

do something else for me? I said to myself, “Now is the time to change.” Of course, I was afraid. But change was necessary. I got a new job where I needed to speak English. It was a challenge for me and also a risk! I felt so nervous when I decided to work as a Bank Teller. But, if I didn’t do it, what would happen? More years of my life would pass, and maybe I wouldn’t do anything to grow as a professional.

It’s hard to be a mother, worker, wife, and student when you don’t have any family close to you who can support you. So I decided to let other

people support me, including strangers! My teachers and fellow students care about me and help me achieve my goals.

My day is really tiring. It starts early in the morning when I get my son ready for school. Then I go to work full time, and I study until late at night while also preparing everything for the next day. Now I am starting to see the results. I have more confidence and it shows. I have a possibility to get a better position at the bank and have a career.

Nobody said it would be easy to do, but you can do it. Why not?

Jazmin Jara is a student in the ESOL for Immigrant Parents Program at the Center for Immigrant Education and Training at LaGuardia Community College. She earned an undergraduate degree in her country, Ecuador, and she has two children.



Weighing Risks and Rewards

Read the articles on pp. 34-35, as well as the article by Salisa Chuon, “From Assembly Line to Accounting” in our online “Extras” (available at <changeagent.nelrc.org/issues>). List the risk each writer took and the reward she experienced. Make a new chart and interview your classmates about the risks they have taken and the rewards they have received.

Risk	Reward

My Winding Career Path

Kelsey Littlefield



My career goal is to study Early Childhood Education and to work in childcare. I want to be a preschool teacher. So, after graduating from high school, I went to Great Bay Community College (GBCC) to study Early Childhood Education.

When I started school at GBCC, I struggled with math. I felt unprepared and frustrated. My math teacher explained to me that the Dover Adult learning Center could help me improve my reading, math, and writing skills, so that I wouldn't waste money on tuition if I wasn't ready for college.

I took a year off college to improve my academic skills. My teacher is helping me to achieve my goals and gain more confidence. I took a college class in Early Childhood Development last summer. It was both hard and fun, and I passed it!

To get started in my field, I decided to look for a job working with young children. I found a daycare called Little Blessings. I have been there for almost a year (working as an Assistant Teacher). I really enjoy working there because I can see all the children grow. I like to play with them and watch them laugh.

The pathway to my goal is to finish up at the Dover Adult Learning Center and then go back to college and to take more classes in my field. Finally, I will get my degree, and I will be successful.

Kelsey Littlefield is a student at Dover Adult Learning Center in Dover, New Hampshire.

<p>Reaching Goals</p>  <p>What they say it will look like.</p>	<p>Reaching Goals</p>  <p>What it really looks like.</p>	<p>Reaching Goals</p>  <p>What it looks like to you!</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Almost everyone has a winding career path. Interview people in your class or in your community, and find out how they got into their current job or career. Share a time in your life when you had to go "backwards" or "sideways" in order to keep going down your chosen path.

Cosmetology Didn't Work Out

Raquel Angulo

The career I chose was Cosmetology. Unfortunately, I am not satisfied with the career I chose. After I finished with the training for this career, it turned out that the credential wasn't enough.

With my State license in hand, I started looking for a job. It was a nightmare. All the places required that I had experience and could bring my own clientele. I finally got a job, but it only lasted for two weeks. The owner of the salon fired me because my English was not good. I remember she walked me to the main gate of Davis Mountain, which is where I was working. Davis Mountain is a military base in Tucson, Arizona. At that time, the only language that was permitted was English. I left feeling desperate and sad.

I never had the chance to practice the skills and talents that I learned in this career. So the years I had at Tucson Beauty College were in vain. But now I've come back to school to advance my English, and I am glad.



Raquel Angulo is a student at the El Rio Learning Center of the Adult Basic Education for College and Careers program in Tucson, Arizona. Raquel is a proud mother of four children.

Weird English!

A phrasal verb is a phrase that contains a verb and another word to make a new meaning. What does “work out” mean in the title of Raquel’s article? What does “work out” mean here? →



More examples of phrasal verbs: calm down, figure out, get away (with something), shop around, find out, pull over, take over.

It Didn't Work Out

Why didn't Raquel’s career choice work out? Name two specific problems that Raquel encountered as she tried to start working as a cosmetologist.

What does she mean when she says her time at Beauty School was “in vain”?

Share a time when you made a choice and it didn't work out. What did you do? Looking back, what would you do differently? Was your effort in vain?

I Stumbled and Got Back Up

Abad Villanueva



Be Tough. Stay Silent. Work Hard.

As a little kid, I was raised to be more silent than the other kids. I was afraid to come out and play because of the violence in my neighborhood. My mother was single and always struggling to get us a meal. My father was forever far away, so I had no father figure to teach me. In my life, strength was a must. I learned to be tough and to stay silent. The pain inside me made me want to provide for myself. I harnessed the virtues of patience and resilience to guide my work ethic.

One day, I found an opportunity. A business called Thrifty's Beer and Beverage/Trash for Cash gave me my first job. Their concept was "One man's trash is another man's treasure." I learned how to be a "people person." I managed to get my driver's license, forklift certificate, and a lot of experience in everything from cleaning to driving

the company's trucks and operating different machinery. I started off as an average Joe, but I rose to the position of Assistant Manager and then Manager. With happiness in my heart, I worked with total and absolute dedication. It was hard to please those that gave me this opportunity, but I stayed with it and managed to overcome adversity.

