



works

Jacob's Ladder Job Center, Inc.
2304 The Plaza, Charlotte, NC 28205
www.jacobsladdercharlotte.org

WINTER 2011 - OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

Our mission is to help unemployed and underemployed individuals find and keep living wage jobs.

Two Locations Extend Program Reach, Impact

Jacob's Ladder West now has a permanent home inside the new **Center for Employment Services** located in the Charlotte Housing Authority's Arbor Glen community. The satellite site extends our reach into new neighborhoods and is in addition to our existing location at Plaza Presbyterian Church on The Plaza.

Supported by a partnership between Jacob's Ladder, the City of Charlotte, Charlotte Housing Authority, Charlotte Mecklenburg Workforce Development Board, and City Dive/New Birth Charlotte Church, the Center addresses chronic unemployment with "wraparound" services for residents of the West Boulevard corridor. The fully renovated facility includes classrooms, a clothing closet, administrative offices, meeting space and a state-of-the-art computer lab. Classes began at the new facility at 2201 Caronia Street on January 3.

With the support of a \$100,000 grant from the Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation, Jacob's Ladder West is now home to two full-time staff members: Project Manager Susan Pierson and Technology Instructor Margo Scurry. In addition to our job readiness curriculum, clients will benefit from Charlotte's first-ever SHARE Network Access Point (SNAP)-a computer resource supplied by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Workforce Development Board, that connects directly to JobLink Center databases. Once a participant secures em-



Jacob's Ladder West, which piloted job readiness classes at Southview Recreation and Wingate Resource Centers in 2010, extends our proven four-step approach to the chronically unemployed on the West side.

ployment, Jacob's Ladder and other partners will offer personal mentoring for at least six months to support job retention.

Thanks to Southview Recreation Center, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation, City of Charlotte, Vision Charlotte, Sisters of Mercy NC Foundation, Weed & Seed, and the New Generation of African American Philanthropists for their financial and in-kind support of Jacob's Ladder West's pilot program in 2010.



An innovative partnership with the Charlotte Housing Authority offers a new permanent home for Jacob's Ladder West at the **Center for Employment Services** in CHA's Arbor Glen development.

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From the Executive Director . . .

Though the pundits laud the end of the recession, the reality is that 2011 will still be a tough year for the people we serve.

Local unemployment has been essentially static – above 10 percent or more – for the past two years. For our typical clientele, low-wealth African Americans, unemployment remains even higher -- upwards of 20% for some age groups.

In this context, our 70-percent hire rate is indeed an achievement. We have made great strides in helping our clients overcome chronic conditions. But, **we are not content** to allow 30 percent of our clients remain unemployed.

That's because the cost of failure is too high. More than half of our clients have no source of income when they enter our program. Prolonged unemployment and lack of income leads to increased desperation, a rise in chronic

illness, and depression, which impacts the individual and their families immediately, and raises the costs to the public in the mid-to-long-term. **Therefore, it is imperative we help break the cycle of poverty.**

To do this, **we are looking for champions** who will invest in our clients. We must:

- **increase donor support** to meet the increased need, and
- **increase the number of job referrals** from volunteers, donors, and community members.

We have a proven model that works for a population that is dreadfully underserved by the marketplace. Our expansion into West Charlotte is driven by the need for services citywide and is made fiscally responsible by the myriad of partners offering space, volunteers, expertise, and other resources to create a permanent home for Jacob's Ladder West.



Steffi Travis

Still, we cannot deliver services without the critical personnel, equipment, utilities, training materials, and client assistance that drive our program. We are launching a "no-donor-left-untouched" approach to raising funds and support for our most vulnerable citizens. We must shore up resources to maintain operations at the level needed for 2011.

Through it all, I want to thank our volunteers, donors and community partners for all you do to link people to opportunity through Jacob's Ladder. Together we can help our clients help themselves with the skills, the training and the opportunity they need to begin the climb out of poverty.

Sincerely,

Steffi Travis



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WINTER 2011
The official newsletter
of Jacob's Ladder Job
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A Place Of Her Own

The Heart of Champions celebration also made a dream come true for aspiring artist Sylvia Thomas.

A graduate of Jacob's Ladder, Sylvia was featured guest at the event where she showcased her art in hopes of raising \$600 to put a deposit on an apartment. When the night was over, she had doubled her goal, raising \$1,200.



Sylvia's heart-themed works from the evening.

"Getting my own apartment is a dream come true to me," said Sylvia. "I appreciate the support of everyone at Jacob's Ladder for my dreams of being an artist. My art has opened the door to my new apartment and I will forever be grateful."

