

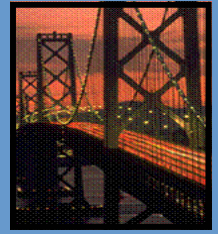
November 2009

Fall Issue

www.eri-va.com

Building Bridges...

*for youth and young adults through
education and employment training.*



Fall & Winter Calendar

November 25

School Early Dismissal/Holiday

November 26-27

School/Offices Closed
Thanksgiving Holiday

December 22

School Early Dismissal/Holiday

Dec. 23—January 3, 2010

School/Offices Closed
Winter Break

January 18

School/Offices Closed
Martin Luther King's Birthday

February 15

School/Offices Closed
President's Day Holiday

February 24

School Early Dismissal
Teacher Work Day

Michael W. West, Editor

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The *Building Bridges* newsletter is produced three times per year by Employment Resources Incorporated to inform our clients, students, parents, community partners and the public about our educational, employment and transition programs and services. For more information call 540-372-6710, or visit our web site at:

www.eri-va.com

Employment Resources Incorporated

Fredericksburg • Warsaw

High School Diploma Graduate Receives Honors

ERI's Gladys H. Oberle School has formed a partnership with *Continental Academy*, a fully accredited online education provider in Florida, to provide a blended learning environment for individuals who desire a high school diploma in our region. The program blends classroom instruction by an ERI instructor for six hours per week for 15-weeks with a home-based online study program. The "blended learning environment" is the key to the program and the student's success.

The Gladys H. Oberle School is pleased to announce that one of our recent students, Savanna Goodeill, 19, a resident of the City of Fredericksburg, graduated in October *with honors*. "It gives me great pleasure to assist each student to set and reach goals," said Nicolette Ward, ERI Training Manager. "When each finally crosses the finish line and earns an actual high school diploma, it is a momentous occasion."



Savanna Goodeill

On December 4th, ERI will be holding our very first *High School Diploma Program Graduation Ceremony*. Thirteen graduates in the region who were enrolled in the program throughout the year will be receiving their diplomas. All of these students dropped out of high school at one point in their life but were determined to get their diploma and move forward.

Chanda Dear, an 18-year old Caroline County resident and mother of one, had a dream of pursuing a career in the United States Army only to find out she needed a high school diploma to be accepted. Chanda enrolled and graduated early this fall from our *High School Diploma Program*, completed the ASVAB test and physical examination, and will be leaving for basic training in December.

As a non-profit organization, ERI was very fortunate to recently receive a financial contribution from the Union Bank & Trust Company. The donated funds will be used to support the *High School Diploma Program* and help economically disadvantaged individuals pay for the program. For more information on the program, contact ERI at 1-888-371-0597, or visit our web site.

Customer Service Training Is Important in Getting a Job

Just ask Danita Johnson, 18, a Caroline County resident who was recently looking for a job in the area, how a *Certification in Customer Service* credential can help someone in obtaining a job. "Danita is a wonderful example of a young woman who pursues her goals until she achieves them," said Faranda Ferguson, ERI Transition Specialist.

About a year ago, Danita went to the local Kohl's Department Store in search of a job and was turned down. This past summer, while working in ERI's *Summer Youth Employment Program*, she found out about our *Professional Certification in Customer Service* program. She enrolled and obtained her professional credential in the fall. "Upon completing her customer service certification she applied and was hired on the spot by Kohl's," said Ferguson.



Danita Johnson

From January-October 2009, twenty-six people have graduated from ERI's *Professional Certification in Customer Service* program. ERI is proud to partner with the nationally recognized retail industry trade association, the *National Retail Federation (NRF)*, and offer the customer service credential through NRF. All customer service trainers at ERI are trained and certified by the New York City based association. For more information on the program, contact ERI at 1-888-371-0597, or visit our web site.

Visit our web site: www.eri-va.com

ERI Receives New VAISEF Commendation



Joan P. McLaughlin
President
Employment Resources Incorporated

In April, 2010, Employment Resources Incorporated will celebrate the start of its 20th year of providing exceptional educational and workforce services to the communities of Planning District 16 and Planning District 17. To honor this monumental milestone, we are planning a reunion of all former staff to celebrate the many successes we have achieved over the years.

In September, The Gladys H. Oberle School underwent its five-year reaccreditation process through VAISEF. VAISEF stands for the Virginia Association of Independent Specialized Education Facilities, and was chartered in 1973 for the purpose of developing and maintaining an effective collaborative relationship with public sector educational and human service agencies. VAISEF is affiliated with the Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE) and the National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children (NAPSEC) and has been granted the responsibility for being the accrediting body for non-public specialized education schools in Virginia. The accreditation process is a rigorous two-day site visit by a team from the VAISEF organization. New to the organization this year is the opportunity to receive an accreditation with commendation. To receive this distinguished honor, a school must meet all seventeen standards and six modules with a 95% or above rating. The Gladys H. Oberle School scored a 98% and is now a school accredited with commendation. Specifically, some of the details that the site visit team felt evidenced exceptional performance were:

• *The climate and culture was very calm and warm with strong teacher student relationships*

• *Staff teamwork was great to meet student's needs*

- *The student parent handbook was well organized and user friendly*
- *The school had very good linking and transitioning to job/workforce programs for students*
- *Small student teacher ratio with 5 students per class*
- *Teachers felt supported by school administration*
- *Students spoke highly of school and staff*

We are extremely proud of our staff, students and parents for the collaborative effort they make on a daily basis to ensure that The Gladys H. Oberle School remains one of the premiere special education day schools in Virginia.

