



## NEWS RELEASE

### Workforce Development Board

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## 120 opening announces in Workforce Investment Board Program to boost youth employment



*Homeless mother-of-two and local entrepreneur praise program for helping them succeed*

**SAN BERNARDINO (November 12, 2014)** — Single mom Theresa Acevedo is living in a homeless shelter with her two young children but says life is great and she's excited for the future.

She is employed and is studying to complete her high school diploma, with the goal of going to college to attain a business degree.

Theresa is part of the Youth Program supported by the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board (WIB.)

This week, the WIB announced that there is still room for 120 young people, aged 17 to 21, to join the program and develop a successful career.

"For the first time in my life, I have a true support network and I am working hard to make a better life for myself and my children," said 21-year-old Theresa. "Those involved in this program have become like a family to me. I used to feel I had no one to turn to for help, but now I have so much encouragement and support from everyone here."

Last year, the WIB's Youth Program helped 1,245 young adults obtain work-readiness qualifications, new occupational skills or find employment. Eighty percent of those participating were either placed in a job or enrolled in higher education, while 75 percent earned a high school diploma, GED, vocational certification, or degree.

"In addition to career services and job placement, participants can also receive help with transportation costs, work attire, childcare and school supplies. It's a fantastic opportunity for young people to create a better future," said Bradley Gates, Deputy Director with the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board. "We have already enrolled hundreds of young people across San Bernardino County since the summer, but luckily, we still have 120 spaces available, most of them in the Rialto, Fontana, and Colton area," added Gates.

Another steadfast advocate of the WIB Youth Program is Karyn Chapman who is now a successful entrepreneur. She first received help from WIB services when she was 14 and failing school. With support from WIB programs, she graduated from a charter academy and went on to obtain a Bachelor of Arts, and a Master's degree. Chapman became a qualified tax specialist and launched her own business.

"Without the guidance from the Workforce Investment Board program, I would not have mustered the drive and vision to achieve any of this. My mentors made me feel I was important, and taught me that I did not have to allow my environment and family circumstances to stop me from achieving a good education and making a difference."

She added, "The youth program shaped me into the person I am today and I am always determined to do better."

Sandy Harmsen, Executive Director of the Workforce Investment Board, says there are hundreds of success stories like Theresa's and Karyn's.

"We understand there can be challenges for young people trying to find a job or improve their prospects, which is why we are doing all we can to provide them with opportunities to move them in the right direction."

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chair, Janice Rutherford added, "The WIB is making a difference in people's lives by giving young people in our community a chance to develop the skills and work experience they need to find careers. I applaud Theresa and Karyn for their accomplishments and encourage other young people to follow their lead."

Anyone interested in the youth program can find out about eligibility/availability by