Sylvia is also employed part-time as a CNA after updating her certification with the help of Jacob's Ladder.



Sylvia, left, joins event planner Elizabeth Hyland at the event.

Photo: Dirk Weaver

Heart of Champions Celebrates Brinkley's Service

Tribute launches a landmark campaign for sustainability



Photo: Dirk Weaver

Amy and Robert Brinkley and their daughter Rebecca celebrate Robert's decade of commitment to Jacob's Ladder during the February Heart of Champions event.

Though long time Jacob's Ladder champion Robert Brinkley is retiring from the Board of Directors, he isn't finished telling our story to Charlotte's philanthropic community. On February 10, friends of Brinkley and the agency gathered to celebrate his decade of service and to launch a 3-year \$1 million fundraising campaign aimed at creating a legacy of self-sufficiency for Jacob's Ladder and its clients.

Celebrants heard the stories of champions like Sylvia Thomas, a graduate of Jacob's Ladder who is overcoming adversity to achieve employment and pursue self-sufficiency, before dancing to the sweet sounds of Smitty Flynn and the Rivas. The highlight of the evening was a presentation of Thomas' original painting, "Fishers of Men," which commemorates Brinkley's long time philosophy that we "teach a man to fish" through job readiness training and support.

In honor of Brinkley's service and focus on long-term sustainability for our clients and our agency, Board chairperson Jeff Jones and Development Committee chairperson James Freeman announced a landmark effort to increase sustainable giving to Jacob's Ladder through the Heart of Champions Legacy Campaign.

What is the Heart of Champions Legacy Campaign?

The campaign seeks to raise \$250,000 this year and a total of \$1 million over the next three years through multi-year pledges from individuals and households. The goal is to create a legacy of self-sufficiency for the agency and its clients while freeing staff and volunteers to focus on putting people back to work.

Who are the champions?

Jacob's Ladder is a story of all kinds of champions -- graduates, donors, volunteers, and professional staff who make the impossible possible every day.

To become a champion,

- **Consider a multi-year pledge of \$1250 or more.** Join the Legacy Circle with a commitment to make a recurring annual gift each year for the next 3 years.
- **Make an annual gift of any amount right now.** A gift of any amount helps ensure clients have access to the tools they need to succeed with their search.
- **Make a gift of time.** Your expertise can help others achieve sustainable employment.
- **Hire a client or share job referrals.** Let us know about entry-to-mid-level opportunities in your company or wherever you see them.

Special Thanks to the following who made the celebration possible:

- Binders Art Supplies & Frames
- The Blossom Shop
- Dirk Weaver Photography
- Ice Sensations
- Johnson and Wales University Baking & Pastry Club
- Van Landingham Estate
- Bobby Sisk, Channel 36 News
- Smitty Flynn and the Rivas
- Sylvia Thomas, Artist
- Joe Travis, Videographer

Making a Fresh Start

Jacob's Ladder graduate finds renewed focus and a way forward

Life has changed for the better since Belinda Paca, a 35-year-old mother of one, came to Jacob's Ladder in February 2010.

Life Before Jacob's Ladder:

Belinda was struggling with part-time, intermittent work and wanted more stability for her 12-year-old son and herself. "I was going through a stressful point in my life. I lost my car, I was living with my sister, and I really wasn't making ends meet."

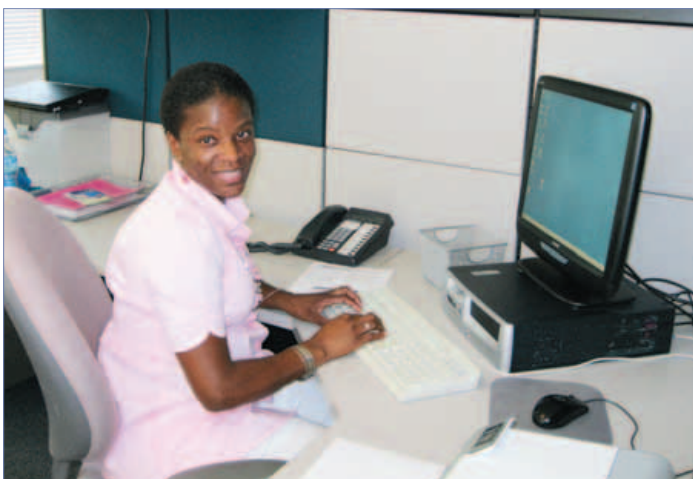
What She Learned From The Program:

"I've worked since I was 14. I've gone on plenty of interviews, but I've always dreaded the 'Tell me about yourself' question. I never know what to say, how much to share, and just how to handle that one. The volunteer I worked with helped me practice keeping it short and sharing something unique that makes you memorable."

