

SLATE Update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (SLATE)



Francis G. Slay, Mayor



ST. LOUIS AGENCY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

SLATE
americanjobcenter

Michael K. Holmes, Executive Director

www.stlworks.com

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1 Youth Summer Jobs
- 2 Construction Skills Training
- 3 Entrepreneurial Success
- 4 New Local Veterans Representative and More

SLATE Update is a monthly newsletter produced by the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE), a unit of St. Louis City government helping match area job seekers with businesses through a variety of no-cost services.

The purpose of this publication is to share the progress and outcomes of our many programs, and will be of special interest to legislators, Workforce Investment Board members, vendors, partners, educational institutions, other public agencies or anyone with an interest in workforce development.

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CITI FOUNDATION SUPPORTS SUMMER JOBS FOR ST. LOUIS YOUTH

A press conference was held on April 27 at St. Louis City Hall to celebrate exciting news for the STL Youth Jobs summer employment program in 2015. The Citi Foundation and the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund (CFE Fund) had previously announced St. Louis City's selection as one of the newest communities to join Summer Jobs Connect. This nationwide program provides low-

income youth with summer work experience, access to financial education and appropriate financial services. Representatives of Citibank presented the City of St. Louis and Mayor Francis Slay with a check totaling **\$259,400**.

SLATE will play a central role, helping to place approximately **1,500** youth in summer jobs in the third year of STL Youth Jobs, which in its first two years placed over

Photo: Brianna Farrell, STL Youth Jobs 2014 participant, at City Hall.

“A summer job can make a big difference in the life of a young person.” ~Mayor Slay

600 youth in employment. This planned increase is the result of the generous support of the CFE Fund and other public and private sources; foremost among these is Governor Jay Nixon’s special initiative to connect thousands of young people from low-income families in the St. Louis region with summer jobs in 2015.

“The message is clear from our youth,” said Mayor Slay. “We want a job. We want to stay busy when out of school. A summer job can make a big difference in the life of a young person.”

The newly appointed Executive Director of STL Youth Jobs, Hillary Fray, was also present to discuss the impact of summer employment, saying that it “helps them learn discipline, sacrifice, respect and teamwork.” **90** percent of the employers would participate again, and this tells us we have a great program,” added Mayor Slay.

The Mayor acknowledged the contributions SLATE has made to the success of STL Youth Jobs, and personally thanked Executive Director Michael K. Holmes and Dr. Alice Prince, Manager of the Young Adult Workforce Division, for their

Photo (L to R): Michael Holmes, SLATE Executive Director, Stan Shoun, Ranken President, Mayor Slay, Tammika Hubbard, Alderwoman, and YouthBuild participants.

hard work. SLATE has operated summer jobs programs for youth since its establishment in 1974.

Brianna Farrell, a young woman who participated in STL Youth Jobs last year, spoke briefly about her positive experience with Swiss American, Inc.; she intends to attend Mizzou in the fall and continue to work with her former employer as an intern. “I loved it!” she exclaimed.

The Mayor closed with an appeal to the St. Louis business community. “I hope all employers will join me in hiring youth. I will be hiring two youth in my office this summer. It is important. It shows them that adults care for them.”

YOUTHBUILD WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS

A press conference held on April 20 formally welcomed the *YouthBuild-Northside Regeneration*

program to the City of St. Louis. The Department of Labor awarded **\$1.1 million** to SLATE last year to create a construction skills training program in partnership with Ranken Technical College.

The funds will be used to serve **75** disadvantaged youth ages 16-24, giving them the ability to earn pay, help build affordable housing for low-income families, develop leadership skills, and obtain industry-recognized certifications.

The event was held at an actual construction site on 4411 Evan, near Ranken in the Carr Square neighborhood. The first group of **9** youth to exit the program were in attendance; **8** of them have already found employment.

City of St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay noted that “these grants are part of a broader effort to invest in the future of our nation’s youth and give them a helping hand up the ladder of opportunity.”



Tammika Hubbard, representing the 5th Ward as a member of the St. Louis City Board of Aldermen, also spoke to the assembled press and guests: “To see these young men and women working so hard to better themselves, it gives me real hope.”

Ranken Technical College President Stan Shoun spoke about Ranken’s commitment to the project, and the bright prospects for employment in the skilled building trades over the long term. “Blue-collar jobs will be at the heart of the economic recovery,” he said.

SLATE Executive Director Michael Holmes commented that “jobs are important, but just as important is training. YouthBuild will give youth the skills they need to succeed.”

