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## Expanded Job Readiness Program 2010

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### Introduction:

In response to an increasingly competitive job market for its employable homeless clients and a deepening economic recession, Friendship House in 2008 committed itself to a dramatic expansion its job readiness and employment training services. Phase One was the establishment of online computer labs at its two Wilmington Day Centers. This required the redesign and renovation of both centers and was accomplished with a grant from the Wilmington Rotary. Later that same year through a grant from the Verizon Foundation, Friendship House, using wireless laptops, was able to set up a mobile computer lab in both its men's and women's transitional housing programs.

With these physical resources in place, Friendship House designed and implemented a four stage Job Readiness Program to enable its employable homeless clients to:

- Acquire employment-mandated certification (State I.D. or driver's license, birth certificate, social security card, TWIC card, etc.)
- Bridge the digital divide by acquiring the basic computer skills needed to search and apply for jobs online.
- Acquire the life-skills and living resources necessary to get and maintain employment.
- Upgrade their professional *persona* through workshops and individual mentoring.

In 2009, through grants from the Chichester duPont Foundation and the Jessie Ball duPont Foundation, Friendship House was able to dedicate eighty hours of staff time weekly to Job Readiness Program clients and hire a part-time Job Readiness Volunteer Coordinator to recruit, train and supervise a team of volunteer job coaches and mentors from its coalition of churches and community partners. By year's end, more than four hundred Day Center clients had enrolled in the Job Readiness Program and more than thirty volunteer mentors and job coaches had served a minimum of twenty-five hours. Another seventy-five men and women had participated in the more intensive Job Readiness Program offered by its Transitional Housing Programs and the Clothing Bank of Delaware. Not surprisingly, the housing residents and Clothing Bank interns were far more successful at finding and keeping full-time jobs (85% of all graduates). Of those three hundred Day Center clients that attended at least three Job Readiness Program sessions in 2009, 55% were employed at some level by year's end.

In 2010, Friendship House further expanded its Job Readiness Program services at the Clothing Bank of Delaware, the Women's Transitional Housing Program and the Newark Empowerment Center. At the Clothing Bank Friendship House expanded the paid employment-training positions from four to six. This not only enables the program to serve more women at any one time; by increasing the work force by 50%, each women can spend more of her 30 hours per week with her case manager and volunteer job coach. In June, 2010 Friendship House opened Epiphany House to provide short-term shelter and counseling to recently-released female ex-offenders and/or graduates

of residential treatment programs. This entry-level shelter also serves as a probationary first stage for women interested in Friendship House’s long-term transitional housing program for women. The Epiphany House program provides residents with more daily structure, on-site supervision, individual case management, life skills workshops and employment training than the subsequent transitional housing stages. Because most residents enter without any resources, Friendship House cares for all their physical and financial needs. Residents that get a job, exhibit personal self-discipline and demonstrate their commitment to implementing their personal recovery strategy will graduate to Stage Two of the Women’s Housing Program. Finally, in November, 2010, Friendship House established an online computer lab at its Newark Empowerment Center. To date, twelve NEC volunteers have begun serving as on site job coaches and mentors.

**2010 Job Readiness Program Statistics:**

The enhanced Empowerment/Job Readiness Program (JRP) has four levels, each with its specific objectives and tasks. These levels are:

- Level One:           Creating A Realistic Strategy  
*(Initial Intake, Certification, Issues Assessment, Strategic Plan)*
- Level Two:           Basic Training  
*(Resume, Email, Computer Literacy Classes, GED Tutoring)*
- Level Three:        Job Search Mode  
*(Online Job Searches and Applications)*
- Level Four:         Job Acquisition and Maintenance Mode

**Wilmington Day Centers:**

**Interest:**

Total Clients who made appts. in 2010	New 2010 Clients	Clients who made 3 or more sessions
557 306 men/251 women	371 (66%) 149 men/222 women	227 (40%) 134 men/93 women

**Progress of Those 227 Who Made 3 or more Sessions:**

Completed Level 1 Tasks (Intake/Plan)	Completed Level 2 Tasks (ID/Resume/ EMAIL, etc.)	Were Active With Level 3 Tasks (Job Search/Applications)	Found Jobs or entered long-term training programs
205 (90%)	211 (93%)	197 (87%)	110 (48%)

