



Submitted by Dianna Simar

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Providing pathways to success

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## **Sierra County Entrepreneurial Boot Camp**

WOW!!! This three day intensive training for business owners and perspective business owners was spectacular. The event was held in Loyalton on May 26th through May 28th. There were twenty four "enlistees", some coming from as far away as Grass Valley. The presenters spoke of various aspects of running a successful business and were able to work with many of the participants' one on one. They answered any questions and gave advice to increase the business owners' chances of success. The information disseminated ranged from how to start a new business to ideas for the self employed to invest for retirement.

This workshop was made possible with funds from WIRED and SED Corp (Sierra Economic Development Corporation). Brent Smith CEO of SEDCorp was the "commandant" for this event and did a great job of keeping everyone in line as well as entertained. Brent felt that Boot Camp was an appropriate name for this training as it involved a lot of rigorous work and long hours. Each "enlistee" went away with so much information that it was decided to have a follow up session to address any questions and concerns that popped up while implementing the skills learned in the workshop. This will also provide feedback for future workshops.

In speaking with local merchants in Loyalton the comments I received were consistently positive. Because we had enlistees from out of town who were patronizing local businesses for the three days, our local hotel was full for the 3 nights our restaurants picked up some extra business and the markets reported a bit of an increase as well. Merchants are all looking forward to the follow up session and hope we can hold future workshops in the area.

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## **JOB FAIR 2009**

The Sierra-Plumas Job Fair was held April 2nd at the Fire Hall in Graeagle. The turnout was remarkable for job seekers as well as employers. There were over a hundred job seekers in attendance as well as fifteen employers from around the area. The employers had the opportunity to speak with applicants and conduct interviews or set up appointments with potential employees for future interviews. Some of the local resorts depend on this job fair to hire for the upcoming summer season and were thrilled with the turn out of qualified applicants. Job seekers always appreciate being able to put in numerous job applications at one location as opposed to having to drive throughout our area to put in applications with potential employers. AFWD is happy to put this event on each year as a service to both the job seekers and employers.



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## *Sierra County Youth Success*

The Youth Program in Sierra County is going strong. Loyalton High School senior Daniel Perez is our latest youth success story. This remarkable young man initially came to us for help with his senior school project. This project is one of the requirements for graduation at Loyalton High. Each student must complete a senior project on a subject that is of interest to them but something that they have not done in the past. The project includes an eight page research paper as well as a public presentation that is judged by a panel of 4 judges made up of community members and the creation of a brochure marketing brochure on their subject. This project is extremely time consuming and a cause for much anxiety among the seniors.

Daniel chose to do his senior project on the culinary arts as he is considering a career as a chef and felt this would be a great opportunity to explore that field. Each student is required to have a mentor and spend a minimum of twenty hours with that mentor. Daniels mentor was Chef Louis Baeza from Casa Baeza in Truckee California. Daniel logged 35 hours with Louis learning the various aspects of being a chef. In addition Daniel chose to have a second mentor who could teach him the art of baking. His second mentor was Vicky Barney, owner of the Blue Moon Bakery in Loyalton. Vicki is locally well-known for her delicious pastries and deserts.

Daniel spent many hours working at the Sierra Work Connection writing and revising his research paper, creating his marketing brochure and practicing his presentation. In the end all this hard work paid off. I attended Daniels presentation for moral support and he did a great job overcoming his fear of public speaking and presenting his project. Daniel received a B on his project.

In addition, this youth also participated in a work experience sponsored by AFWD. Daniel was able to do this because as a senior he was not required to attend school full time and so had time for a part time job but was having difficulty finding employment as he had never held a job. We felt a work experience was just what this youth needed to transition into the work world. We placed him with one of our local employers, Sierra Kids Child Care Center. Initially Daniel was doing light maintenance and clean up. It was soon recognized that Daniel was great with the kids and it was amazing to see how the children responded to him. He was then able to assist with some of the activities at the center.

Daniel graduated from Loyalton High on June 12th. I was thrilled to attend his graduation and was so proud to see him walk across that stage and pick up his diploma. He is the first in his family to graduate from High School and his parents were obviously extremely proud of him. The work experience was completed successfully and Daniel is now employed at a local resort where he helps the chef prepare meals as well other duties as needed.

We are confident that Daniel will go on to know many other successes in his life and wish him all the luck in whatever he decides to do.

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## *Another Success Story*

Tim Spearing was laid off from Roberts Cabinets in Chilcoot when the company filed bankruptcy back in 2008. Tim was collecting unemployment but is not the type of guy that enjoys not being busy. He had been diligently looking for work on his own and was surprised that he was unable to find work since he had put in numerous job applications and spent many hours searching for employment. It soon became apparent that he needed extra help if he was going to compete in the slim job market. Originally Tim just wanted Sierra Work Connection to give him job leads as he figured he could do the rest. Unfortunately he was still not having any luck. His case manager at SWC counseled him on making his resume stand out among the many resumes that were received for each open position he applied for. We revised Tim's resume as well as polished his interviewing skills. Tim did a number of practice, as well as some actual, interviews. He was feeling good about the work we had done but was still unemployed.

When a temporary position came available at the local Sierra Pacific Industry power plant we immediately sent over Tims new and improved resume. Tim was called in to interview with management the following week. He was now confident with his interviewing abilities and was excited to use his new skills. Tim was hired as a temporary worker and when a full time position became available had already proven that he was a dependable and capable employee. Tim Spearing is now employed full time with benefits at SPI and couldn't be happier.

When this client originally came to us he had been out of work for several months and he was feeling quite discouraged. He credits the staff at Sierra Work Connection with keeping his spirits up and not letting him give up. We were happy to help and excited to see him back in the workforce.



***Congratulations Tim!!***

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### ***CWA Conference***

The California Workforce Associations annual conference was held in San Diego this year. AFWD Resource Coordinator, Dianna Simar, was in attendance as well as AFWD representatives from Lassen, Plumas, and Modoc counties. It was a terrific learning experience and a lot of fun for everyone. The conference this year focused on training for "green jobs" and the upcoming Summer Youth projects. The information we gathered from this conference will undoubtedly be very helpful in each of our counties as we continue to help our clients in a struggling economy.

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### ***ARRA Summer Youth Program***

The America Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) has provided us with a great opportunity to help our youth while stimulating the economy. Through this fantastic program we have been able to put nine Sierra County youth to work as well as provide some local employers with the help they need to get through the busy summer season.

As we all know our youth have limited opportunities to gain the valuable work experience needed to compete in today's tough job market. We hope that by providing this opportunity they will be better prepared to obtain and keep the jobs they seek in the future. Each participant will go through work readiness workshops as well as having the on the job experience.



Our youth had their first day on the job June 16th when we provided new hire and Life Skills training before sending them off to their prospective employer. They have only been on the job for couple weeks now but so far all reports are that they are doing great and we look forward to seeing the success stories in August at the end of the program.