

Getting People Ready for the Workforce

United Way of Gaston County is proud to serve this great community. Over the past three weeks, I have shared with you the work that is being done in our four impact areas: promoting health and wellness, helping children and youth succeed and providing for the elderly. This week we will look at the last area of the four: improving individual's employability.

The goal of improving employability is that every individual in our community has the skills, opportunities and support to achieve and sustain economic self-sufficiency to meet his or her basic needs. The priority funding areas are programs that provide adult literacy services, programs that assist with transportation (on a temporary basis) for those individuals who are actively participating in a job skills training program or who are newly employed and programs that assist low to moderate income individuals who are employed with affordable child care.

One of the programs that we support is Gaston Literacy Council's literacy program. This agency is the primary provider of literacy services and advocacy for Gaston County. Their literacy program is committed to helping individuals develop the ability to clearly read, write and speak English on a level necessary to develop one's knowledge and potential, compute and solve problems, achieve individual goals and function in an English-speaking society. The literacy council offers one-on-one and small group tutoring for emerging adult readers, small group instruction in pre-GED and English as a second language curriculums and reading soul mates, an enhanced mentoring program for children in grades 1 – 3 at risk of failing grades.

There are many other United Way funded programs that are all committed to improving individual's employability: Alliance for Children and Youth's Communities In Schools and Advocacy, Piedmont Council – Boy Scouts of America's Learning for Life-Building Tomorrow's Workforce Today, Consumer Credit Counseling through Family Service, Inc., Salvation Army's Center for Hope and Emergency Assistance and Summer Camp and After School Financial Assistance through the Gaston County Family YMCA. Also, Cherryville Area Ministries and Mt. Holly Community Relief Organization offer Emergency Assistance programs to help people with utility bills, provide food, clothing, household goods and appliances and money to purchase medications.

Great work is happening in Gaston County to improve people's skills and allow them to be more prepared to enter into our workforce. Your commitment and financial investment in the United Way of Gaston County makes the support of these programs possible. We are thankful for you and will continue to fund programs that address the priority areas of promoting health and wellness, helping children and youth succeed, providing for the elderly and improving individual's employability. For more information on any of these programs listed

above and to read program success stories, please visit our website at www.unitedwaygaston.org.