

DISTRICT 1199C
**Training &
Upgrading
Fund**



CONNECTIONS

NEWSLETTER

BRIDGE TO OPPORTUNITY

*Training Fund
apprenticeship
graduate
Brittany
Fowler, Quality
Assurance
Assistant at
PHMCC.*



Eight years ago, Brittany Fowler was a high school student struggling with poverty, wondering how to build a future.

After first graduating from District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund's Nursing Assistant Program and later from the inaugural year of the Training Fund's Registered Direct Support Apprenticeship Program, Fowler now works as a Quality Assurance Assistant at PHMCC. At age 24, Brittany has set her goal to become a mental health therapist.

With financial coaching from the Training Fund, Brittany recently reached another goal and moved into her own apartment.

"When they gave me the keys, I was so excited. Very, very excited," she said, her voice still shining at the memory. "I'm just thankful there are organizations like this that can really, really help you."

The combination of occupational training— from the ground floor up — coupled with career and financial counseling that Brittany received is the hallmark of the Training Fund's Bridges

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LETTERS

Dear Training Fund Community of Friends,

This year District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund is celebrating its 45th birthday. So much has changed during the decades – we are bigger than ever, serving thousands of students annually. Our facility includes our School of Practical Nursing. And we have won numerous national and local honors for our work.

But one thing has remained the same. Since we first opened our doors in September 1974, we have been committed to using high-quality education and training to help Philadelphians move onto a career pathway and into good, family-sustaining jobs. Our greatest rewards are the success stories of our students, just like the ones you'll read about in this first issue of our newsletter.

As the co-chairs of the Training Fund Board, we are proud of our storied history, but we are even more excited about the Training Fund remaining true to its mission to improve the lives of local residents – one student at a time.



CHERYL WHITFIELD
VICE PRESIDENT,
HUMAN RESOURCES
INGLIS HOUSE;
CO-CHAIR
TRAINING &
UPGRADING FUND



HENRY NICHOLAS
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL
UNION OF HOSPITAL AND
HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES,
DISTRICT 1199C;
CO-CHAIR, TRAINING &
UPGRADING FUND

The Training Fund offers so many opportunities – from credentialed occupational training in healthcare, human services and early childhood education to GED and college prep classes to college-degreed coursework. Every year we open our doors to 5,000 District 1199C members and community residents throughout southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey.

Since 2014, we have grown exciting apprenticeship programs for both healthcare workers and youth and adults who are entering the healthcare workforce. In partnership with committed employer partners, apprentices – supported by work site mentors – earn credits for competency-based on-the-job learning at the same time they are attending schools such as the Training Fund's Health & Technology Institute, Community College of Philadelphia, and Delaware County Community College.

We are also proud of the 100 plus District 1199C members who have obtained their Associate, Bachelor and Master Degrees from Thomas Jefferson University as well as the incredibly motivated students graduating from our accredited Practical Nursing Program.

A big thank you to District 1199C, our employer partners, educational partners, community partners such as the Local Initiatives Support Corp. (LISC), and the many government, philanthropic and banking partners that support our mission to serve workers and employers with high quality educational programming.

Please join me in giving appreciation to our committed and dedicated staff and faculty who go the extra mile to support students to succeed in achieving their goals.

Congratulations to each and every student on your achievements. We look forward to supporting you in taking steps to advance even further!



CHERYL FELDMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TRAINING &
UPGRADING FUND

EVENTS

Free tax help for 1199C union members, students and retirees:

Wednesdays (4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.), Saturdays (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) at Training Fund headquarters through March. Drop off service through March, and April 3, 10 for simpler returns (no more than two W-2s and up to three dependents). Information: Campaign for Working Families, 215-454-6483.

Citizenship Classes:

Mandatory information and registration, March 5, 9:30 a.m., at Training Fund headquarters; mandatory English language assessment, March 12, 9:30 a.m. Ten weeks of Tuesday and Thursday morning free classes begin March 14. Applicants must bring their Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) to registration. Lawyers will check eligibility. Textbook and CD cost \$28.00. Information: Arlyn Freed, 215-568-2580.

Sharing Our Heritage Day:

Students and teachers celebrate the diversity of students and staff with performances, speeches, skits and food. March 6, 10 a.m. to noon and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

High School Equivalency and Refresher Classes:

For classes beginning April 15, students must be assessed by March 15. Information: 215-568-2220.

Greater Philadelphia Healthcare Partnership:

Representatives from 120 regional employer, academic and workforce development organizations and District 1199C Training & Upgrading officials discuss workforce trends and current projects at the partnership's quarterly meeting, 8:30 a.m., April 24. Information: Susan B. Thomas, IP Director, sthomas@1199ctraining.org.

Achievement and Graduation Ceremony:

The Training & Upgrading Fund's annual celebration, a moving day for students, teachers and families, June 5, 7 p.m. at the Kimmel Center.

GRANT LINKS ALUMNI TO JOB, FINANCIAL HELP

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to Career Opportunities (BCO) program. What makes the BCO program valuable to employers and employees is that support does not end when students graduate onto a career pathway.

Last month, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a national nonprofit, announced their expanded national partnership with Citizens Bank's Citizens Charitable Foundation, and the support of a \$125,000 grant to the Training Fund to continue the critical supports that Brittany received as students train, gain employment, improve their financial situations, and build economic stability. With this investment, the Training Fund will focus on client retention to keep students on track to achieve their goals and to continuously serve their most pressing needs related to education, career advancement and money management.