What was the nature of this adversity? My boss was very strict and very militant without being in the military. We received no benefits and no vacation time or sick time. If you worked, you got paid; if you didn't work, you didn't get paid. We weren't allowed to stop for a second to take a breather. "I don't pay you to take breathers," he would say. I never got a raise or a bonus. "What am I paying you for? Move it! Nobody goes home until all the work is done," he would say. We had to work like there was no tomorrow. The

Quiz: Your Rights at Work

After reading Abad's article, discuss whether any of his rights were violated on the job. Take this true/false/depends quiz to test your knowledge of workers' rights. (Answers on p. 39.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Workers have the right to one unpaid half-hour break for every 8-hour shift. | T F D |
| 2. Workers have a right to unpaid sick leave. | T F D |
| 3. Workers have a right to paid vacation days. | T F D |
| 4. If your boss is a bully, there's probably not much you can do about it. | T F D |
| 5. The law may not require an employer to provide benefits, but you can still bargain to get them. | T F D |

boss would get mad that we had to go eat lunch. I worked five years for that man, and I didn't have much to show for it—no savings, no career pathway, no safety net.

Injured with No Safety Net

And then I found myself in the emergency room!

In 2012, I was in a car accident, and I broke my femur and received a blunt trauma to my head. I became unemployed. I lost everything. I lost my job. I lost my car and apartment. I faced abandonment from friends and family because nobody wanted

And then I found myself in the emergency room!

to take care of me. I was forced to live in a shelter and forced onto welfare due to a lack of income. I did not receive unemployment. I suffered from major depression.

Back on My Feet

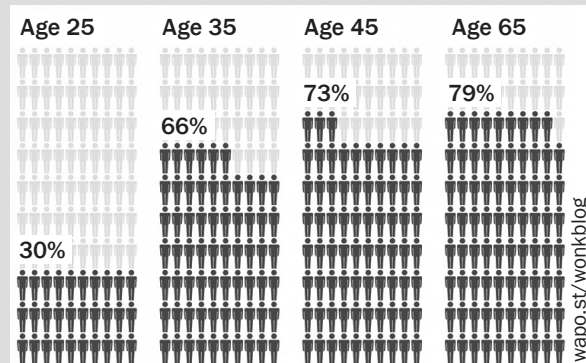
But 2017 is a new year, and it is a good year for me. I have healed from my injuries, and I'm back to being strong and not feeling sorry for myself. I am resilient. I'm heading up the ladder again starting with my GED.

Abad Villanueva is a 36-year-old Gemini. He is quiet and soft-spoken, and he is in school to better himself. He is working on his GED at the Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center in New York City. He has a wife and three boys whom he loves!

Answers to p. 38 quiz: 1. D. Federal law does *not* require employers to provide an unpaid meal break, however, some states do. New York, where Abad was working, *does* require meal breaks. 2. D. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires employers to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid medical leave. However, FMLA only applies to employers who have at least 50 employees, and to employees on the job for at least one year. 3. F. The U.S. is the only advanced economy that does not require employers to provide vacation time. 4. T. OSHA may protect you if you are a "whistleblower," and physical and sexual abuse are against the law. However, bullying is not against the law. 5. T. Especially if you are in a union, and you can bargain collectively.

Economic Hardship is Common

This chart shows the percent of Americans who will experience economic hardship by the time they are a certain age. Look at the chart and re-state the percents as fractions. (Use rounding where helpful.)



The social safety net includes benefits for people who are going through a rough period, such as disability, unemployment, or old age.

Who pays for the social safety net?

What is the cost of having no (or a very limited) social safety net?

How might things have worked out differently for Abad if he had access to more of a social safety net?



Hurry Up and Wait

Yeny Fuentes

Living in the U.S. without documents or English is very hard. We often get the worst jobs and lose hope. But things can improve if we don't resign ourselves to the worst. Fighting for our dreams is a must. That's exactly what I did.

After enduring so many hard days at a job where I was treated unfairly, the day finally came when I said, "Enough!" I knew I had to change my life, and I made a decision that has made my life so much better.

I quit that job and enrolled in English classes at the Adult Education Center. At first, the classes were hard and I would get very frustrated. It wasn't a piece of cake, but my positive attitude helped me stay strong and prevail. This year, I reached one of my career goals—I obtained my GED! I am so happy, but I know that it is only the beginning of the rest of my career path.

My determination, sacrifice, and discipline have helped me with the things I can control. However, my legal situation is something that I can't change right now. My



goal of becoming a Nurse is sitting, waiting for a chance to become a reality as I work to change my legal status. Putting my goals and future on hold because of life circumstances is so frustrating. However, I know that I'll be a Nurse one day, and I will be able to look back on my struggle and feel good about my accomplishments.

Immigrant Children

Some immigrants (like Yeny) who came to the U.S. as children may qualify for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA).

The immigration issue of *The Change Agent* (Issue #38) has information about DACA (pp. 8-9), as well as moving stories and useful information by and for immigrants. Get a copy at changeagent.nelrc.org/subscribe/.

Yeny Fuentes recently obtained her GED at the Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR. She came to the U.S. from El Salvador when she was a teenager and has been living in Fort Smith for 11 years. She is a happily married mother of four daughters.

Learn English and Join a Union

Amina Jama

When I came to America I didn't speak English at all. I got a job at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital as a Housekeeper. The Supervisor always gave me a hard time because of the language barrier. He gave me bad evaluations. He would not help me because he couldn't talk to me.

For my second job, I was hired by a food service company. As a worker at this company, I am a member of UNITE HERE (the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union). Two months into my new job, my Supervisor told me to do a job that was not my responsibility. I explained my problem to my union and they spoke to witnesses and corrected the situation. They spoke to the Company Manager, who fired the Supervisor.

Because I was able to communicate in English and because I had a union, I received justice. My Manager gave me a promotion because he saw that I was a hard worker. Now, I work three jobs while also going to school. I earn more money and

have a better life, all because I can read, write, and speak English better

I advise everyone to get an education. It is also important to join unions if possible. Education gives you more opportunities, and unions defend workers against unfair situations (like the one I had).



Unions Provide Training

A union is an organization of workers who collectively bargain with their employer for pay, benefits, and working conditions.

Many unions provide training to support workers to reach their career goals. For example, in Boston, BEST Hospitality Training offers classes to union members and job seekers. Read more about union apprenticeships on p. 23.

Amina Jama is a student at the Notre Dame Education Center in Boston, MA. She is originally from Somalia, and she has been in this country for 15 years. Her educational goal is to finish the HiSET and start her own business.

