



NEWS RELEASE

Workforce Development Board

December 14, 2015

CONTACT:

Sandy Harmsen
Executive Director
909-387-9862

sharmsen@wdd.sbcounty.gov

Youth builds career with help from Workforce Investment



San Bernardino, CA – Brandon Mason attributes his career in healthcare to the opportunities provided to him by the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board (WIB).

The shy, gentle-natured 21-year-old man was raised by a single mother and completed high school with aspirations of becoming a physician. He enrolled in San Bernardino Valley College where he soon changed course and decided to pursue nursing.

It was the devastating diagnosis of his mother's breast cancer that compelled Mason to step away from the Certified Nursing Assistant program and find employment to support his mother and two younger siblings.

During his tenure as janitor at a local amusement park, his hopes of pursuing the nursing degree began to fade until he learned of the WIB Youth Program. This program is designed to help youth ages 16 to 24 enhance job skills, develop leadership qualities, explore career options and take advantage of paid internships available to help them build experience.

He enrolled in the program through Provisional Accelerated Learning Center in San Bernardino in December 2014 and took the opportunity to complete vocational training at Summit College. Today, Mason is a Certified Nursing Assistant and employed full-time at Hacienda Heights Healthcare and Wellness.

"The Youth Program helped get me to where I am now," Mason said. "I don't know what I'd be doing today, honestly, if it wasn't for the program, and I am grateful for all the things people involved did to help me."

Mason intends to reach out to the WIB in the near future to seek assistance in pursuing a Licensed Vocational Nurse degree back at Summit College.

"We strive to achieve success stories like Mason's in San Bernardino County, as it reflects our Countywide Vision of a vibrant economy with a skilled workforce," said James Ramos, Chairman of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. "This Youth Program is just one of the innumerable services available to San Bernardino County residents that provide resources and support to realize long-term success."

Other services provided at no cost include skills assessment, career counseling, job training and placement, resume assistance and interview training, and access to computers, printers, faxes and telephones.

"We have seen a high success rate of participants in our Youth Program securing employment after completing the program," said Sandy Harmsen, Executive Director of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board. "The program takes a comprehensive approach in helping youth ages 16 to 24 enhance their job skills, develop leadership qualities, explore career options and take advantage of work experience opportunities."