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Success stories feted by employment board

By Chris Coates



CHRIS COATES PHOTO Emcee Gerry Schuetzenhofer presents awards during the 2008 Workforce Investment Board Awards Luncheon Wednesday at the Sunset Hills Country Club in Edwardsville. The group recognized area residents who overcame challenges to earn new careers.

Trinetta Bolds three years ago was a high school dropout stuck in an abusive relationship struggling to support a baby son when she enrolled in the Madison County e-learning program in a bid to turn her life around.

A few years of school and job training courses later, Bolds, of Madison, has earned her high school diploma and is taking courses at Sanford-Brown College.

The transition, Bolds said, has been remarkable.

"I've come a long way," she said.

Bolds Wednesday was one of six success stories that the Investment Board recognized during its 20th annual awards luncheon in Edwardsville. The ceremony highlighted the work of the board, made up of 35 leaders representing businesses, education and labor from across the region, to help residents receive training and find jobs in sometimes challenging situations.

"In many cases they are dealing with multiple barriers," said David Stoecklin, the Executive Director of the Madison County Employment and Training Department, who serves on the Investment Board. "Every year I get inspired."

Along with Bolds, individual achievement awards went to:

- Shelly Greenwood, a Bethalto mother of twin girls who after a divorce enrolled at Southwestern Illinois College and took classes in health information technology, eventually graduating and nabbing a job in the Tumor Registry Department at Barnes-Jewish Hospital.
- Denietra Franklin, who as a teenager was forced to move to Madison from Texas only to find she couldn't graduate on time, enrolled in the Madison County e-learning program and is now studying to become a nurse through Southwestern Illinois College.
- Patrick Grant, a fired truck driver with three children, who took auto technology courses at Lewis & Clark Community College and was hired at a Midas car repair shop.
- David Holt, a fired factory worker, who took courses in radiology at Kaskaskia College during the day and took care of his three stepchildren at night, graduating cum laude in May before being hired at Hillsboro Hospital.
- Toni Reynolds, a single mom, who put herself through school at Sanford-Brown College, taking classes in medical billing and coding, getting a 4.0 grade point average and a job at Mid America Psychiatric Consultants in Granite City.

The board also awarded its Business Leadership awards to Kelly Cobb, owner of the Culver's restaurant in Edwardsville, for using the agency's recruitment services and Your Travel Biz, a Wood River firm that supports travel Web sites.

Also recognized was Debra Angleton, a longtime county Employment and Training office manager, who last year faced massive changes in her office, the death of a friend and the diagnoses that her husband had cancer.

She was credited with staying strong even as pressure mounted.

"I couldn't have done this without the staff," Angleton said after accepting the award, adding that her husband is now cancer free. "They kept me going and we made it through."

Additionally, the board recognized a task force, the Basic and Effective Supervisory Training Project, organized to address the void of health care workers in the region, and Connie L. Carroll, who with the help of the

county employment department became a nurse and was hired at a Head Start program.

Later, Stoecklin said the awards show how much can get done if the right system and support are in place. None of it would be possible, however, if those who took part weren't committed, Stoecklin said.

"We are a small part of it," he said. "We provide some of it. But the people we recognize provide the guts."