

# Telamon—Virginia

November 2012

*Empowering Individuals, Improving Communities*

## Message from the State Director Sharon Saldarriaga

The third Virginia Immigrant Advocates Summit was held on October 26, 2012 at the Annandale United Methodist Church. The event was sponsored by a number of organizations that work with immigrant communities. The summit provided information about the many needs and issues impacting Virginia's immigrants, identified the challenges facing Virginia as a result of changing demographics, and created a forum for advocates and stakeholders to develop ways to address specific concerns of the immigrant communities they serve.

One session, "Understanding the Economic Contribution of Immigrants to Virginia's Economy," underscored the importance and value that immigrants have on the Commonwealth's economy. In 2010, Virginia had the ninth-largest immigrant population in

*(Continued on page 3)*

## In this issue

<i>Partners in Success</i> .....	1
<i>Motivation Matters</i> .....	2
<i>Twenty Years: Robin Roark</i> .....	2
<i>Cover stories continued</i> .....	3
<i>Telamon Welcomes New Employees</i> ..	4



## Partners in Success

By Sara Lopez  
Workforce Development Specialist, Montross

Miguel Zamora Carranza first came to Telamon in 2009. He was a high school senior seeking career guidance and financial information. At the time, Miguel was performing seasonal farm work like his mother. Miguel says his mother wanted him to have a better life and pushed him to achieve. We were happy to work with Miguel and find ways to overcome the barriers to his success.

Through interviews and assessments, we discovered that Miguel had both aptitude and interest in several industrial fields. We talked

to Miguel about the demand for different jobs and provided him with other career information. Miguel wanted to enroll in courses at nearby Rappahannock Community College (RCC), so we advised him on taking the placement exams. He had good test scores in high school, and it was no surprise when he did well on most of his placement tests too. We urged him to retake one of the exams, knowing from experience that his skill level exceeded the scores. Eventually, Miguel was tested in person by a college counselor, and not only did he score very well, but the counselor was so impressed that he joined us in actively encouraging Miguel.

Although the RCC counselor suggested Miguel should pursue a

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Motivation Matters

By Nelson Diaz  
Program Coordinator

Motivation is critical for success in school. Most people already know this basic fact and accept the idea that motivation is the key to staying focused on important goals, but many students discover that the real challenge is finding ways to remain motivated. Here I present a few tips on how to stay motivated.

## Review your goals

*Why did you decide to start school? What made you choose this career path?* Ask yourself these questions from time to time, and especially in times of doubt or stress. Your answers to these questions can help you stay motivated and be more successful in your studies. Always review your own personal goals to remind yourself why you are doing the school work. For example, a student studying education may get bored or frustrated in the middle of a semester and start to lose focus. But then he remembers, his purpose for studying education was not only to earn a degree and find a job; he chose education because he is extremely passionate about helping kids and wanted to become a role model in his community.

## Have a game plan

Early on, develop a plan for your studies and create a visual reference like a chart or a diagram. Make it large and colorful and post it somewhere you can see it when you are studying. As an example,

you might decide that you need to study for one hour each night in order to keep up with your schoolwork for a particular class. Having this posted near your study spot can help remind you what you have committed to do in order to achieve your goal.

## Keep a positive attitude

Your commitment and your performance are strongly influenced by your attitude toward learning; therefore, it is important to adopt positive attitudes. Choose a positive mantra or catch phrase to say to yourself, such as “I can do this, I can do this.” It may sound silly, but the words you say to yourself are extremely important to maintaining a positive attitude. If you hear yourself thinking “this is awful” or “I hate this,” immediately rephrase those thoughts using your own positive message - “I can do this.” If you did not believe this, you would not have started. You just need to keep reminding yourself as you go along.

## Find support

There are plenty of people around you who can help you stay focused and boost your morale - you just need to ask for their support and get them engaged in your success. Talk to your teacher about your goals. Join student support groups. Make connections with your classmates. Keep your Workforce Development Specialist at Telamon informed and ask for their input. Share your hopes and your challenges with your family.

## Celebrate success

Every accomplishment along the way deserves to be recognized and celebrated. Tell your friends and families how great you are doing. Tell everyone when you pass a difficult test or complete a really challenging project. Get some little gold-star stickers, and put them on your mirror every time you receive a good grade.

And finally, do not forget to take time to relax and have some fun. You cannot put all your energy into studying, or you will burn out. A little downtime will allow you to recoup and will help you be more productive.



Please join Telamon in celebrating twenty years of service from dedicated employee, Robin Roark. Robin is the Homeownership Project Manager and works from Virginia’s Chatham office.

Robin said, “My passion is to help people and working with Telamon has allowed me to do so. I have enjoyed helping people purchase a home who thought they would never be able to do so.”

## State Director's Message

*(Continued from page 1)*

the U.S. with over 903,000 foreign-born residents and it continues to grow. A report published by The Commonwealth Institute entitled "Critical Assets: The State of Immigrants in Virginia's Economy," reveals several interesting facts about the foreign-born population in Virginia. Compared to the nation, Virginia's immigrants are more diverse in that no single country accounts for ten percent or more of the immigrant population. This is in stark contrast to other states in the South Atlantic region. In Virginia in 2010, the top country of origin was El Salvador followed by Mexico, India, Korea, and then Vietnam.