Another exciting achievement for ERI is the completion of our fourth YouthBuild USA class. This fourth class proved to be even more successful than the first three. To enhance our involvement with YouthBuild, ERI has just submitted an application for becoming a full affiliate of the national organization, YouthBuild USA. In becoming a national affiliate, a local YouthBuild program assumes responsibilities designed to strengthen the YouthBuild movement and protect the integrity and reputation of the YouthBuild program model. An affiliate can become an *accredited* affiliate by completing at least two program cycles and a comprehensive accreditation process, and demonstrating outcomes that meet or exceed YouthBuild performance standards. Full affiliates are considered first for grants from YouthBuild USA--in recent years full affiliates have received about twice the amount of pass-through dollars through YouthBuild USA than non-accredited programs.

In October, ERI completed our yearly financial audit for 2008 with a certified public accountant from Bowling, Franklin & Co., LLP. This annual audit complies with our federally funded contracts. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Education conducted a licensure review of The Gladys H. Oberle School and has issued the school a three-year licensure.



Season's Greetings



During this time of year as we celebrate "Thanksgiving" all of us here at *Employment Resources Incorporated* (ERI) would like to "thank" our students, our parents, our clients, our financial supporters, our volunteers, business partners, and the community who have made our progress this year possible. Your friendship means a great deal to us and we appreciate you very much.

May your holidays be filled with Peace, Joy, Hope and Happiness.

We wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Prosperous New Year!

What's Happening at the Gladys H. Oberle School?

Oberle Students Visit Historic Jamestown

On October 20, seven Oberle students accompanied by three teachers spent the day on a school field trip exploring Historic Jamestown, Virginia. They learned that in 1607, 13 years before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts, a group of 104 English men and boys began a settlement on the banks of Virginia's James River. "Our students learn best by experiencing the material being taught," said Rossana Finegan,



Jamestown Ships

Oberle teacher and trip coordinator. "By taking a guided tour at Jamestown, the students were able to experience what it would have been like if they were living in Jamestown." The Jamestown Settlement became America's first permanent English colony.

Students stepped back in time as they boarded the *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed* and *Discovery* – recreations of three ships that brought English colonists to Virginia. One of the highlights of the day was a guided tour of the Powhatan Indian Village featuring reed-covered houses, crops and a ceremonial circle of carved wooden posts. "My favorite part of the Jamestown trip was the Indian village," said 11th grade student, Rashawn James. "I really liked the Indian clothing," she added.



Learning about Crops

The tour guide was able to engage the students in activities such as using the tools the Native American Indians used to garden with and listening to a musket being fired.

Another highlight was visiting James Fort. The re-created fort interprets the settlement during 1610-1614, reflecting its predominantly military and commercial character.

Back to School Night at Oberle

The Gladys H. Oberle School administration and staff welcomed our students "back to school" this fall with a special night at the Oberle campus including information, food and fellowship. Parents and their children received an invitation to attend the *Back to School Night* on September 28 from 5-7pm. Over 50 parents and students attended the event and had a wonderful time.

Mrs. Dawna Vaughn welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for taking time to come and be involved in their child's education. She presented each parent with a copy of their child's school schedule. The festivities for the night included some quality time with each teacher in their classroom, a question and answer session and a group meal for everyone.



Mrs. Vaughn Welcomes Guests

Mrs. Vicki McCarthy, Gladys H. Oberle School's licensed clinical social worker, gave a presentation on upcoming educational opportunities for students and family members to attend in the community. A discussion was held on the formulation of a Parent Support Group at Oberle, and Mrs. McCarthy provided some general information on the Interact Club including the introduction of candidates for the upcoming election of club officers. "The school year is off to a great start for our students," said McCarthy. "It's wonderful when we can gather together as a school community to support our students and families."

After the evening festivities concluded, several students, parents, and staff stayed a while longer and engaged in informal discussions about the school and the excitement about the upcoming year.

From Education to Employment

Once an individual finishes their education, the next step in life is employment. At The Gladys H. Oberle School, we give our students a solid educational foundation then help them transition from school into the workplace. The *Education for Employment Class* became a "signature program" for the Oberle school and has been conducted since 1991.

The program starts with daily classroom instruction with one and two block courses for the students preparing them to transition to an employment training site. Currently, Oberle has seven students in the classroom environment with our teachers, Mrs. Renu McMahon and Ms. Tricia St.Clair.

Then, it's on to one of Oberle's many training site partners with Ms. Tonya Williams, Oberle's Transition Specialist, to gain experience in the workplace. Some of ERI's employment partners in the community include companies such as Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg Field House, Woodmont Nursing Home, Fredericksburg Food Bank, Top Notch Custom Paint, Roxbury Mills, and University of Mary Washington Dining Hall.

Students also earn a weekly training incentive fee which is one of their favorite parts of the program. They can earn a maximum of \$20 per week in the classroom portion of the program. The on-site training experience can garner them between \$32-\$80 per week based on how many days they participate. The employer evaluates each student on a scale from 1-5. A higher evaluation in the program can help students earn a higher training incentive fee for outstanding work.

"The program has been very successful thanks to all the support we receive from teachers and local businesses," says Tonya Williams.

1st Annual Health & Fitness Walk

On October 14th, twenty-two students and six staff members participated in The Gladys H. Oberle School *First Annual Health & Fitness Walk*. Students also showed concern for their environment by collecting litter along the 2-mile walk route. The *2nd Annual Health & Fitness Walk* is being planned for Fall 2010.



Building Bridges...

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ERI Warsaw Campus & Office

ERI's Mission

Employment Resources Incorporated's mission is to provide youth with the education and skills they need to become successfully employed, self-sufficient and contributing members of their community.

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