"Jacob's Ladder helped me build my confidence, be willing to take chances, and not be discouraged. I'm able to step out there to find what works for me."

Life After Jacob's Ladder:

"I feel like I've progressed dramatically. I have a car again. We moved into our own apartment in July. My son is in school and doing well."



Belinda's passion for children led her to a job opportunity at Big Brothers of Greater Charlotte.

What She Learned From Her New Job:

When she came to Jacob's Ladder, Belinda was working part-time in afterschool settings, but thought she wanted to leave the classroom for good. Her time away has taught her that she really is "called" to teach. Though she began substitute teaching at age 19, she needs to finish her college education to go further.



Belinda Paca, 35, graduated from Jacob's Ladder's job readiness last year and is now studying to become a teacher while working in the non-profit field.

"I miss working with children. I have a gift, and now I know that's what I need to do. I'm taking the necessary steps to complete my degree and get back in the classroom teaching full-time."

What The Future Holds:

Professionally, her ultimate long-term dream is to create a Teen Café. She envisions a hangout for teens who've aged out of camps and other out-of-school opportunities—a place with music, games, a diner, and other activities to keep teens active in a positive environment.

Personally, Belinda says, "I have learned that everything in life is about planning, so I'm taking time to do that for myself." She's making time for reading, writing, art, and travel. One day she wants to take a cruise.

If you or someone you know is unemployed and needs a "Fresh Start", contact Nathan Forb, Program Coordinator, 704.332.5822, x 220. Our next sessions begin April 4 at our main office and Jacob's Ladder West. Participants commit to four weeks of classes weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Afternoon opportunities include GED preparation, computer training, and focused job search activities.

McColl School Students Design New Impact Measures

With the help of McColl School graduate students **Craig Hopkins** and **Lara Nguyen**, Jacob's Ladder's program team has a brand new system to track the progress of our clients toward job readiness and job success.

"Until now, we have only measured our success in terms of the number of participants who graduate and the number of participants who get a job once they do," says Steffi Travis, Executive Director. "The new system allows us to quickly see exactly which job readiness skills a participant has improved as a result of our programs."

Working with Project Manager **Sheena Bossie** and fellow volunteer **Bob Caruso**, Hopkins and Nguyen identified six specific components of job readiness as Key Performance Drivers (KPDs):

- * Job Applications
- * Interview Skills
- * Business Attire
- * Resumes
- * Work Ethic
- * Barriers to Employment

To measure client progress, each element will receive a "Before" and "After" grade from which both individual and aggregate data may be tracked. Procedures for scoring, logging, and reporting results were also developed.

"This new information will help us make sure clients are getting the skills they need, allow us to report our results to current and future funders, and ensure that our program remains properly aligned with our mission," says Travis.

Look for quarterly updates of program successes and performance measures based on the new system.

All In for Jacob's Ladder!

Popular Poker Fundraiser Returns March 31



Our first tournament in December raised \$3,000. Many thanks to the Ritz Carlton, Carolina Poker Supply Company and Chris Lebhar for their contributions to the evening.

Mark Your Calendars to join the game on March 31st at the Ritz Carlton in uptown Charlotte. Hosted by board members Emmanuel Choice, Tony Perez, and Brian Willis, it's a great way to have fun, enjoy a game of chance, and show your support for Jacob's Ladder and its clients. A \$60.00 buy-in gets you a spot at the table and proceeds directly benefit unemployed clients right here in Charlotte.

To sign up or find out more, visit Jacob's Ladder online at www.jacobsladdercharlotte.org/poker.html

Did you know?

In 2010, 70% of our program graduates achieved employment. Considering the double digit unemployment rates in the region, that's an accomplishment!

Watch for our Annual Report in April to learn more about program successes, finances, and community support.



Welcome to the Team

2011 brought new roles and new faces to the agency. Please welcome these new members of the Jacob's Ladder "family."



Derrick Miller joins the team as Program Coordinator for our core clients at the main office on The Plaza. Derrick was educated at Oakwood College and Springfield Technical Community College, and he most recently served as a Job Coach for individuals with disabilities at Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.



Susan Pierson becomes full-time Project Manager at Jacob's Ladder West. She piloted the project in 2010 on a contract basis after serving in various capacities with Habitat Charlotte. Susan is a graduate of Dickinson College.



Margo Scurry joins the team as Technology Instructor based at Jacob's Ladder West. She brings a diverse background in financial services, real estate, higher education, consulting and technology sectors and is a certified technology trainer. Margo is a graduate of Norfolk State University, and she leads digital literacy courses for clients from both locations.



