

Telamon—Virginia

February 2013

Empowering Individuals, Improving Communities

Message from the State Director Sharon Saldarriaga

Efforts to address the nation’s broken immigration system are finally getting attention with the release of bipartisan Senate immigration principles. Senators Schumer, McCain, Durbin, Graham, Menendez, Rubio, Bennet, and Flake have joined together to create a bipartisan framework for comprehensive immigration reform that would create a path to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants currently living in the U.S. and commit additional resources to secure our borders. There are provisions that recognize the circumstances of those who entered the country as minor children and of those who have been performing agricultural work but who lack legal status. These two groups will have different requirements in order to earn a path to citizenship.

This is wonderful news not only for the millions of hard-

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A Better Life

By Kathy Bullano
Regional Manager, Danville

After two and half years of effort and struggle, our client Shannon Green came into my office beaming, “Can you believe it? I got my dream job!” Moments like this are extremely rewarding for both the client and for me. Through a cooperative process, working with a client from entrance to exit, Telamon staff have a direct impact on the people we serve, and we truly help them create a better life for themselves and their families.

Shannon Green got her “dream job” this past November working as a Medical Assistant for one of the best doctor’s offices in the City of Danville. Her journey was made easier by the financial aid and the constant support and service we provide. This is what we do. This is who we are. Shannon Green is just one example of our many successes.

Shannon toiled in tobacco for many years, surviving but not prospering. She decided to enroll in the Medical Assistant program at National College, then heard about us from one of our many outreach efforts. Shannon under-



stood she would face many challenges trying to balance work and school, and recognized she would need help managing the expensive and demanding curriculum. Telamon assisted Shannon through a variety of services: needs-related payments, assistance with tuition and books, home visits during times of stress, and ongoing training and employment services designed to help Shannon reach her goal.

In the end, Shannon’s hard work and our support proved worthwhile. She was one of the rare and lucky few to be hired directly after completing her internship, and is now enjoying the first stage of a bright new future.

A Beautiful Program

By Nelson Diaz, Program Coordinator

Seeking better opportunities, Robin Parham decided to visit the Workforce Center in Suffolk, VA. At the Workforce Center, Robin learned about Telamon Corporation's National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) which helps farmworkers gain education and occupational skills training to enhance their opportunities inside or outside agricultural employment. After learning more about the program, she decided to enroll, hoping for a better life. Having worked both on and off the farm, Robin's work experience background was a bit bumpy. She had just quit one job due to poor working conditions and because the extreme hours prevented her from caring for her sick mother. Robin stated that she wished she could go to school, but there were too many obstacles.

By working with Telamon,



Robin was able to rediscover herself. She attended Job Readiness classes and explored an interest in health care. Resources and educa-

tion provided means for her to overcome barriers. Robin was very

happy and started seeing new possibilities. She stated that a career in healthcare was perfect because she always had in mind a job that involved helping people, especially because she also would learn how to better take care of her mother. A career as a Registered Nurse (RN) seemed ideal, but she lacked the credentials necessary for employment, so Telamon helped her develop a plan that would begin with training leading to becoming a Certified Nurses Assistant (CNA). This would enable her to get a job, save money, and continue with her goal of becoming a RN.

Through Telamon's NFJP, Robin began her CNA program in March 2012 at The Wakefield Foundation. After attending twice a week for more than nine months, she graduated as a CNA and was hired less than a month later as an aide for an assisted living center where she did her practice. She was thrilled, especially after learning that, due to lack of funding, it was the last CNA program that the Wakefield Foundation would hold.

Today, Robin is well on her way to a long and in-demand career in healthcare. She is working for Personal Touch Home Care and planning to register in the near future for the RN program to continue her career in healthcare, moving one step closer to her ultimate goal. Thanks to Telamon's National Farmworker Jobs Program, her hope for change is now a reality. "NFJP is a beautiful program," Robin concludes.

A Little Help

By Sara Lopez
Workforce Development Specialist, Montross

Fulmencio Ramos came to the Telamon office in Montross a few months ago. He had a great attitude and was on a good path for success, but he faced many barriers in life and just needed a little help. He had worked almost exclusively in farmwork his whole life and was desperately seeking employment in a more stable job market.



Through assessments and interviews, we learned that Fulmencio wanted to get a job as a welder. In less than a month, with our assistance Fulmencio was offered a job as a welder at a local company starting at \$9.85 an hour plus benefits. He was overjoyed with the news especially since he would be earning \$2.60 more per hour than his farm job, not to mention the opportunities for overtime pay. We further assisted him in purchasing his welder's uniform, boots and a few tools, plus we helped him with gas for the first couple of weeks until he started getting steady income. He thanks us greatly for the support and is very much enjoying his new occupation.