Wageless Work, Modern Day Slavery

Where is the Pathway for Prisoners?

Jason Welborn

I have been incarcerated for over 10 years in the state of Georgia, stuck within a prison system that is 150 years behind the times. In Georgia, the forced labor of inmates without pay is big business. At the time of slavery, white plantation owners grew an abundance of cotton, tobacco,

Georgia companies make millions in profits annually because they use free prison labor.

and peanuts. And it was all harvested by African slaves. Today, which is the time of modern-day slavery, corporations run metal fabrication plants, optics warehouses, and cattle and pig farms.

They use slave labor, too—from the Georgia prison system. Most of these prisoners are African American.¹

From the production of designer eye glasses to the production of beef and pork, Georgia companies make millions in profits annually because



This video, made by the GA Department of Corrections, promotes the farmwork done by inmates at Rogers State Prison. <tinyurl.com/RSPfarmwork>. Watch it and discuss it. After reading Jason Welborn's article, what do you think he would think of the video?



they use free prison labor.² In most other states, inmates get paid *something* for their work. Even a small amount of income can lighten the burden for families. A prisoner can buy some of the things he needs without having to ask his family to send money. He may even be able to send money home to his family. Additionally, when people are paid a wage for their work, they get a sense of pride and self-respect.

Where Is the Career Pathway for Former Prisoners?

I have been working without pay since my incarceration began. Food service is where I am forced to work from 8-12 hours daily, Monday through Thursday. The work is unsafe, unclean, and frustrating for staff and inmates. Since inmates are not paid for their work, many feel that they have to steal food. Watching these behaviors constantly makes me feel low and depressed. I dread getting up each day to work.

Where is the career pathway for the 52,000 inmates housed in Georgia's state prisons? What have they learned in prison that will help them get

a job when they get out? The Georgia Department of Corrections says that prisoners are getting “on-the-job training.”³ But many inmates are mentally broken through a system of unfair treatment and literal slavery. Instead of positive reinforcement, they get more beaten down. Only love, encouragement, and positive success will undo the harm that most prisoners have experienced.

My incarceration has humbled me a great deal. As a result, I have become more mature as a father, a friend, and (most importantly), a son of God. My time in prison has also motivated me to be a future successful business owner. I plan to treat my employees fairly by paying them an honest wage for their efforts. This will help them become better people because they will experience empowerment and responsibility.

Footnotes: 1. According to 2010 census data, 31% of Georgians are African American, but they make up 58% of the prison population. <www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/GA.html>. 2. According to <www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/09/prison-strike-inmate-labor-work>, “Some states, including Texas, Arkansas, and Georgia, do not pay inmates at all.” According to <www.ledger-enquirer.com/news/local/article29322202.html>, “[Georgia] prisoners who work on sanitation, golf course, recycling and landfill details earn \$3 per day, while those who do jobs such as facility maintenance, street beautification and transportation get nothing.” 3. <www.dcor.state.ga.us>



For more on Prisons, see Issue #40 of The Change Agent.

Jason Welborn is in the GED program at Rogers State Prison in Reidsville, GA, and he has passed three out of four subjects. His hardships have taught him to be patient, to love the unlovable, and to keep God at the forefront. The immature boy he once was is gone, and he wishes to return to society to be a loving father, husband, and leader in the community.

When Does the Punishment End?

According to the author, how does it affect prisoners to not get paid for their work?

Read the article by Sterlin Reaves on p. 44. Write a short essay about how prison fails to prepare inmates to succeed after they are released. Cite information from this article and the one by Reaves. Use quotes. Look up additional sources if you wish.

Learn more. Find out how “modern day slavery” could be legal in the United States. Look up the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. What do you think about it?

What do you think? Visit <bantheboxcampaign.org> and watch the short video, “Enough is Enough.” What do you think is “enough” punishment? After prisoners serve their term, how should we welcome them back into society? Should there be a career pathway for them? (Note: “Ban the Box” refers to the box that job applicants sometimes have to check indicating whether they have a criminal record.)

Take Action. If you agree, sign the pledge at <bantheboxcampaign.org>. Find out what your employer’s hiring practices are. If they discriminate against formerly incarcerated people, organize with others to ask your employer to sign the pledge.

“All of us or none.” What does this logo mean in this context?



They Prepare Us to Fail

Sterlin Reaves

BEFORE YOU READ: Share a time that you were set up (or prepared) to fail.

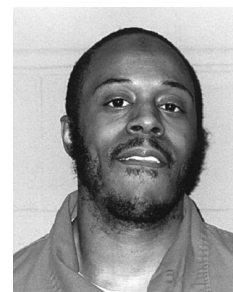
When I talk to people at home, one of the questions I'm asked the most is: "If prison is as bad as you say it is, why do so many people go back?" And my response is the same each time: "What's the number one reason people go back? Money!" Most prisoners go home with the best intentions, but once the reality sets in about how difficult it is

to find employment, then temptation gets the best of them.

When it comes to Career Pathways, this is where the Department of Corrections needs to improve the most. People get some job experience while they are incarcerated, but the jobs offered in prison are mostly low-skill and low-wage. Also, they use antiquated tools and processes. Sure, you can be a cook, plumber, or painter, and some jails offer Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), but when you get out, you find the technology has changed and what you learned in prison is not up-to-date.

I'd love to see more certification programs that incorporate modern technology. Also, we need to learn how to use computers and the Internet to find jobs and housing, apply for services, and navigate modern society. The biggest obstacle facing most people released from prison is finding ways to provide for themselves, and that means finding a job. I just hope that in the near future, more and better opportunities will be provided for the women and men in prison.

Sterlin Reaves is from Philadelphia. He takes correspondence courses geared towards educating prisoners in social awareness and activism. He can be reached at Sterlin Reaves DX-5999, 189 Fyock Rd., Indiana, PA 15701.



ACCORDING TO THE AUTHOR, what are three ways that prison fails to prepare inmates to be independent and successful when they leave prison? What do you think prisons should do differently?