Sarah Combs works to help graduates find and keep jobs as contracted Job Developer and Work Experience Coordinator. Sarah is based at the West office, but she serves both locations.



Rev. Elizabeth Hyland brings her expertise to the development team as contracted Special Projects Coordinator. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, she leads special events and helps connect houses of worship to the work of Jacob's Ladder.

We're Going Green!

We are committed to reducing our ecological footprint in 2011. This year, we will do more with electronic versions of our quarterly newsletter, expanded use of social media, and our volunteer e-news.

You can help by updating your mailing address and electronic contact information at www.jacobsladdercharlotte.org/subscribe.htm

For up-to-the minute information and happenings, join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/jacobsladdercharlotte

We're also on youtube at: www.youtube.com/jacobsladderjobs

Don't forget to share your new and gently used professional attire with our clients.

We accept all business appropriate attire, but we are always in special need of:

- plus size women's clothing,
- men's shoes, belts and accessories,
- women's flats in wide widths.

Contact Denise, 704.332.5822 to arrange a donation time.



A Perfect Fit

JACOB'S LADDER JOB CENTER, INC

Changing Faces . . .

Jacob's Ladder Job Center, Inc. is guided by a Board of Directors who volunteer their personal and professional expertise on behalf of their neighbors in need. Board oversight ensures that we are accountable to our donors, remain true to our mission, and conduct our business in a manner deserving of the public trust. We welcome five new members to the board and congratulate four returning members on their new roles.

In 2011, our board of directors is led by Chairman Jeff Jones, Vice Chairman Tony Perez, Secretary Rhonda York and Treasurer Charles Pfeiler.



Emmanuel Choice

Emmanuel Choice is a Commercial Real Estate Broker with Lincoln Harris, LLC. He is also CEO of Black Star International Trading, Co. A husband and father of three, the Los Angeles native and University of Southern California alumnus is committed to improving the overall business and social climate in Charlotte by actively contributing time and talent to organizations that are focused on making a difference. Teamwork and a focus on principle-centered leadership help Emmanuel balance work, family and community involvement.

He is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with an MBA from the McColl School of Business at Queens University of Charlotte. He is a senior fellow with the American Leadership Forum, Charlotte Region. He and his wife, Roxanne, have two daughters.



Brian P. Willis

Brian Willis is the Founder and CEO of Wealth Builders Enterprises, Inc., the Board Chairman for the Center for Financial Empowerment and current President of 100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte.

In addition to staying active in his various business endeavors, he donates his time and talent to his church and community. He mentors several young men in The 100's very successful Movement of Youth mentoring program, is a very active member of the men's group at his church, and serves as a church trustee. Brian is a St. Louis, Missouri native and a University of North Carolina at Charlotte graduate.



Dr. Gloria Campbell-Whately

Dr. Gloria Campbell-Whately, Associate Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, is a nationally recognized special education consultant, trainer, and keynote speaker. She has given more than 70 keynotes, speeches, training sessions and workshops in the United States, Africa, Brazil, China, Spain, and Australia. Dr. Campbell-Whately's publications are used in classrooms nationwide, and her upcoming text, "Leadership Practices for Special and General Education" is awaiting release this year.

She has served on several boards including the Council for Exceptional Children National Board. Campbell-Whately earned her Bachelors at Dillard University and her Masters and Doctorate from the University of Alabama Birmingham and the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa, respectively.



Kelty McRae

Kelty McRae is a Human Resources Manager at Wells Fargo in the Wholesale Banking Division. She leads a team of consultants who support Specialized Lending and Commercial Real Estate businesses. For ten years prior, she worked in Human Resources at Wachovia.

Kelty is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and earned a Masters at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. She lives in Charlotte with her husband Alex and her Kerry Blue Terrier, Murray. She also enjoys friendly competition in local running races and triathlons.

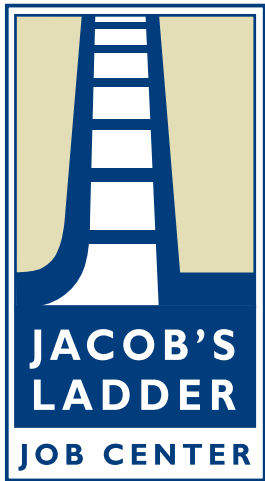


Vincent Davis

Vincent Davis is director of Duke Energy's Smart Energy Now Community Partnerships. He leads the company's participation in the Envision: Charlotte initiative, which collaborates with large commercial building owners, municipalities and federal agencies to evaluate and implement energy efficiency products and services.

"I am excited to serve clients with a desire to create positive change in their lives."

~ Kelty McRae



Jacob's Ladder Job Center, Inc.

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