

Grundy Workforce Services

"Changing lives by developing a dynamic workforce through resources and programs while connecting people to business and community." – JJC Workforce Development

VOLUME 6

FEBRUARY 2012

SAVE THE DATE!

**8TH ANNUAL
GRUNDY
COUNTY
REGIONAL
JOB FAIR**

**Wednesday,
August 8, 2012**

Saratoga School
4040 Division St
Morris, IL

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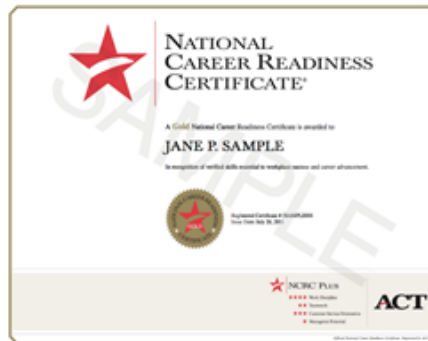
Grundy WIA Students Attain National Career Readiness Certificate through ACT

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is a credential that measures essential workplace skills and is a reliable predictor of workplace success. The certificate is used by employers for screening, hiring and promotion, and targeting employee training and development.

Recently, Grundy WIA students were offered the opportunity to prepare for the assessments needed to obtain the certificate. Interested students were given access to Career Ready 101[®] by KeyTrain, an online comprehensive career training course, and practiced Reading for Information, Applied Math and Locating Information. During the months of December and January, ten WIA students obtained the NCRC. The ten earned a gold or silver certificate based on their scores. Whether they are at the beginning or at the end of their career training, the certificate will verify to employers that they are the right candidate for the job by compar-

ing their skills to the skills required for their job.

ACT also offers a Plus version of the NCRC. It ranks individuals in the following soft skills categories: work discipline, teamwork, customer service orientation and managerial potential. Additional, soft skills include: performance, fit and talent. Within the last couple of months, eleven GWS Young Professionals Network (YPN) students



were encouraged and took the performance, fit and talent assessments. The YPN students are able to use their scores when trying to find employment and research careers.

Visit [ACT](#) to learn more about the [National Career Readiness Certificate](#).

To register for testing times in Grundy County, contact Griselda at (815) 280-6822 or gmartine@jjc.edu.

For Will County testing times, contact Lynn Svetlechich at (815) 280-1526 or lsvetlec@jjc.edu.

Volunteering - Improving your Employment Odds

There are a lot of obvious benefits to volunteering – developing skills, gaining perspective in a new work environment/ industry and meeting new people to grow your network.

Developing New Skills

Volunteering can be a positive way to get training in areas your current or past jobs didn't provide. If you need some additional experience for a particular job or promotion, there are many options. For example:

- **Project management** -- organizing events or fundraising efforts.
- **Sales skills** -- contacting people for donations or recruiting volunteers.
- **Managing a team** -- many projects require a group effort and a leader to coordinate it

VolunteerMatch.org offers free webinars on how to be a great volunteer to get you started.

Job and Environmental “Fit”

Career Changers and stay-at-home parents transitioning back into the workforce should consider volunteering as a job search strategy. Volunteering enables you to test out job environments without making a long-term commitment.

"Volunteering is a fabulous strategy, especially for someone who does not have experience in the field they want to go into," said Andrea Kay, a Cincinnati-based career coach, and author of [Life's a xxxxx and Then You Change Careers: 9 Steps to Get Out of Your Funk and On to Your Future](#). "You gain experience in a non-threatening way. It also gets you into a business industry where other people see you in action."

While volunteering, you are more apt to hear about job openings in an organization and are positioned to hear the buzz about industry trends and job opportunities at affiliated organizations.

"When a job opens up, you will be first in line to apply for it."

Meet New Networking Contacts

Volunteering is an opportunity to expand your network. Not only will you meet people who support the same cause, you will find people that have personal and professional connections that can help you – especially if you are looking for a job.

Looking for volunteer opportunities?

Here's a few links to jump-start your search:

Idealist.org

1-800 Volunteer.org

Network for Good

Volunteer.gov: Powered by Network for Good has additional volunteering info on main site

Global Volunteer Network: Volunteer abroad

BoardNet: Serve on a non-profit board

Excerpts taken from the following articles:

[Five Ways Volunteering Can Help You Get a Job](#) By Amy Neumann, for Yahoo! HotJobs

[6 Ways Volunteering Can Boost Your Career](#) by Tai Goodwin

[Volunteering Can Open Doors to a New Career](#) by Sharon Reed Abboud

Student Success Stories

Mary Pat Mack came to WIA as a dislocated worker identifying an interest in returning to the classroom to attain a degree in Child Development. Her goal is to become a director in a child care center in Grundy County. Mary takes a few moments to answer some questions for us about her experience with WIA.