WRITE TO THE AUTHOR. Respond to his essay!

LOOK AT THE ILLUSTRATION on the left. How is Bradley using prison time to further his career pathway?



"I drew myself making drawings," explains Bradley M. Pali, who is serving time at Macon State Prison in Oglethorpe, GA. When he gets out, he hopes to start a business developing logos and providing illustrations.

My Road to Greatness

Ayanna Dexter

Although I graduated from high school with honors, I became pregnant during my senior year. My dream had always been to continue my education. My goal was to go to college and become a Counselor. However, caring for my son became my priority. Devastatingly, I accepted that pursuing a college degree might not be an option.

Following my graduation and the birth of my son, I got jobs at Federal Express and at McDonald's. As a young mother working two jobs, it would have been easy to give up on my career

As a young mother working two jobs, it would have been easy to give up on my career goal.

goal. However, giving up was never an option for me. My son gives me the motivation and drive to better myself and secure a positive future for our family.

I want to demonstrate to my son that no matter what occurs in life, anything is possible.

Today I am a 20-year-old single parent, who has been fighting Type-1 diabetes for over ten years. My son recently had his first birthday. I have been challenged, I have struggled, and I have overcome any obstacle that has been presented to



me. I have been able to obtain an apartment for myself and my son. Most excitingly, I have been accepted to Misericordia University's program, "Women with Children." This program supports single mothers and offers childcare during classes. It gives me the opportunity to pursue my dream of obtaining my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Psychology, specializing in Addiction Counseling.

I am continuing my journey on my road to greatness.

She Writes Beautifully

Adverbs are words that describe a verb. They often end in "ly." Find two instances where Ayanna starts her sentence with an adverb or adverb phrase. What impact do these adverbs have on the sentence?

Use adverbs to describe how Ayanna writes. Think of more adverbs to describe other writing in the magazine.

Ayanna Dexter attended the Higher Expectations program at HomeFront in Ewing, NJ. She is a full-time mother and a future Clinical Counselor from Trenton, NJ, where she will be a student at Misericordia University in the Fall of 2017. Her major will be in Psychology with a minor in Communications and a certificate in Substance Abuse Counseling.

The Feeling of Losing a Job

Julia Umanzor

BEFORE YOU READ: Discuss a time you lost a job. What was it like?

I lost my job in March of 2017. A very difficult situation at my workplace made me resign.

My supervisor screamed at me in front of all my co-workers: "Why are you so late?!" I responded, "You told me to come at this time." She said, "No, I didn't tell you that. You are just making things up."

I was very angry with the supervisor because just the day before, she had come to my table to tell me to come in at that time. I was so furious at

**All these years,
I bore the evil of
my supervisor
against me.**

her that I exploded. I was so tired of all the bad things she has done to me. I had endured so much. I couldn't take it anymore. I endured all her insults, all her humiliations, and all her fabrications against me all these years. I was tired of her. I went home crying and thinking of not coming back. I was done. All these years, I bore the evil of my supervisor against me.

"Bore" is a Homonym

Homonyms are two (or more) words that are spelled the same but have different meanings. In this essay, "bore" is the past tense of the verb "to bear," which means to put up with. Find two more definitions of "bore."

1. _____
2. _____

It is a painful feeling to lose a job because of another person. The days go by, and I keep looking for work everywhere.

I begin to feel depressed, anxious, and sad for not having a job. I have some bills to pay which

Everything is an apprenticeship.

are very important. In these moments of distress, everything seems lost. I constantly fight against the negativity of my thoughts, against the sadness of not even having \$1 in my pocket to eat or buy something I wish for.

Yes, I know I will find a job, but the feelings I experience while waiting for work are terrible. Daily life is a challenge, but everything is an apprenticeship.

AFTER YOU READ:

- 1) Tell the story of how Julia lost her job. Use words that show sequence, such as first, then, after that, and finally.
- 2) Julia says that "everything is an apprenticeship." Can you infer what she means by that?
- 3) Look at the chart on the next page. What kinds of workers are likely to be losing their jobs to computerization in the coming years?
- 4) Write a letter to Julia. Let her know how her story affected you. Be sure to use information from her article. Use quotes if possible.

Julia Umanzor studies English at English for Action in Providence, RI. She is 30 years old, from Honduras, and came to the U.S. when she was a young teenager. After writing this article, she worked many temporary jobs and finally found one she likes: a stable job with good pay as a Pharmaceutical Quality Control Inspector.



The Future of Jobs

Many Jobs Will Be Computerized

According to the authors of this study, the U.S. is at a “high risk” of losing 47% of jobs over the next one to two decades. What jobs will be lost at the highest *rate*? And what is the highest *number* of jobs that will be lost? Make some true statements about the information in this chart.

Probability that Select Occupations Will Be Computerized					
Marketing			Content Creation		
Probability	Employees	Occupation	Probability	Employees	Occupation
1.4%	184,490	Marketing Managers	1.5%	29,000	Multimedia Artists and Animators
1.5%	56,920	Public Relations and Fundraising Managers	2.1%	52,250	Photographers
3.7%	77,940	Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	2.2%	97,300	Producers and Directors
3.9%	29,340	Advertising and Promotions Managers	2.3%	33,140	Art Directors
13.0%	587,450	Management Analysts	3.8%	43,500	Writers and Authors
18.0%	208,030	Public Relations Specialists	5.5%	97,350	Editors
22.0%	26,970	Statisticians	8.2%	197,540	Graphic Designers
23.0%	15,410	Survey Researchers	16.0%	13,310	Desktop Publishers
61.0%	468,160	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	31.0%	24,460	Film and Video Editors
66.0%	14,110	Statistical Assistants	84.0%	10,500	Proofreaders and Copy Markers
94.0%	57,120	Budget Analysts	89.0%	48,210	Technical Writers
Sales			Information Technology		
0.4%	68,080	Sales Engineers	0.7%	528,320	Computer Systems Analysts
1.3%	358,920	Sales Managers	1.5%	24,210	Computer and Information Research Scientists
7.5%	248,770	First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers	3.0%	112,170	Database Administrators
25.0%	335,540	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	3.0%	365,430	Network and Computer Systems Administrators
28.0%	1,199,770	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3.5%	330,360	Computer and Information Systems Managers
51.0%	83,600	Demonstrators and Product Promoters	3.5%	86,950	Operations Research Analysts
54.0%	154,220	Advertising Sales Agents	4.2%	686,470	Software Developers, Applications
85.0%	1,394,640	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	13.0%	382,400	Software Developers, Systems Software
92.0%	4,562,160	Retail Salespersons	22.0%	unknown	Computer Occupations – All Other
92.0%	374,700	Insurance Sales Agents	48.0%	302,150	Computer Programmers
99.0%	234,520	Telemarketers	65.0%	738,030	Computer Support Specialists
Sources: The Future of Employment, Carl Benedikt Frey and Michale A. Osborne, 2013; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014 data.					



