

# 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](http://www.stlworks.com)

**January 2014 Issue**

## ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1 MLK Tribute Award
- 2 Summer Jobs League
- 2 OJT Helps Small Businesses
- 3 Veteran Success Story 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.

To subscribe/unsubscribe to SLATE Update, please send a request to [sbostick@stlworks.com](mailto:sbostick@stlworks.com).

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## SLATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HONORED BY SLU WITH MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. GOVERNMENT AWARD

In honor of the life and legacy of *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, St. Louis University (SLU) held their fourth annual memorial tribute on January 16. Among the honorees was SLATE's Executive Director since 2008, **Michael K. Holmes**.

The award ceremony and luncheon was held at SLU's Butler Hall with nearly 400 attendees. Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis CEO Michael P. McMillan served as master of ceremonies, with a spe-

cial welcome by SLU President Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D. Guest speakers included Rev. Raphael G. Warnock, current pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church (part of Atlanta's Martin Luther King Jr. Historic District) and actor, director and activist Malik Yoba. Perhaps the highlight of the occasion was the recognition accorded to Lou and Jackie Brock. The couple received a Lifetime Achievement Award, not only for Lou's legendary prowess as a ball



player, but also for the couple's ongoing commitment to serve their community through their ministry.

Michael Holmes was the sole recipient of a *Government Award* for his efforts at SLATE to bring employment opportunities to at-risk St. Louis youth and his role in creating meaningful regional collaborations. "I may be the face, but the credit

should go to my staff," he stated in his acceptance speech. "They do the hard work each and every day that enables us to have an impact."

A group photo of individuals honored can be found on the last page of the newsletter. A full listing of awardee names and titles is published at <http://www.slu.edu/x100168.xml>.



Photo (from left): Michael Holmes, SLATE Executive Director, Fred Pestello, SLU President, Jeff Fowler, SLU VP, Marketing and Communications.

### MISSOURI CREATES NEW SUMMER JOBS LEAGUE

Summer jobs for youth aren't just a way to earn spending money – they help build soft skills, confidence, responsibility, references, networks and financial literacy. Without these experiences, young men and women can find it even harder to obtain full-time employment later. This year, the Missouri Division of

Workforce Development is establishing the *Summer Jobs League*, a new job placement program for young persons ages **16-24** in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area and St. Louis City and County.

Summer Jobs League participants will be placed in traditional summer jobs such as retail and local parks and recreation, but also in work experiences with industries increasingly important to the economic growth of Missouri. These include many vital to the St. Louis region – Information Technology, Financial Services, Healthcare and Bioscience. Best of all for participating businesses, the Summer Job League will entail no cost - the program will assume all responsibility for wages and workers' compensation.

Eligibility for the program is largely based on income; priority will be given to candidates that need these opportunities most. SLATE will play a central role in the recruitment and placement of local youth in work experiences that will lay a solid foundation for future success.

Further information, along with online application forms for both interested youth and businesses, can be found at <http://summerjobs.mo.gov>.

### SPARO LABS STARTS UP WITH HELP FROM SLATE AND OJT

In less than two years, *Sparo Labs*, founded by Washington University graduates **Andrew Brimer** and **Abigail Cohen**, has gone from concept to award-winning



Sparo Labs co-founders Andrew Brimer and Abigail Cohen.

reality. Named by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of the top ten-startups to watch last year, this young medtech firm has enjoyed phenomenal success, attracting over \$1 million in angel investments and winning ten funding competitions to date.

Sparo Labs has developed a patent pending spirometer solution that seamlessly connects with smartphones and other mobile devices (spirometers measure the movement of air into and out of the lungs). In the hands of asthma patients, this new system will revolutionize the ways in which respiratory diseases are managed.

SLATE's Business Development team has played a role in Sparo's success, linking them with their critically important first two hires. Andrew Brimer tells us that the startup's two new software engineers, hired with the assistance of On-the-Job Training (OJT) funds,

have rapidly become impressive additions to his team. They have built signal processing algorithms, database architectures, and other internal software projects in order to propel Sparo Labs towards

FDA submission and bring their new product, *Wing*, to market.

"We were able to work with OJT to get these hires on board and offer competitive salaries to ensure that we had the right talent for the positions," states Brimer. "With OJT, our company was able to integrate training and education into positions that were crucial." As Sparo Labs prepares to launch *Wing*, they look forward to hiring additional staff.

Once again, On-the-Job Training has proven to be a valuable resource able to spur the growth of a new company. Brimer tells us that "OJT has been a great experience overall. The documentation required is lightweight enough to allow us to operate efficiently without getting bogged down in too much paperwork... We would like to see continued funding for the OJT program."

Entrepreneurs with new ideas, when combined with SLATE's administrative and OJT expertise, are helping to fuel the St. Louis region's economic engine.

## A VETERAN EMPLOYED AFTER TWO VISITS TO SLATE

SLATE American Job Center serves veterans of all kinds find employment, from those recently returned from duty to those that successfully reintegrated decades ago but find themselves dislocated. Recently, SLATE's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP), **Rodney Hearn**, helped just such a veteran, a former tank commander, achieve a successful outcome.

**Gary Kennedy**, 59, served in the Army Reserve from 1981-1987 as a tank commander and a drill sergeant. After his retirement from the Army, Kennedy was introduced to phlebotomy and since then has been employed by various healthcare organizations, including American Red Cross, as a Lab Tech and Phlebotomist. He recently received his certification, although it is not a requirement in Missouri.

In October of 2014 his latest employer experienced financial problems and began laying off selected personnel, including Kennedy. After unsuccessful attempts

## EVENTS *Calendar*

- **Feb. 5:** EBLAP: Legal Clinic
- **Feb. 12:** Post- AEL Career Guidance and Coaching Session.
- **Feb. 19:** EBLAP: Third Party Contracts & Commercial Leases
- **Feb. 19:** EBLAP: Legal Clinic

to find a new job, Kennedy found his way to SLATE where he was introduced to Rodney Hearn.

Concerned about the possibility of losing his home and the ability to care for his family, Kennedy struggled to adjust to the 21st century job market. Hearn immediately noticed that Kennedy's resume needed to be reformatted and given new focus: "His resume wasn't targeting a particular field; there were other things there that weren't related."

Once the resume was updated and re-written, Hearn pointed Kennedy to Missouri's online job bank, [Jobs.Mo.Gov](http://Jobs.Mo.Gov), and guided him through the job search and application process. Together, they looked for suitable positions that closely matched Kennedy's experience and Kennedy began to receive definite job leads.

Rodney Hearn (*left*), Gary Kennedy (*right*).

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Gary applied online for a Phlebotomist position and was selected for an interview. Soon Kennedy was contacting his councilor to share news about a job offer and full-time employment with Urban Lab and Health Care Services which began in December of 2014. He was reluctant at first to visit SLATE, he told us, "Because I really didn't think that anything was going to come of it. It was on my second visit when it was like - Bingo! - it all worked out just like that," said Kennedy.

"I am happy to be in a position to help such a deserving man. He came here with a right attitude and determination, and really paid attention to my suggestions. First

impressions are highly important and a professional resume is still the best platform to showcase your talents," said Hearn.

Two months into his new position and still excited, Kennedy is working 9 hours a day, making \$15/hour. "I just like the healthcare profession," said Kennedy. "It's a far cry from being a tank commander, when you train people how to destroy things. Now I'm doing something on the opposite end of that."



Inductees to Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Tribute and Awards Ceremony, Saint Louis University, Wool Ballroom, *January 16, 2015*.

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SCI Engineering's David Nolan interviews a candidate, SLATE, *January 14, 2015*.

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