What is the training program you are in the process of completing? “Associates degree in Child Development.”

What career/occupational goals are you trying to achieve? “I am changing my career from business/office worker to preschool teacher at a day care/preschool location.”

Why is WIA an important program to the people of Illinois? “The State of Illinois has given me a second chance in a new career. I will be working to shape little minds and create future adults to help run this challenging economic world we live in today.”

What positive change has occurred due to training? “This training has helped me give 110% to my

studies and not have to stress about where I was going to get the \$\$\$'s to pay for my education. I have met wonderful people at the Morris location and also in the registration office on campus. This program is one of the best things that could have happened and very glad it came into my life.”

Recent employment in the educational/child development industry? “I was recently employed as a teacher at a local child care center in my area. Starting out part-time and will be full time in the future. What more could someone ask for in this time of hardship for so many people, thank you State of Illinois.”

How would you measure the success you have achieved thus far through the WIA program? “I have proved to myself what a good student I can be by receiving all A's and B's in classes thus far. My confidence level in my classes and my ability to do this job has grown so much in the last few weeks. Thank you again for giving me a second chance to change my career.”

- **Mary Pat Mack, Grundy WIA grant recipient**

Shelby is a typical struggling student, but what makes her unique are her high aspirations and dedication to her goals. She attained a Nurse's Aide certification through Joliet Junior College, found and has retained employment. Between continuing her education, managing her money, and making good decisions when faced with adversity, her days are full. Shelby is half-way through her prerequisites and is working towards transferring to a four



year to get her Bachelors of Science in Nursing. Working closely with Angie from the Young Professional Network Grundy County Youth Program, Shelby has worked diligently towards the goals that have been set. “Angie has helped me get through a rough spot in my life, no matter if my problem was about school or home she listened. I am thankful to have had her to help me through my ups and downs in life.”

- **Shelby Wendell, Grundy WIA YPN grant recipient**

“With the downturn of the economy, I was laid-off from my Administrative Assistant position, which I held for 8 ½ years for a small west suburban company. My sister then informed me about a program she went through years before in Will County, and encouraged me to inquire. I soon found out that Grundy County offered a program called the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). After following the necessary steps and testing, I soon found that I was accepted into the program!

After detailed research, I decided to refocus my education into the healthcare field, in particular Health Information Management (HIM). While completing my clinical class at a local hospital, I decided to volunteer my services in the department that interested me most, Medical Records. This also gave me additional experience to list on my resume while completing my educa-

tion. I quickly realized that this was a great career choice for me. I checked the employment opportunities list on a regular basis and applied once something became available. With great delight, I am employed once again! Only this time, my position is a part-time HIM Technician, which I can apply my studies to. I am now in the final stretch of my education, last three classes. Once completed, I hope to be working full-time again.

The WIA program has allowed me to refocus my educational and career goals, while still utilizing all of my professional experience. As an adult, I now realize just how important my education is, especially in this economy. I can happily say that I have worked very hard to receive straight As throughout my WIA educational experience, and feel blessed for this opportunity. Thank you!”

- **Kim Cheever, Grundy WIA grant recipient**

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Resources for Veterans

[Feds Hire Vets](#)

A one-stop resource for Federal veteran employment information.

[My Next Move, for Veterans](#)

My Next Move for Veterans is a web-based interactive tool for U.S. veterans to learn more about their career options.

[Veterans Assistance Commission of Grundy County](#)

The Commission provides needed interim and/or emergency financial assistance paid exclusively to Honorably Discharged Military Veterans and their families, who reside in Grundy County, for basic living expenses.

[Veterans Job Bank](#)

Provides Veterans with a central source for identifying Veteran-committed employment opportunities and assists America's employers in identifying qualified Veterans.

Upcoming Events

February Workshops

Register for job readiness [workshops offered in February](#)

8th Annual Grundy County Regional Job Fair

Wednesday, August 8, 2012
Additional information available mid-February

Next Issue:

Quarterly Mini-Job Fairs

Retirement Planning Seminar



TRAINING • CONNECTING • DEVELOPING ILLINOIS' WORKFORCE

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Job Search Resources

Refresh Your Resume

Check out [Monster](#) for helpful resume writing tips.

Job Market

Visit [USA Today](#) for the 2012 job market forecast.

Navigate Illinois workNet

Connect to [Illinois workNet](#) to find and prepare for jobs and connect to training services.

JJC Workforce Development on Facebook

Create a Facebook account and search for the Joliet Junior College Workforce Development page and click "LIKE". You will receive access to our newsfeed. We post job opportunities, job fairs, interesting articles, and the latest in job search activities.