Identifying Problems and Finding Solutions

First, brainstorm all the problems you see in this illustration.

Next, work with a partner to try to match each problem with a cause.

Then, gather all the problems and their causes and come up with ideas for solutions. Divide your solutions into three categories: individual, workplace, and community/nation.

Grace Copowycz draws as a hobby. She is seventeen years old, and she recently received her HiSET after studying at the North Kansas City Schools Adult Learning Center in Kansas City, MO.



Fighting for Higher Wages

Luz Elias

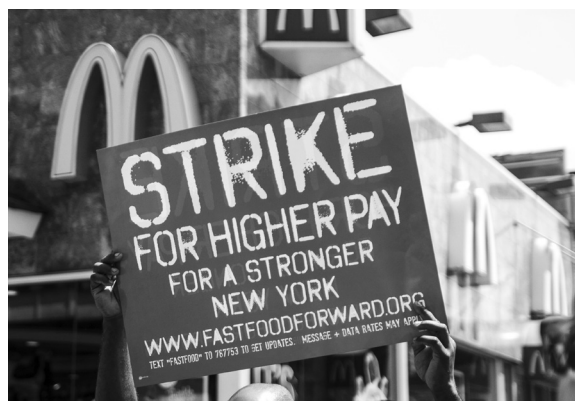
BEFORE YOU READ: Interpret the signs in the images. What is going on in these two photos? Re-state the signs in your own words. How would higher pay make New York stronger? Discuss the difference between bargaining and begging.

Desperate to Earn More

There are many people in this country who are desperate to earn what they need. Some people are on a career pathway, and they might earn more money as they get more education and training. But what happens in the meantime? And what about those who can't take the time to get more education and training? They should be able to earn a living wage too!

Three Ways to Fight

More people would be earning a living wage if the minimum wage were higher. This is an important issue for everyone in the USA because we need enough money to survive and be happy. But how do we fight to increase the minimum wage?



Above photo by Annette Bernhardt via Wikimedia Commons.
Photo (top right) by Fibonacci Blue, Flickr.

There are many ways people can fight to increase the minimum wage. First, we should read articles about politics and learn about the arguments for and against increasing the minimum wage. Second, we should understand the role of unions in helping to improve wages. We should support unions and fight for laws and regulations that benefit unions. Third, we can join community groups that support workers' rights and fight to increase the minimum wage.

More to Gain than to Lose

If everyone who is able comes together, then we are going to win. Even if we don't win a higher minimum wage right away, we are going to gain new experiences for the future and be ready to keep fighting.

AFTER YOU READ: Research the three ways to fight. Find out 1) the pro and con arguments regarding increasing the minimum wage, 2) how a union improves wages, and 3) how community groups fight to increase wages.

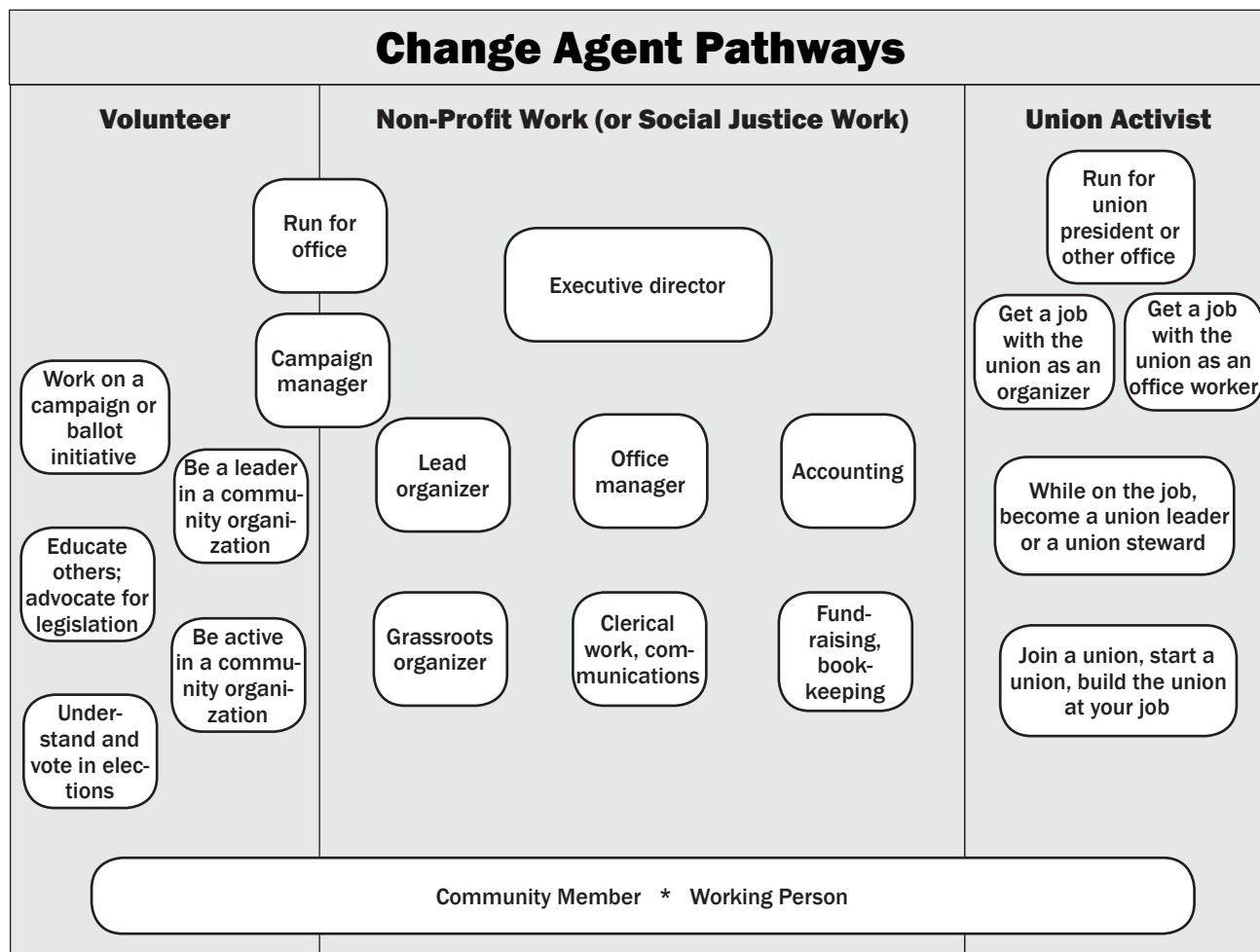
Luz Elias was born in Sasabe, Sonora, Mexico. She is a student at El Rio Learning Center in Tucson, AZ. She has been in the U.S. since 1994.



