

SUCCESS STORIES

America's Promise Grants

— PARTICIPANT SUCCESS —

Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA)



Gerald Hamilton, Photo source: SEMCA Michigan Works! Wayne Service Center

Gerald Hamilton always strove for excellence. Having discovered a love for cooking, he completed culinary school and started his own catering business; however, building clientele was difficult, there were financial struggles, and he was soon unemployed. Gerald also suffered from a back injury that forced him to seek treatment. During this time, Gerald started receiving assistance from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and after discussions with his Case Manager, they developed a plan for him to pursue a career in Manufacturing.

MRS referred Gerald to SEMCA, the local Michigan Works! agency, where he was co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult and America's Promise grant program to pursue Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator training at Schoolcraft College. Gerald showed determination getting to class every day, even through adversity with transportation issues and the long distance that he traveled from his home to the campus. To help him succeed Michigan Works! and MRS provided supportive services such as gas cards, car repair, and work clothing.

Gerald received a job offer from Aztec Manufacturing in Romulus where he was able to apply his newly acquired skills as a CNC Operator. He is currently making \$17.80 and approaching his 1-year anniversary in November 2019. His employer is encouraging his aspiration to continue schooling.

Gerald summarized his experience and the people who have helped him along the way. "I would like to thank my Creator, the staff at Schoolcraft College for their assistance and educational training I received, and the incredible team at Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Michigan Works! Ms. Thompson, Mr. Brickey and Ms. Jones, these respected individuals became symbolic to an extended family, with their shared wisdom. I did not get a job, but embarked upon a new career."

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Pictured left to right, Brett Ottenbacher, and Sandra Miller, Business Development Center Project Coordinator for Schoolcraft College

Photo source: SEMCA Michigan Works! Livonia Service Center

By Brett Ottenbacher

In March of 2018, I ended my career from a very comfortable but, stress inducing truck driving job (13 years, 1.5 million accident free miles). At first I was not exactly sure of what the future held for me until one bright day, I stopped by the Livonia Works Office to see if they had any job leads. I was immediately captivated with a flyer on the wall about becoming a CNC Machinist in only 8 weeks. My first reaction was "Heck yeah, that's for me!!" I met with a career counselor who signed me up for the 8 week boot camp and that turned out to be one of the best decisions of life.

I was totally mesmerized by what this amazing instructor was talking about and demonstrating to the class. Three weeks into the class Professor Gene said to me "email this gentleman he might have a job for you." I sent the email and immediately got a response which led to an interview and a job offer. I started in the mail room and worked hard, showed up every day with a great attitude.

I was laid off the first part of the year and asked Professor Gene if he knew anyone else hiring and he shared a lead which brought me to my current job. I run a CNC lathe and I'm learning more every day. The training that I received in the CNC boot camp properly prepared me for the job with hands-on training. Thanks to the America's Promise grant and some amazing people, I have a new challenging career which I absolutely love!