

Helping People Succeed



In School, Work And Life.



The Right Environment

Head Start program addresses child's special needs in classroom

by Mike Blount

When she was born, doctors told Jenn-Jen and Gordon Owyang they were unsure if their daughter Katelyn would ever walk on her own, speak or even recognize them. But Katelyn, now 5 years old, is capable of all of those things and more.

While she has some challenges, Katelyn thrives in the Hillsdale Head Start full-inclusion preschool program, which provides support for children with disabilities so they can be in a traditional preschool environment with their peers. Seeing the progress Katelyn has made gives Jenn-Jen and Gordon all the reassurance they need that their daughter is in the right place.

“THIS ENVIRONMENT IS REALLY THE PERFECT ENVIRONMENT FOR HER.”

JENN-JEN OWYANG

Early on, there were complications as Katelyn and her twin sister, Daria, came 15 weeks early in January 2008. Katelyn was in critical condition because of an internal bleed from her brain and put on life support.

“The doctor basically told us we could stop the life support if we wanted to a week after she was born because her brain bleed was so severe. They weren't sure what her quality of life would be,” Jenn-Jen says. “But neither my husband nor I felt that that was our choice to make — to let her live or die.”

While Daria eventually stabilized, Katelyn's condition worsened. She weighed just 1 pound and 7 ounces, and doctors told the parents they would have to operate. In total, she had eight surgeries and stayed in the hospital for three-and-a-half months. But Katelyn continued to fight until she was healthy enough to come home.

Today, Katelyn is continuing to overcome obstacles at Hillsdale Head Start. When she first arrived in the program, she used a walker to help her get around. But teachers helped her learn to walk without one.

At other times, Katelyn challenges herself. As a result of watching her classmates, she expressed interest in



Jenn-Jen and her daughter Katelyn spend time together on the playground.

learning how to eat on her own using silverware. Teachers at Hillsdale worked with Katelyn to help her achieve that goal through coaching. Jenn-Jen says she likes the program because it allows Katelyn to be independent, while still addressing her individual needs.

“This environment is really the perfect environment for her,” Jenn-Jen says. “I really believe she has made so much progress because she has that freedom to challenge herself while she is learning.”

INCLUSIVE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The Hillsdale Head Start full-inclusion preschool program provides support for children with disabilities in a “typical” preschool environment — allowing students to be independent, while still addressing their individual needs. Classes consist of 20 typically developing students, with four students that are given special education support. Teachers and para-educators work together to support all children enrolled in the program. The Hillsdale Head Start inclusive preschool program is a collaboration with the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) and the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE). **MB**

The Sacramento Employment & Training Agency

The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) works to help disadvantaged people and prevent people from becoming disadvantaged by giving them the tools they need to thrive. SETA prepares people for success in school, work and life through

its programs Head Start and Sacramento Works. Since 1978, SETA, Head Start and Sacramento Works have improved the lives of people in the Sacramento area through skill development and occupational training, employment search assistance, family and

GIVING SACRAMENTANS THE TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

child development, emergency assistance, refugee and youth services. These services not only improve the lives of individuals and their families, but strengthen our community at large.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SETA



PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES

Head Start builds a foundation for children entering school.

Teacher Alli Robin prepares children for school at SETA Head Start Sharon Neese Learning Center.

The Building Blocks of Success

Head Start prepares children for school

by Kendall Fields

Every morning Alli Robin arrives a little early to prepare her classroom for 20 students and a new day.

Robin, who is affectionately referred to as Teacher Alli, is a lead teacher at the Sharon Neese Early Learning Center off of Del Paso Boulevard. Robin has been teaching at Head Start for nearly four years and says her job is so rewarding because she gets to work with children in their most important developmental years and set them up for success in school and life. “Every day is new and it’s exciting because I get to see my children grow.”

Head Start’s goal is to prepare children for school socially and emotionally. “It’s not just teaching ABC’s and 123’s, it’s teaching how to be independent and how to succeed in life,” Robin says.

To achieve school readiness, Robin explains how Head Start focuses on the whole child and the whole family, implementing strategies for children to succeed in the classroom that can be applied at home. Head Start’s strategy to focus on the whole child is especially important since it serves low-income families with children who may not have access to health care, nutritious meals or

a safe environment. Robin says staff at centers like Sharon Neese help address these concerns so the children and their families can focus on laying a good foundation for school.