So You Want to Be a Change Agent?

Make a difference. Gain skills. Build community.

Find a job. Change the world.



DISCUSS: What is a “change agent”? In what ways are you a change agent in your life, your family, and your community? (Note: in this context, an “agent” is someone who shows “agency,” someone who is not passive.) According to the chart, what are three main ways you can be a “change agent” in your community? Which ones do you have experience with?

RESEARCH: Use a pencil to mark a pathway on this chart that might make sense for you. Use bls.gov/ooh/ to research the training you would need to move forward and the salary you would earn. (Of course there is no pay for the jobs in the volunteer section. However, consider and discuss the way these volunteer jobs would help equip you for paid jobs.)

LEARN MORE about unions. See pp. 48-51 of the “Good Jobs, Not Just Any Jobs” issue of *The Change Agent* and pp. 23 and 41 of this issue.

Career Pathways Are Not Enough

Andy Nash

Education is Just One Key Component

Adult education programs are offering a lot more work-focused classes nowadays. They teach basic education and ESOL in the context of workforce training. And the training depends on where local employers have said there are jobs. Why focus so much on job preparation? One reason is because most living wage jobs need workers who have stronger math, communication, and technology skills. Also, employers are not doing as much in-house training as they used to. Finally, govern-

ment funders see education as the solution to the problem of low-wage jobs.

Of course it's true that education helps some adults access a career pathway and move out of low-wage work. However, the fact remains that those low-wage jobs are still there and someone's going to do them! The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that the fastest growing jobs (in real numbers) are low-wage, poor-quality jobs that require no more than a high school diploma.¹ These jobs include retail sales, home health, food preparation, and food service. (See the chart on the next page.) And these jobs are not only low-wage, they also often have poor working conditions, irregular hours, few employment benefits, and limited options for advancement.

So What Should We Do?

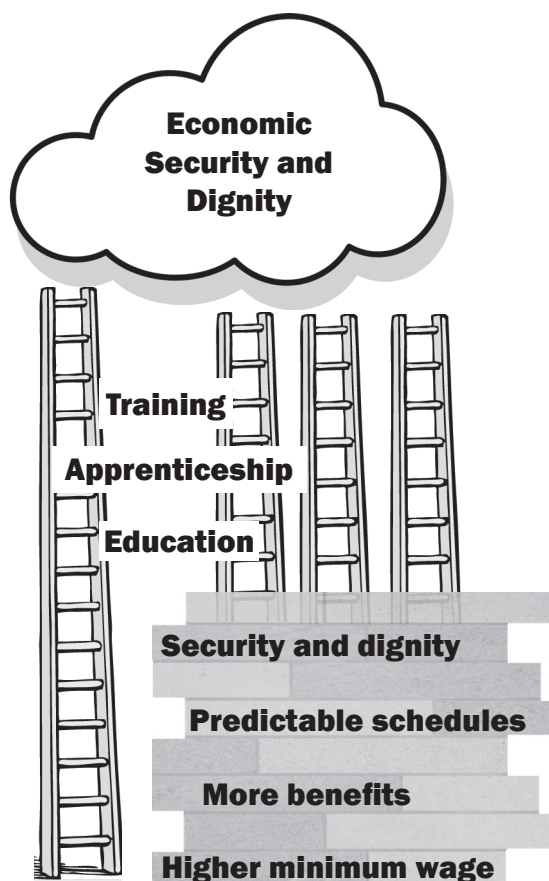
According to the Aspen Institute,² to help low-wage workers secure high-quality jobs, we need to follow two strategies:

- 1) BUILD LADDERS.** We need to help low-wage workers climb out of poor-quality jobs by providing access to education and training (career pathways).
- 2) RAISE THE FLOOR:** We need to make poor-quality jobs better by improving compensation, benefits, schedules, training, and working conditions so that every worker can have some security and dignity on the job.

"Building ladders" and "raising floors" would improve life for ALL workers – not just provide an escape route for the minority of workers who have the support to succeed on their career pathway.

What Would This Look like in Programs?