Students stay connected to the Training Fund through emails, phone calls and face-to-face meetings. With one-on-one financial coaching, students improve credit scores, reduce debt and set financial goals, i.e. save for a car or a home. To advance professional goals, students get advice regarding training opportunities and career advancement. These supports work two-fold, benefitting students seeking employment and financial stability and employers seeking skilled and stable employees, thus to reduce turnover costs and improve workforce quality.

"We are extremely thankful for the opportunity to expand the Bridges to Career Opportunities program to include a focus on retention services supporting graduates of the Training Fund's occupational training programs as they transition successfully into new employment and navigate challenges they may face," said Cheryl Feldman, executive director of the Training Fund.

The grant is part of a national push by LISC and Citizens Bank to connect unemployed and underemployed workers in Philadelphia, Boston and Providence to education, training, career and financial coaching in fast-growing, family-sustaining fields, particularly healthcare.

"It is vital that we work together to ensure that people have the skills necessary to reach their potential in the economy of tomorrow," said Bruce Van Saun, CEO and Chairman of Citizens Financial Group.

In Philadelphia, where the Training Fund has been chosen to implement this program, the scope will focus on adult students, including English language learners, and future home health aides. After becoming home health aides, twelve students will receive scholarships to train for Nursing Assistant certification, placing them on a career pathway towards Registered Nursing (RN) and beyond.

"This retention idea is absolutely fantastic," said Erika Shearlds-Hill, the Training Fund's new Retention Specialist, a grant-funded position. "We're the listening ear. That is so crucial. Retention allows for barriers to be dropped and conversations to begin," responding to concerns and hopes of employers and students.

"Philadelphians are prepared to work hard to succeed; the key is to put reliable systems in place to aid them on their path to quality jobs. With the support of Citizen's Charitable Foundation, the Training Fund will equip residents with valuable job skills, financial education, and ongoing services to support their economic growth. When people are empowered to thrive, their communities benefit."

— Andrew Frishkoff, Executive Director of Philadelphia LISC.



Lamia Talab, left, and Hanadi Abdalla practice health care vocabulary during an English as a Second Language class at the Training Fund.

Shearlds-Hill sees her job as cementing relationships with longstanding Training Fund employer partners and cultivating new ones.

"There's always something more an employee needs that is going to be useful to an employer," she said. "Both are trying to get to the same thing. As an employee, I want to learn more. And employers can say, 'I have an employee who will not only bring longevity, but who will bring talents and creativity to the table.'"



Erika Shearlds-Hill, Training Fund Retention Specialist.

Shearlds-Hill also keeps in touch with Training Fund graduates and refers them to her BCO coaching counterparts — Mark Karcz, Career Coach; Nathaniel Dixon, Financial Counselor, and Stephanie Webb, Program Manager.

"I like how all the parts come together to serve the students long term and holistically, in an integrated way," Webb said. "We are able provide them with individualized coaching, integrating career and financial concepts into the classroom."

At the Training Fund, Lamia Talab and her future home health aide classmates can also practice English as a second language while gaining workplace expertise. For Talab, the class allows for a new life for her family in the United States, one that began when she arrived from Sudan in 2017.

Talab was here only ten days when disaster struck. Her husband had a heart attack but managed to dial 911 before falling unconscious. That left Talab, unable to speak English, struggling to cope with hospitals, doctors and overwhelming fear, while her husband remained unconscious for 10 days.

"I was a stranger in the country," she said. "I saw how kind the nurses were to him and how kind they were to me."

Her husband is recovering but remains out of work. Talab, who completed a master's degree in Arabic and worked as a kindergarten teacher while in Sudan, wants to advance in health care, where she is starting as a Home Health Aide. One day, she hopes to become a hospital nurse, able to be kind to a stranger from a foreign land.

"I want to improve myself," she said. "You have to use every second, every minute, to do your best, to learn more. This is a country of chances. This is a dream land."

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS: MIX KITCHEN, CLASSROOM SKILLS FOR JOBS

Down on the diamond, a Phillies pitcher will serve the first ball of the season, hoping for a win at the March 28 season opener at Citizens Bank Park.

Up in the luxury suites, it might be Hunter's' Chicken being served — this time by one of the All-Star graduates from District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund's newest Bridges to Career Opportunities (BCO) program, created in partnership with UNITE HERE Local 274 in Philadelphia.

Teaming with the Training Fund, UNITE HERE Philadelphia Hospitality Academy combines kitchen training skills with basic education for chefs. At the end of the free 120-hour program, the new chefs will receive chef uniforms and a set of professional knives, as well as nationally recognized culinary certifications.

The home run? Graduates are guaranteed \$15-an-hour jobs through baseball season, and perhaps beyond, with Aramark Corp., the ballpark caterer. Aramark provides catering at many other venues, schools and institutions.

At the Training Fund, students practice mathematics by doubling recipes and converting measurements. As a project, they plan a restaurant, building a professional vocabulary and industry know-how. They've already received career and financial coaching which will also be available in the future. Their kitchen training occurs at Murrell Dobbins Career and Technical High School, one of the School District of Philadelphia's community schools, designed to benefit the city's citizens during after-school hours.



Future chefs Donrell Evans, left, and Alexis Turner prepare a recipe. As graduates, they'll work in catering for Aramark Corp. at Citizens Bank Park.



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