



NEWS RELEASE

Workforce Development Board

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HR manager stays connected to WDB after landing new role

Heather McDougall worked in human resources most of her professional career, so when she was laid off from her job at a nonprofit organization in early 2017, she knew there were places she could turn to for help.

Among her first stops was the East Valley America's Job Center of California (AJCC), one of three employment centers operated by the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB) to help job seekers through training and placement services.

"I had to do whatever I could to keep us afloat," said McDougall, a single mother with two children at home at the time. "The AJCC was such a great place to have as a resource. I was able to attend job fairs and workshops. I enjoyed it so much I went back every couple days to update my resume and see what kind of job leads had come up."

Her participation in San Bernardino County's Work Experience (WEX) program helped her explore new skillsets and career possibilities, while working part-time at the AJCC.

"I was thinking of possibly changing my career path. I found that with my (human resources) background, I could be a really good resource for people who had experienced a job loss or looking for work," McDougall said.

Soon, her work with AJCC led to an interview at Garner Holt Productions, the San Bernardino-based animatronics company. Hired as human resources manager, McDougall stays closely connected with AJCC and the WDB – using the agency's On-The-Job Training (OJT) resources to help Garner Holt find and train new employees for the company's newly established and rapidly expanding education company, Garner Holt Education through Imagination. McDougall worked in collaboration with the Education company to sponsor seven students through WDB's GenerationGo! Career Pathways program.

Tony Myrell, WDB Chairman, said McDougall's story underscores the far-reaching impact that the agency and its AJCCs have on job seekers and businesses throughout San Bernardino County.

"Heather's experience is very inspiring, she received the help she needed at a vulnerable point in her life, and now is helping others explore new career options and land on their feet. In the



process, too, she is helping her company find qualified people to do the highly specialized work that Garner Holt is known for worldwide,” Myrell said.

McDougall said the situation could not have worked out better.

“As scary as it was to get laid off, the AJCC really was a great experience,” she said. “Fabulous and amazing things are happening there, helping people from all walks of life.”

For a manager or executive who has lost his or her job, “part of it is being humbled a little bit and being willing to learn something new. But once you do that, you see how many new opportunities there are.”

About the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board

The San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is comprised of private business representatives and public partners appointed by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. The WDB strives to strengthen the skills of the county’s workforce through partnerships with business, education and community-based organizations. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is committed to providing County resources, which generate jobs and investment in line with the [Countywide Vision](#).

The Workforce Development Board, through the San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency and Workforce Development Department, offers a variety of programs designed to help youth and adults identify career pathways and get the appropriate training and skills. Programs funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provide eligible youth, ages 16 to 24, access to a variety of career and educational services designed to help enhance job skills, develop leadership qualities, explore career options, participate in adult and peer mentoring opportunities, and take advantage of work experiences. In addition, the WDB operates San Bernardino County’s three America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC). The AJCCs provide individuals with job training, placement and the tools to strengthen their skills to achieve a higher quality of life. The AJCCs also support and provide services to the county’s businesses, including employee recruitment and business retention programs.

Employers and job seekers who are interested in the Workforce Development Board programs may call: (800) 451-JOBS or visit www.sbcounty.gov/workforce. Also follow us on: Facebook www.facebook.com/SBCountyWDB; Twitter [@InlandEmpireJob](https://twitter.com/InlandEmpireJob); LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sanbernardinocountywdb>; and YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/SBCountyWIB>.