“At Head Start, we are working to make sure every child has the best education and best care possible — and that is not limited to the classroom,” Robin says. Head Start gives parents incentives to find a career or go back to school. According to Robin, the belief is that children will do better when their parents are doing better.

When children exhibit behavioral issues, Head Start is equipped to intervene. Robin, who earned a master’s in Early Childhood Education at Sacramento

State, developed a project that focused on techniques to improve staff teaching methods and child behaviors. SETA Head Start uses strategies and techniques from the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) to support children’s behavior and expectations. “We are constantly growing and looking for ways to help our children grow.”

But for Robin, the true measure of success is when she hears back from parents who have had children graduate from the Head Start program. “When I hear back from parents and I get to see how my [former] students are succeeding in school, I feel like I’ve done a good job.”

WHAT IS SCHOOL READINESS?

Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. The Head Start approach to school readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and schools are ready for children. Head Start is a leader in the early childhood education field with a strong, clear and comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy development, including physical, cognitive, and social and emotional development — all of which are essential to children getting ready for school.

For more information on school readiness, go to Head Start’s website www.headstart.seta.net.

“IT’S NOT JUST TEACHING ABC’S AND 123’S, IT’S TEACHING HOW TO BE INDEPENDENT AND HOW TO SUCCEED IN LIFE.”

ALLI ROBIN Lead Teacher, SETA Head Start

Starting A New Life

by Kendall Fields

Head Start helps woman with more than just child care

For years Tracy* wondered why she deserved to be choked, hit, kicked and isolated by her husband. *What did she do wrong?*

Once she and her son escaped from the town they were living in, Tracy moved in with her parents in California and tried to start a new life with her son. She didn't know how to be a parent — she had no voice, no confidence and lived in fear that somehow her husband would find her and kill her. But her love for her son and a desire to give him a better life inspired Tracy to get help.

After witnessing his father abuse his mother for three years, Tracy's son, Trevor*, starting exhibiting signs of aggression and would lash out at Tracy. Worried, Tracy looked for help. A friend encouraged her to reach out to the Head

Start program through the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency. When she contacted Head Start, not only was Trevor immediately welcomed, but Tracy was ushered in and supported as she reconstructed her life. "Head Start looks at the whole family — not just the child — and that was important because it helped mend our relationship," Tracy says.

Head Start staff came to Tracy's house in 2009 to ease Trevor into a child care setting and to help Tracy learn parenting skills. Then Trevor transitioned to a Head Start facility. Head Start teachers worked with Trevor to control his anger and taught Tracy techniques to do the same at home. "Head Start even helped me go to a conference where I learned ways to channel my son's energy," Tracy says.

As Trevor blossomed in the Head Start program, Tracy was changing, too. The once meek and uncertain woman who would barely lift her eyes when talking to people was finding a support network of Head Start parents and staff. Head Start helped Tracy find financial aid to go to school where she realized she wanted to be a photographer.

Today, Tracy lights up when she talks about Trevor and the progress he has made. "We have come such a long way," she says with a sigh of relief. "I don't know how we would have gotten here without the help of Head Start."

While Trevor is excelling in elementary school, Tracy is taking classes at her local community college in hopes of becoming a photographer. She has already won several awards for her photos. She continues to stay in touch with staff at Head Start and update them on Trevor's progress.

**Names have been changed to protect identities.*

"HEAD START LOOKS AT THE WHOLE FAMILY—NOT JUST THE CHILD—AND THAT WAS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT HELPED MEND OUR RELATIONSHIP."

TRACY*



PHOTO BY ANNE STOKES

After escaping an abusive environment, Tracy* and her son Trevor* built a new life with the help of Head Start.