If adult education programs embraced this broader approach to workforce development, then in addition to career pathways, we might discuss what



How does "raising the floor" make working conditions better for everyone? How does a raised floor make it easier to climb your career ladder?

we mean by a “good job.” For example, a good job:

- provides steady income that supports a family
- is meaningful, contributes to society, and provides dignity, self-respect, and opportunities to learn
- provides a predictable work schedule and access to benefits: health and disability insurance, family and medical leave, a safe working environment, grievance protections, retirement savings
- supports worker success through adequate training, supportive supervision, and opportunities for advancement
- encourages worker engagement in the work, creating opportunities for workers to build competence, exercise judgment, and feel a measure of control over their work

We might also study the history of how regular people have fought for and won many improvements in their working conditions. We have

the power to make changes. Here are some things we can do:

- Advocate for a minimum wage that is also a “living wage.”
- Work on a public campaign to encourage or require employers to adopt “good job” practices for their low-wage employees.
- Organize a union, or join a worker association that negotiates with employers for better working conditions.
- Advocate for an improved social safety net, which ensures that people can meet their essential needs, such as health, education, food, and housing.

The Cost of Bad Jobs

Poor-quality jobs make all of us less secure, less healthy, and less happy. They lead to low worker morale and high worker turnover. And they put a strain on communities because low-wage work-

Top 12 Occupations with the most job growth, 2014-24 (Numbers in thousands)						
Occupation	Employment		Change, 2014-2024		Median Annual Wage, 2014	Typical education needed for entry
	2014	2024	Number	Percent		
All occupations	150,539.9	160,328.8	9,788.9	6.5	\$35,540	
Personal care aides	1,768.4	2,226.5	458.1	25.9	20,440	No formal credential
Registered nurses	2,751.0	3,190.3	439.3	16.0	66,640	Bachelor's degree
Home health aides	913.5	1,261.9	348.4	38.1	21,380	No formal credential
Food prep. & servers (incl. fast food)	3,159.7	3,503.2	343.5	10.9	18,410	No formal credential
Retail salespersons	4,624.9	4,939.1	314.2	6.8	21,390	No formal credential
Nursing assistants	1,492.1	1,754.1	262.0	17.6	25,100	Postsecondary nondegree award
Customer service representatives	2,581.8	2,834.8	252.9	9.8	31,200	High school diploma or equivalent
Cooks, restaurant	1,109.7	1,268.7	158.9	14.3	22,490	No formal credential
Operations managers	2,124.1	2,275.2	151.1	7.1	97,270	Bachelor's degree
Construction laborers	1,159.1	1,306.5	147.4	12.7	31,090	No formal credential
Accountants and auditors	1,332.7	1,475.1	142.4	10.7	65,940	Bachelor's degree
Medical assistants	591.3	730.2	138.9	23.5	29,960	Postsecondary nondegree award

Analyze the chart. Make true statements about the data you see. Source: www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t06.htm

ers do not contribute very much to taxes, so the government has less to spend on programs. Meanwhile, since bad jobs do not pay very well, workers who have those jobs are poor, and they suffer from the stresses of poverty. So they tend to need subsidized health insurance, food stamps, and housing support. With bad jobs, no one wins.

Escape Route for the Few vs. Better Work for Everyone

If the adult education system wants to help students escape poverty, it needs to support adults in many ways. One way is to teach about career pathways. Even in the current context—with so many bad jobs—a career pathway can help a student get out of poverty. However, to help *all* our students, our programs should teach about the ways we can *change* the context. After all, we don't want our career pathways to be narrow ladders that provide an escape route for a few while so many others get left behind in jobs that don't pay a living wage and offer little in the way of meaning or dignity.

Organizing together as workers and community members, regular people have won all sorts of benefits, including the 8-hour day, a minimum wage, social security benefits, and much more. But there is more to do. By building more ladders and raising the floor, more people will be able to enjoy fulfilling work, meet their needs, care for their families, and create stronger communities.

Andy Nash is the director of the New England Literacy Resource Center at World Education.

Sources: 1) <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t06.htm>.
2) "Restore the Promise of Work," Maureen Conway and Steven L. Dawson, April 2016, <www.aspenwsi.org>.

AFTER YOU READ:

- 1) Explain the relationship between building ladders and raising the floor.
- 2) Look at the box on the right. "High-road" and "low-road" are used as adjectives to describe employers. What do these adjectives mean?
- 3) How does the data in the chart on p. 52 back up the author's point that we need to "raise the floor"?

Who's Raising the Floor?

Restaurant Opportunity Centers (ROC) leads campaigns against "low-road" restaurants who break labor laws and have the worst conditions for their workers. They also promote "high-road" restaurants that offer fair pay and good conditions for their workers.



The Workers Defense Project, in Austin, Texas, helps construction workers advocate for better wages and working conditions.

Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (PHI), in the South Bronx, has created its own high-road home care agencies. PHI also leads policy campaigns to increase compensation and job quality.

Community groups in the U.S. have fought for and won legislation to establish fair scheduling standards for workers employed by large chains. For example, in Oregon, legislation guarantees that workers receive:

- advance notice of their schedules,
- compensation for last-minute schedule changes,
- input into their schedules and a good faith estimate of their weekly work hours upon hire.

Repaving My Career Path

ABE student takes classes and then gets job at her program.

Janet Scharbor

Sometimes when you least expect it, life throws you a curve ball. I've had a few curve balls in my life, and by working through them, I got to be where I am today.

When I was 25 years old I went through a divorce. I didn't have a job or a skill to my name. I

The very first day of my job, it was so hot that I literally passed out from the heat.

decided that manufacturing needed the least experience, so that's where I started. I landed my first job through a temp service making \$3.10 an hour at

Fort Smith Plastics. The very first day of my job, it was so hot that I literally passed out from the heat. Reality set in.

I finally learned to adjust to this style of work. In 1987, I was hired by Seba, Inc., an office furniture manufacturer. After just one year, they shut down because they were too small to compete with larger companies. For years after that, it was all the same. I went through two more manufacturing plants—Store Kraft Manufacturing and

Whirlpool Manufacturing—and they both shut down as well. Store Kraft moved their company to Nebraska where the main plant was, and Whirlpool sent a lot of their factories to Mexico, where labor is cheaper. It was the scariest time of my life.