CATERER TURNS PASSION FOR FOOD INTO LASTING BUSINESS SUCCESS

Welch One Catering is a food service provider for schools, small companies, breakfast meetings and special events.

The company’s Executive Chef/Owner, **Euylan Welch**, has been cooking and sometimes selling food to friends since the age of seven. When he turned 16, he started cooking professionally for hotels under the supervision of a Master Chef. After completing Culinary School in New York and years of training in France, China and Italy, Euylan found work with Ritz Carlton, helping them open brand new hotels and restaurants.

After 10 successful years with Ritz Carlton, Welch decided to start his own business to meet the demands of his growing family. Realizing the potential risks but confident in his ability to provide an excellent catering experience, Welch was able to establish a successful business and maintain stability and continuous growth.

He now has 14 full time and 25 on-call employees, preparing and delivering food from his location off N. Lindbergh. Welch One has survived major economic dropdowns, and Euylan has plans to further expand by opening a restaurant in St. Louis.

Welch is honest about his personal strengths and weaknesses. “If you ask me how to make a chicken, I can tell you a hundred of different ways, but if you tell me to go fill out some forms - I don’t know how to do that,” he said.

Euylan decided to enroll in the *Micro Enterprise Competition* at SLATE, designed to support emerging entrepreneurs and provide them with business training. Welch attended *FastTrac* workshops, where he learned how to write a business plan. “When I got



Above: Euylan Welch, Executive Chef/Owner of Welch One Catering.
Photo below: Catering FastTrac workshop at SLATE, March 27, 2015.

my business plan done, people were looking at me differently,” he said. “Suddenly, I wasn’t just a kid making food for fun; I was ready to step up my company’s growth using food as a vehicle.”



Welch was awarded a small prize to cover his most pressing business needs. He spent his award on advertising and developing his company, adding more new clients to the roster. "It allowed us to take chances that we couldn't necessarily do if we didn't have that funding. We would never have tried some of the things that we did," says Welch.

He continues to give back to the organization that helped to shape his success – he now caters food for FastTrac classes at SLATE and also speaks in front of the program participants, discussing the business lessons he learned, and helping to inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs.

The pursuit of excellence is an important and never ending process for Welch. "I am only as good as my last meal," he likes to say.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

SLATE has extended the deadline for the Micro Enterprise Competition until **May 11**, 2015. Interested persons should contact Cassandra Williams at **(314) 657-3599**.

EVENTS *Calendar*

- **May 14:** *EBLAP: Legal Clinics*
- **May 18:** *Starting a Business in MO*
- **May 20:** *The Basics of Writing a Business Plan*
- **May 28:** *EBLAP: Legal Clinics*

THE MISSION CONTINUES: NEW LOCAL VETERANS REPRESENTATIVE AT SLATE

When **Michelle Matthews**, a Captain in the Missouri National Guard, returned home from Iraq, she thought the worst was over. But soon she found out that adapting to life and finding employment away from the war zone could also be challenging.

Michelle found it difficult and frustrating to job search after over two years overseas. Back in December of 2006, there were no mandates on the federal level that required business to hire veterans. "At the interviews, I heard businesses thanking me for serving our country but nothing really came out of that," she said.

Part of the problem was a lack of information on effective job search techniques veterans can use as they transition to civilian life. Michelle was fortunate that her position with the U.S. Army as a HR and Public Affairs Specialist gave her experience directly transferable to similar positions in the marketplace. But trying to access resources for veterans could sometimes be difficult or confusing.

Now, in her position as a Local area Veterans Representative (LVER) for the State of Missouri, Michelle believes she can make a real difference. Last year, she applied for this job in order to connect veterans to employers and build bridges with businesses willing to give returning veterans a chance.



Michelle Matthews, SLATE's
Local Veterans Representative

That number has been rapidly growing; Michelle states that no less than **592** St. Louis area companies have already signed-up for Missouri's *Show-Me Heroes* program and made a pledge to hire veterans. Michelle said she is following up with them and helps to ensure that when they hire veterans, the companies will be recognized by Governor Nixon and receive the State of Missouri Flag of Freedom Award.

Michelle states that in her position, she hopes to reach out to veterans who may never have heard about On-The-Job Training (OJT) or the other employment services available to them at American Job Centers like SLATE. She has been especially impressed by the WREAP (Work Ready Employment Assistance Program) seminars conducted by SLATE's Frank Alaniz. "The class was enlightening and I recommend it, but there are a lot of veterans who don't know about it," she said.