State Director’s Message

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working immigrants who are forced to live in the shadows, but also for the country. Fixing our immigration system is critical to our continued ability to prosper. The country is better served when we begin to value the current (and future) contributions made by our young immigrants, who have graduated from our schools, and the priceless contributions made by our farmworkers in ensuring Americans a safe, secure, and affordable food supply.

We hope that this effort will continue and that all our legislators will work in the best interests of our nation. To read the full document “Bipartisan Framework for Comprehensive Immigration Reform,” go to <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/01/23/us/politics/28immigration-principles-document.html>



Pictured from left to right: Richard Ruffin, Joseph Stone, Jamal Wilkins, Jimmy Dews, Donald Neathery, Carolyn Walker, Mitchell Harvey, and Wendy McRae

Telamon’s Virginia **Weatherization Program**, which is operated out of South Hill, has weatherized 261 homes including a 42 unit multi-family building in Mecklenburg County with funds from the American Recovery and

Reinvestment Act (ARRA.) This is far in excess of their assigned state plan production goal of 159 homes. Congratulations and thanks to all the crew and staff in our South Hill Office for their hard work and dedication!



Seeking a Home

By Ana Nethken
Field Service Rep, Harrisonburg

Andre, Jean Claude, and Louna came from Haiti seeking better life opportunities. Migrant farm work provided income for themselves and their families, but it required them to move frequently following the jobs and thus denied them any chance to join a community or have

a lasting residence. Louna told me that was her dream: to stay in one place and have a home to return to at the end of each day.

Jean Claude is a hard worker, always laboring to provide the basics for his family, and always looking for chances to improve his skills. His wife Louna came with him to the U.S. to improve their income by working in the fields. During orange season, they met Andre working in Florida and recognized him as a kindred spirit; the three banded together for support and continued their search.

Finally the three moved to Harrisonburg, Virginia and settled in when Jean found a job at the Bowman apples camp. They came to Telamon last year eager to explore new possibilities. Through inter-

views and assessments, we quickly determined that Andre, Jean Claude and Louna possessed fantastic personal traits, work ethic, and responsibility. However, they also faced several barriers to improving employment: insufficient work history, language, undeveloped work skills. Immediately we began designing solutions to open a pathway for them to succeed.

Telamon provided information and training, such as Job Readiness and computer basics. We also coached them for interviews. In December, they reached a major milestone by obtaining permanent full-time jobs. Building on this success, they are now attending James Madison University. All three are very optimistic and sincerely grateful for our assistance.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN



Powell Road, Dry Fork, VA



Cleveland Street, Danville, VA \$95,000

Universal Design, as the name suggests, is the design of products and environments that are to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design. In short, it is the concept of designing for everyone.

Universal Design (UD) is guided by seven principles: 1) Equitable Use; 2) Flexibility of Use; 3) Simple and Intuitive Use; 4) Perceptible Information; 5) Tolerance for Error; 6) Low Physical Effort; and 7) Size and Space for Approach and Use.

The following are examples of UD features in a house and entrance:

- 4 foot wide walkways sloped at 1:20 or less (slopes steeper than 1:20 necessitate handrails)
- 5'x5' minimum level landing area for maneuvering at the entrance
- Minimum 32" clear door opening
- Minimum clear width of 36" for

a hall

- Flush or low profile threshold (1/2" max)
- Lever handle hardware
- Good overall lighting & focused lighting at locksets and house number
- High contrast and largish house numbers (easy to read from a distance)
- Minimized level changes between rooms (flooring interface is kept even, no steps)
- Very low profile internal thresholds (1/4' max) with bevels either side
- Wood floors, vinyl floors or tight weave low pile carpet
- Rocker style light switches
- Light switches mounted 36" to 40" above the floor
- Electrical outlets mounted 18" to 24" from the floor to minimize the need for bending down
- Roll-in or walk-in showers
- Chair height toilet seat (about

16" from the floor)

- Open roll-under vanity (34" high from the countertop to the floor and 29" from the bottom of the sink to the floor)
- Vanity or wall-hung sink with a minimum of 17" depth to allow space for knees

Telamon has two fully accessible UD homes for sale. One is located in the City of Danville and the other is in Dry Fork, Pittsylvania County. They were designed by TightLines Designs of Raleigh, North Carolina who adapted one of their designs to our UD specifications. Both houses are EarthCraft and Energy Star certified. We also have some other houses for sale which though not fully UD incorporate many of these features which will enable aging in place. Please call Robin Roark (434) 509-4242 or Mayra Nickerson (804) 381-6083 if you wish to learn more.