I decided to attend the Fort Smith Adult Education Center (AEC)

and brush up on my computer skills as well as my academic skills. The transition was the most amazing feeling. I was able to get the skills I needed so I that could actually apply for a clerical job.

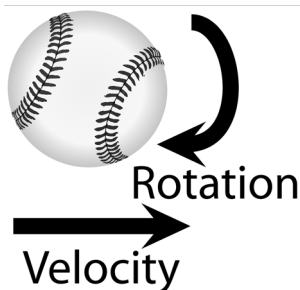
Then to top it all off, the AEC offered me a part-time job. That was a new beginning for me. After three years, I was asked to work full time.

This was exciting because I was able to do something that was more mentally challenging and less physical. Soon after, I was invited to join the Professional Standards

Program. This program encouraged me to become a Certified Educational Office Employee and to join the National Association of Educational Office Professionals (NAEOP).

As a Secretary at AEC, I feel more job satisfaction and my salary has increased by 17%. I feel blessed to be able to enjoy going to work every day now. It gives me great joy to see our students encounter success as they find their career paths, just as I did. I will retire at my job here at the Adult Education Center and I am grateful that it changed my life.

I feel blessed to be able to enjoy going to work every day now.



What is a curveball? How does it work? What does Janet mean when she says life can sometimes throw you a curve ball?

Janet Scharbor is a former student and current employee of the Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR. Her husband is Donnie, and they have a blended family of 4 children and 14 grandchildren. They love to camp and ride their 4-wheeler. She also loves to read and travel. You can read other stories by Janet Scharbor in the "Fashion" and the "Tales of Resilience" issues of The Change Agent



Resources

Compiled by Yssa Santos

CAREERPATH.COM is a career resource center that will assist you in making the right career decisions. www.careerpath.com

CAREER TESTS are the first stage of career planning. They help individuals determine which career opportunities best match their interests, personality, aptitude, IQ, or other characteristics. www.livecareer.com/career-test

THE MAPP is free, takes 15 minutes to fill out, and gives you a wealth of information to help you make wise career choices. www.assessment.com

THE CAREER GATEWAY is a way to access online tools, resources, and leads that will help you be more successful in finding and securing employment. You'll learn about career opportunities, find training programs, links to placement services, and much more. www.gatewaytocareers.com

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES is dedicated to ensuring economic self-sufficiency and empowerment for the more than 50 million Americans with disabilities. www.aapd.com/what-we-do/employment/

Beware of Education Scams

Carefully research the training center or college that you are interested in. Be especially cautious about for-profit institutions. Read more about what to look out for on p. 42 of Issue #34 of *The Change Agent*.

Use a tool like "Mapping Your Financial Journey" <www.collegetransition.org/publications.mapping.html> to help plan for more education and training.



WHAT'S NEXT provides information, inspiration, and resources for those interested in changing careers. This site includes advice on second careers (Career 2.0), financial planning, and a searchable directory of advisors who can assist with your career change or life plans. www.whatsnext.com

THE OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK is one of the most quoted and cited career information guides available. It describes the job duties, working conditions, education and requirements, earnings levels, current employment levels, projected employment change, and employment prospects for hundreds of occupations. www.bls.gov/ooh/

INTEREST ASSESSMENT helps you uncover your interests and match them to occupations. career-wise.mnscu.edu/careers/assessmentsuite.html

THE VETERAN'S JOB SEARCH begins with an article on how to make the transition from the military to the civilian workforce and then points the reader towards several additional articles and resources for guidance. www.job-hunt.org/article_veterans_jobsearch.shtml

WOMEN EMPLOYED guides you through the steps to finding your best career, gaining the education and skills you need, navigating the application process, and continuing to excel on your career path. womenemployed.org/career-coach

CAREERONESTOP provides a toolkit that helps you research careers, training, and jobs. www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/toolkit.aspx

"INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Implementing Programs in Diverse Contexts," by Andy Nash and Ellen Hewett (NCTN). Available for free download. collegetransition.org

Yssa Santos, formerly a student at Excel in Boston, MA, served on the editorial board of the "Good Jobs" issue of The Change Agent, where the original version of this list first appeared.

Write for *The Change Agent* CALL FOR ARTICLES

YOU MUST: Include contact information in *all* articles and emails. *Please cite sources.*

THEME: Hair! It's a major topic in many mainstream magazines. So it's time for *The Change Agent* to take a look at it, too. We all think about it—sometimes fussing over it and sometimes enjoying it. It figures prominently in definitions of beauty; we spend money on hairdressers, barbers, and wigs; students can get expelled from school because of it; laws and religious rules are made about it; and we might even make ourselves sick from the products we put on it. We're guessing everyone has something to say about hair! Prompts include:

- Share a memory from childhood about your hair or someone else's.
- What is the importance of hair in our culture? How does it get elevated or denigrated? How is hair experienced differently by boys and girls, by people of different races/ethnicities, etc.?
- Research the history of certain hairstyles. How did certain approaches to hair come into style? What do our hairstyles say about us (if anything)?
- What do some religions say about hair? Research the background on religious points of view about hair (including beards). What do you think about it? Share your experience.
- Discuss institutional rules about hair. Some schools have policies about hair. Some countries (like France) have proposed laws forbidding women to cover their hair while at university. The military has strict rules about hair. Are these policies, laws, and rules fair? Find a real-life controversy about hair and write about it.
- How has our use of hair products changed over time? Why? What is your analysis?
- Research the issue of chemical safety and hair products. How do U.S. controls over these chemicals compare to, say, European controls? What do you think about it?
- Do you use any homemade hair products? Share your recipe and tell how you got the recipe.
- Have you ever worked in a salon or a barbershop? Describe what it was like.
- In our culture(s), who defines beauty? How do pressures get created to dye, style, and treat hair, and to reverse hair loss and balding? What should our attitudes be about hair?

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: November 3, 2017. *Make sure to include contact information.*
Send to: cpeters@worlded.org. Learn more at: changeagent.nelrc.org/write-for-us.

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