SUPPORT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

The SETA Head Start program provides more than just helping young children get ready for school. Comprehensive services offer support for the whole family. SETA's Family Engagement Manager Lisa Carr says the program is based on the belief that parents are their children's first teacher — and if parents are succeeding, their children will thrive. Head Start supports the whole family by offering parenting classes and career incentives for families who go back to school, connecting families to health and dental care, and providing early-intervention services. "[Head Start] is a comprehensive program because it is not just about getting a child ready for kindergarten, it is about working with the entire family — it is about where they are and what they want for their family," Carr says, adding that when you make a difference for parents, it is going to support children's efforts in school. **KF**

Skills To Get A Job And Succeed

by Kendall Fields

Sacramento Works Career Center trains youth for workforce

Darrell Jackson knew he was blowing the job interview. He wanted the sales position at a local home improvement store, but was so nervous he wasn't completing his sentences. The hiring manager even had to stop him at one point so he could regroup. But in that moment, Jackson took a deep breath and remembered the months of training and interview techniques he'd learned through an out-of-school youth program and restarted. *Make eye contact. Keep hands out of pockets. Respond to each question. Breathe.*

Six months earlier Jackson came to the Sacramento Works Career Center after losing his job at a fast food restaurant. The young adult, who moved out of his aunt's house as soon as he turned 18 to have independence, was desperate to regain self-sufficiency. He also wanted to have a job with room for growth, but since he hadn't completed high school, he felt he lacked the basic skills required to even apply at most companies.

At the career center, Jackson started building his résumé, working on computers and learning what to do in a job interview. With help from career center staff and staff at North State Building Industry Foundation, a nonprofit that partners with Sacramento Works to place out-of-school youth in construction jobs, Jackson earned his GED. With all of his new skills and the completion of his GED, Jackson's confidence improved and it wasn't long before he had that first job interview for the home improvement store's lumber department. Jackson says his training through the career center and coaching through the Building Industry Foundation helped him salvage the interview and get the sales associate job in the lumber department. Those skills, he says, also helped him get promoted three times in his

first year of work for the company. "This program is something that, as long as you are willing to put in the time, there is an unlimited amount of options to help," Jackson says.

"THIS PROGRAM IS SOMETHING THAT AS LONG AS YOU ARE WILLING TO PUT IN THE TIME, THERE IS AN UNLIMITED AMOUNT OF OPTIONS TO HELP."

DARRELL JACKSON

Now Jackson is known for his strong focus and hard work. The same manager that asked Jackson to restart his interview pushes him to keep up his good work. He says he is on the fast track to becoming a supervisor at the store and hopes that this experience will further his dream of getting his bachelor's degree in business. "I've come a long way and I'm glad to be where I'm at. ... The platform I set for my goals is higher now and I'm closer to achieving my goals."

Darrell Jackson learned skills that helped him get a job from training at a Sacramento Works career center.

CREATING THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) In-School Youth Program aims to help students complete their education and attain skills to go to college or get a career. The SETA-run program is based on a collaboration between Sacramento Works One Stop Centers and various agencies in the community. The program serves both in-school and out-of-school youth aged 16 to 21 to create résumés, learn interview techniques, find a job and go to college. SETA's Workforce Development Manager Christine Welsch says the program is designed to help youth navigate the system and find stability in the workforce. Too many of the young people who come to the program don't have the opportunities or support that others may have to succeed in life or at school, Welsch explains. She adds the youth program is designed to give students the support they need to succeed and become valuable members of the workforce. "The youth are our future. Without a skilled and a ready workforce we are going to be in a world of hurt." **KF**

PHOTO BY PRISCILLA GARCIA

A Chance To Change

by Mike Blount

Ex-felon turns life around with Sacramento Works

After spending 11-and-a-half years in prison, James Dupree wanted more than a life behind bars. But first he had to escape the streets and the lifestyle that once sent him there. To Dupree, an education was the key. He just needed the opportunity.

The first night he was out of prison, he slept at a local mission. He had no family to rely on, no money, no friends. Dupree says the experience was humbling and kept him motivated to go back to school.

“That was worse than prison to me — seeing people of all races filthy, dirty and starving,” Dupree says. “It was just one night, but I knew I couldn’t go back there. I had to keep moving forward.”

Dupree went to his parole officer the next day and received a list of addresses. He eventually found a place to stay and enrolled in classes at Cosumnes River College, but making ends meet was a problem because no one would hire an ex-convict.

Being in prison made a lot of doors automatically close for Dupree. Each time he had to fill out a job application, he felt like he was at a severe disadvantage because he had to reveal that he had served time.

While venting his frustration to a classmate, Dupree learned about Sacramento Works. Through a local One Stop Center — which provides career counseling, employment referral, vocational training and other resource services to assist individuals in obtaining employment — he received temporary rental assistance so he could continue to have a stable place to live while he was in school. He also found his calling and changed his major to construction through career counseling.

“Within 60 days, things started turning around, and I could start seeing that there was something at the end of the tunnel if I stayed with Sacramento Works,” Dupree says. “If I just follow the rules that they had for me and the rules I set for myself, I can make it happen.”

Because of the assistance he received from Sacramento Works, Dupree is on track to graduate in May with an associate degree in construction. He has earned two training certificates in green construction and even found employment in his degree field with Angel’s Handyman Services. Dupree says that he is thankful he was able to utilize the One Stop system because he is now a productive member of society.

“If anyone comes home from prison and they don’t have the support system of something like Sacramento Works, it’s setting the person up for an opportunity to go back, and it’s sad,” Dupree says. “[With Sacramento Works] I changed my life from doing time to doing life. And now that I’m doing life, it’s beautiful.”

“I CHANGED MY LIFE FROM DOING TIME TO DOING LIFE. AND NOW THAT I’M DOING LIFE, IT’S BEAUTIFUL.”

JAMES DUPREE



PHOTO BY MIKE BLOUNT

James Dupree changed his life after being released from prison by working with a Sacramento Works One Stop Center.

SACRAMENTO WORKS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Sacramento Works offers a variety of services to job seekers to fit their needs through a network of One Stop Centers. One Stop Centers are conveniently located throughout Sacramento County and provide assessments, career and technical training, job coaching and career counseling, employment networking, and job seeker and employment workshops. Sacramento Works aims to build a dynamic workforce for the Sacramento Region by partnering with the workforce community to serve regional employment needs. **MB**

For more information, visit www.sacramentoworks.org

Securing A Job With New Skills

Sacramento Works Career Center helps woman find employment

by Kendall Fields

At 5:30 on a Friday evening in 2011, Ingrid Royston started her life over. That's when she arrived at a friend's house after ending a troubled relationship.

But it was difficult to rebuild her life, Royston says, because she was unemployed. She worked in the security industry in years past, but did not have the training needed to get hired in the current market.

"I DON'T KNOW HOW I WOULD HAVE GOTTEN HERE IF IT WASN'T FOR MY JOB COACH AND THE PEOPLE AT THE CAREER CENTER."

INGRID ROYSTON

Royston remembered going to a Sacramento Works One Stop Center once before and looked for one closer to her new home. She met with a job coach who helped her apply for the Workforce Investment Act program to get the skills she needed for a job. The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency even helped Royston find scholarships to pay for her security training and all of the equipment. In a little more than a month, Royston completed

her training, learned new computer skills, updated her résumé and practiced interviewing. She was ready to search for a job.

Every day for five months Royston went to the career center to look for jobs. "I just had to be patient. ... Finding a job is hard work, especially in today's world. But I kept at it with the encouragement of the [people] at the career center," Royston says.

Finally, Royston found a contract job as a security officer for one of the career centers. She worked there for nine months, taking on more responsibilities and feeling empowered as she helped people. Royston says working at the career center not only helped her gain experience, but increased her knowledge of the workforce as she was in such close contact with job coaches. "When I started looking for a new job, the staff was so supportive," Ingrid recalls. "They would send me information about job openings and helped me by doing mock interviews."

Royston's confidence, new skills and up-to-date training helped her get her current security job at the corporate office for a major construction company. In February 2012, Royston was hired as the first and only female security officer for the company. "I love my job because of the independence that I feel while doing it," Royston says. "I don't know how I would have gotten here if it wasn't for my job coach and the people at the career center. They helped me become a whole new person — a happy person."

With the financial security of having a steady job, Royston says she is looking into going to college to earn a degree in criminal justice. She hopes to work with troubled youth and inspire them to improve their lives.



Ingrid Royston gained skills to become a security guard through a Sacramento Works One Stop Center.

FINDING A NEW JOB

Sacramento Works Career Centers provide services to give people new opportunities after losing a job. The career centers retrain dislocated workers, building on existing skills or teaching new ones. "We want each person who comes to us to get back to work as soon as possible," says SETA's Workforce Development Manager William Walker. The goal is to help dislocated workers gain employment within three to six months, Walker explains, earning at least 85 percent of their previous wages. To accomplish this, career centers help prospective employees with everything from creating a resume to job interview techniques. Walker says the Employer Services staff collect job orders from employers and match them to qualified dislocated workers for employment referral. **KF**

For more information on the dislocated worker program, visit www.sacramentoworks.org.

Helping People Thrive

SETA provides resources to improve lives of low-income people

Competing for a job, finding child care or affording health care can seem like insurmountable tasks in the wake of poverty. In an effort to reduce the effects of poverty, the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) empowers low-income families and individuals to become self-sufficient by providing resources to help them thrive.

As the designated Community Action Agency for Sacramento County, SETA ensures that families are connected to the resources needed to alleviate conditions of poverty. SETA's Community Services programs are meant to stabilize and promote economic security and are available to low-income families throughout the county, with a special focus on serving at-risk youth, homeless individuals, frail elderly and those who are disabled. In addition, SETA leverages community service and workforce funding to maximize services to the county's most vulnerable populations. For example, subsidized employment has enabled many long-term welfare recipients to reduce their dependency on public assistance; chronically homeless individuals have been offered their first job in years through an On-the-Job Training Program.

SETA serves the Sacramento community, connecting people to jobs, connecting business owners to employees, connecting children with education and nutrition resources, and connecting refugees with relocation assistance and services — in the process, providing hope to many Sacramento-area residents.

SETA works with a variety of community-based organizations with expertise in serving refugees and provides English-as-a-Second-Language, Employment Services, as well as social adjustment and acculturation services. In addition, SETA manages the Sacramento Rescue & Restore Coalition, a network of service providers, community-based

organizations, state and local government agencies and educational institutions addressing human trafficking in the Sacramento community.

In its effort to improve the community as a whole, SETA's programs are designed to cover all aspects of a struggling resident's life — from finding a job to child care. SETA aims to improve the workforce by training individuals and helping them find jobs — and keep them.

SETA OFFERS A DIVERSE LIST OF SERVICES THAT STRENGTHEN AND BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY.

Developing Sacramento's workforce starts with ensuring that children get the right education and care. SETA manages the Head Start Program, which provides early-childhood learning in Sacramento County. Head Start provides children from low-income families and those with special needs with quality child development services. Head Start/Early Head Start serves Sacramento County children ages zero through 5 and their families each year.

Head Start and Early Head Start support the growth of children, families and staff through encouragement, education and empowerment. Parents are involved in the operation and administration of the program and learn

leadership and advocacy skills as they become involved in their communities.

SETA strives to provide opportunities for youth to gain valuable work experience and skills. To do this SETA provides employment and education programs for youth in Sacramento County, with special emphasis on programs serving high risk youth, including programs targeting foster youth, disabled youth and youth in the criminal justice system. SETA sponsors an annual Sacramento Works for Youth Initiative, which offers teenagers job skills workshops, job fairs and summer employment opportunities.

SETA's workforce development program, Sacramento Works, brings businesses, labor, education and public agencies together to ensure qualified and trained workers are available to meet the needs of the region's economy. The organization identifies industries that are critical to the future growth of the region and focuses its resources to ensure there is a healthy supply of well-trained workers available to meet that industry's needs.

Through the network of One Stop Centers, Sacramento Works provides a full range of services, including employment, training and education services for job seekers. Job seekers who visit the One Stop Center will first complete a skills assessment, guided by expert team members. Sacramento Works One Stop Center team members then work with job seekers to strengthen skills that are most in demand, provide one-on-one assistance to help job seekers find and apply for employment best suited to individual skill sets.

Sacramento Works not only works with employees, but employers as well, assisting companies with their recruiting, training and outplacement needs.

SETA's programs work together in many cases to fulfill the agency's mission and help more people. For example, Head Start

teamed with the One Stop Centers to promote employment and training programs to help parents become self-sufficient.

SETA offers a diverse list of services that strengthen and benefit the community. SETA programs work together to change lives, from nurturing the region's youth and preparing them for a brighter future, to matching workers with employers, to helping families and individuals in need move toward self-sufficiency.

PREPARING PEOPLE FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL, WORK AND LIFE.



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