Not only are Virginia's immigrants among the most educated in the nation, but also, when compared to the native-born population, a larger share of them have college and graduate degrees. The report goes on to state that approximately three-quarters of immigrants in Virginia speak English well or very well. The report also found that immigrants constitute a major share of Virginia's workforce with about one out of every seven workers being foreign-born. Their median income in the past decade grew 6.1 percent and the poverty rate for immigrants in Virginia is lower than it is for the foreign-born nationwide and even lower than those born in Virginia.

While their employment by industry mirrors fairly closely

that of native-born Virginians, it differs from immigrants in other states. The above report states that "...while over 1 in 20 Virginia immigrants worked in public administration in 2010, only 1 in 44 immigrants nationwide did so. Likewise, the military employs more than 1 percent of foreign-born Virginians, but less than half a percent of immigrants nationally."

One interesting finding of the report is that although immigrants in Virginia work in all employment sectors, they are more likely to be entrepreneurs, representing about 17 percent of the state's business owners. Between 2000 and 2010, this population accounted for over 40 percent of Virginia's growth in entrepreneurship. This is remarkable when you factor in that immigrants made up just 11 percent of Virginia's population during that period.

It is clear that the foreign-born have been a major asset to Virginia's economic growth and success. They form a significant part of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, which makes Virginia competitive in attracting new businesses that foster economic progress. With an understanding of the critical asset that this population is to Virginia's economic vitality, it is hopeful that any policies enacted, which impact the foreign-born, will advance our economic growth, rather than impede it. For more comprehensive information on Virginia's immigrants, visit the following website [www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org](http://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org)

## Partners in Success

*(Continued from page 1)*

four year Bachelor's degree, Miguel decided it was best to complete an Associate's degree in electronics and get into the job market sooner. Even with the shorter path to graduation, Pell grants, and working part-time, Miguel did not have enough money to pay for college and support himself. With funding from the Department of Labor's National Farmworker Jobs Program, Telamon was able to assist Miguel financially.

Telamon assisted, coached, and advised Miguel; however, the real work was done by Miguel himself. Wanting more and eager for any opportunity, Miguel told me one day that he was interested in the Bay Aging youth program. Telamon and Bay Aging entered into a cooperative agreement to give Miguel real-life, paid experience for him to provide written translations of promotional materials. This Work Experience program gave Miguel a chance to earn income and also contribute to his community.

Throughout his college program, Miguel demonstrated commitment and dedication. He has completed all the necessary course work and plans to graduate in the March 2013 ceremony alongside his classmates. He provided the energy and the will, while Telamon provided guidance and support. Truly, his success is the result of several active partnerships.

## Telamon Welcomes New Employees



### **Betty Furman**

Field Service Representative  
South Boston (VA05)

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(434) 713-4276

Betty's office is located within the Workforce Services Suite at the Innovation Center on the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center campus. Betty will conduct outreach to farmworkers and help gauge demand for a new Telamon office in South Boston.

Betty is a Halifax County native from the Alton community. She has had a diverse career including eight years of service in the Army, working for a law firm in Austin, Texas, and starting a restaurant with her husband in New Orleans. In 2003, Betty and her husband moved back to Halifax County to care for a family member. She is excited about her new position and looks forward to being out in the community.

#### VA05 mailing address:

Telamon c/o Innovation Center  
Attn: Betty Furman  
820 Bruce Street  
South Boston, VA 24592

#### Physical location is:

605 Seymour Drive



### **Zugey Ramos**

Field Service Clerk  
Montross (VA18)

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Zugey is working with Sara Lopez in the Montross office to support operations and provide outreach.

Zugey says, "I am honored to be working for such an amazing organization. Since my first day on the job, I have seen how much help we provide to farmworkers. I know most of the farms and workers in this area. Most of my family members are farmworkers and I was once one myself. I have seen firsthand how they struggle. I believe farmworkers face many challenges and are more vulnerable to abuses because of the precarious nature of their employment. I accepted this job because I want to aid farmworkers in making better futures for themselves and their families. I am proud to be part of such a wonderful team and look forward to assisting farmworkers in the area with attaining greater economic stability."



### **Ana Nethken**

Workforce Development Specialist  
Harrisonburg (VA23)

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Ana is currently working by herself in our Harrisonburg office providing services to clients. We are still recruiting for another position to bolster service levels in Harrisonburg and will announce final staff decisions at a later date.

Ana is from Colombia, South America, and says, "I enjoy helping the community as a volunteer interpreter. I speak English and Spanish, and I am currently learning Arabic. I love cooking and I like inventing new recipes from my imagination. I enjoy basketball, soccer, yoga, tai-chi, wrestling, cycling, boating, and swimming. One of my passions is helping my husband restore classic cars. I love my family and my friends. I believe all human beings deserve respect, love, care, and support. I am very grateful to the creation to have the opportunity to live in one of the most beautiful places on earth, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia."