



United Way aids jobs program for Morris County's casual laborers, workers

By Independent Press

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Need a painter for a small job or a waitress for a large party, the Pathways to Work (PTW) may just have the person you are looking for.

United Way of Morris County's Board of Directors has approved a special grant of \$20,000 to support Pathways to Work. This new referral service was established to connect people in need of daily, seasonal, or temporary employment — called casual laborers — with employers who need skilled or unskilled labor.

PTW is an initiative sponsored and supported by a coalition of community and faith-based groups who have come together to provide a way to link day laborers with employers, whether they be contractors, small businesses, or homeowners.

PTW worker's center is located at Morristown Neighborhood House at 12 Flagler Street in Morristown. The referral service is free and open seven days a week. Compensation and terms are negotiated by the employer and the prospective employee, but translators are available when necessary to make communication more comfortable. Currently, many skilled and unskilled workers are enrolled in this program, offering employers access to painters, gardeners, carpenters, masons, etc.

To register as a casual laborer, or to hire a worker log on to pathwaystoworkers.org or call Rosa Chilquillo, project coordinator at Morristown Neighborhood House, at 973-647-8495.

"In the current economy, there is a great need for jobs programs like Pathways to Work," said David Walker, CEO of Morristown Neighborhood House. "Although this program is still in its infancy, a very diverse group of women and men who registered at Pathways to Work have already landed jobs. It is wonderful that we are able to help people obtain temporary work as a possible route to long term employment.

Casual laborers are women and men without fulltime jobs who seek temporary work to support themselves and their families. This type of employment activity has always existed, but the number of people forced into casual labor has increased in recent years. While the majority of casual laborers are immigrants and refugees, some are born in the US. These individuals are all looking for the same, simple thing — jobs which garner fair wages, safe work conditions, and employers who treat them with respect.

PTW was established in an effort to offer a safe location for casual laborers to congregate while they wait for work placement thus discouraging pickup sites — street corners, vacant lots, and shopping centers — which have proliferated in the Morristown area and become a concern for the community. But PTW does more than just refer and connect casual laborers. This unique program offers its registered workers access to education and training in areas such as job skills, language, safety, civics, workers' rights and duties.

"United Way of Morris County commends Morristown Neighborhood House and the Morristown Area Clergy Council for stepping up to meet this growing need in our communities by establishing Pathways to Work," said John Franklin, CEO of United Way of Morris County. "No one can lead a stable life and support their family without a stable income. Pathways provides not only a fair wage, but opportunities for education and training in various aspects of life. With this training, some of these individuals will move on to attain fulltime jobs. This service that Morristown Neighborhood House provides for this community is essential."

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