**Comments:**

The computer labs at both Wilmington Day Centers have demonstrated their value as resource centers and are in constant use. This availability has been made possible by a team of more than thirty volunteer lab monitors and job coaches. Roughly 50% of those clients that initially are only

interested in accessing the JRP programs resources (i.e. the computer lab, funds for ID, bus passes for job interviews, etc.) ultimately take the next step of making an appointment with a Friendship House staff person and beginning regular vocational case management. It is anticipated that the JRP program in Newark will evolve in the same way. Currently the computers are available whenever the center is open. Most afternoons either Kathy Graham, the JRP volunteer coordinator, and/or a volunteer lab monitor is there to work with interested clients.

***Clothing Bank Employment Training Program:***

<b>Hired in 2010</b>	<b>Currently in Program</b>	<b>Fired or Opted Out</b>	<b>Completed, but didn't find a job</b>	<b>Completed, Found Job</b>
30	3	5	5	17

**Comments:**

Besides participating in the on-site Clothing Bank employment training program, each intern works weekly with the Day Center Job Readiness Program counselor and has access to the online computers for job search and application at both the Clothing Bank and the Women's Day Center.

***Men's Housing Program:***

<b>Total Residents</b>	<b>Residents who entered without a job</b>	<b>Residents who found employment</b>	<b>Current Residents</b>	<b>Residents who opted out or were evicted</b>	<b>Graduates (Employed &amp; Housed)</b>
51	48	44	15	21	15

**Comments:**

Unlike previous years, virtually all Men's Housing applicants coming from prison or residential rehabs do not have a job on entering the program. In the past, most such residents could find some kind of temporary employment within 2 weeks. Since 2008, it has taken 4 – 6 weeks for residents to find work, even with the assistance of their Friendship House case workers and volunteer job mentors. In the end, however, most resident profit from the more strategic job search by upgrading their employability and presentation skills. 92% of all unemployed residents ultimately found full-time employment.

***Women's Housing Program:***

<b>Total Residents</b>	<b>Residents who entered without a job</b>	<b>Residents who found employment</b>	<b>Current Residents</b>	<b>Residents who opted out or were evicted</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
42	27	21	21	9	12

**Comments:**

The addition of Epiphany House and the creation of two additional paid internship positions at the Clothing Bank significantly improved the success rate of both programs. Through this

combination of services, homeless women who graduated from prison and/or residential treatment programs were provided with the material resources, program structure and communal support that they so desperately need during their initial re-entry period. The holistic program was especially effective with enabling residents to acquire full-time employment. Four nights weekly, different human service professionals volunteer their time to conduct on-site workshops on Job Readiness, Money Management, Positive Decision- Making and Surviving Abuse. Since the opening of Epiphany House in June, the drop-out rate in Women’s Housing has fallen from 50% to 16%. 100% of those women who were both Clothing Bank interns and Epiphany House residents ended 2010 employed and housed.

***Volunteering:***

Kathy Graham has done an excellent job of recruiting and training job coaches and mentors. In 2010, fifty-two volunteers served as individual job coaches, computer literacy mentors and GED tutors. In addition, eight other volunteers with HR experiences have conducted semi-annual interactive workshops on interviewing skills and conflict resolution in the workplace.

Kathy is currently recruiting and training volunteers for the JRP program at the Newark Empowerment Center. Ten current NEC volunteers have already signed up. She also expects to draw other volunteers from the University of Delaware and JP Morgan Chase who have both expressed interest.

<b>FH Program</b>	<b>JRP Volunteers</b>	<b>Source</b>
Women’s Day Center	27	Church Partners (11) College Interns (3) Business Sponsors(8) Former Clients (5)
Men’s Day Center	13	Church Partners (7) College Interns (3) Business Sponsors (3)
Clothing Bank	4	Church Partners (4)
Men’s Transitional Housing	4	Church Partners (4)
Women’s Transitional Housing	12	Church Partners (6) Ministry Partners (6)
Newark Empowerment Center	12	Church Partners (12)