

YWCA Moving Ahead Program gets women back to work

Are you a woman that has been unemployed six months or more? YWCA Bergen County's Moving Ahead Program provides free training and resources to long-term unemployed women of Bergen County. The next five-week program session will begin on June 24 in the Ridgewood area.

According to the Federal Reserve Bank, Bergen County has a 5.4 percent unemployment rate as of February 2015. Since the Great Recession female heads of household have suffered tremendously for a variety of reasons. More recently, from 2007 to present, food stamp households have rose from 8,500 to 21,000. In addition, New Jersey has the highest foreclosure rate in the nation. A change in economic status can also bring along emotional distress such as depression, anger, behavioral issues with children, and shock over the shift of lifestyle. The necessity to resort to public assistance such as food stamps itself can be the cause of these emotions.

In 2014, YWCA Bergen County was awarded a Women United in Philanthropy grant in order to kick off the Moving Ahead Program. In addition to the development of workforce skills, the key to this project is case management which will utilize one on one sessions to identify issues affecting participants' function and well-being.

Essential to the program's success, case management will

address housing, parenting those with special needs or behavioral issues, aging parents, mental health, credit issues, and current or past domestic violence.

A partnership with Teaneck Women Train and Work (TW2), Moving Ahead Program participants will learn the professional skills necessary not only to land a job but to keep it! Session topics will include: Resume writing, interview skills, networking skills and how to "dress for success."

During the course of the program, women professionals from YWCA Bergen County's monthly Women's Empowerment Network and annual Tribute to Women in Industry (TWIN) will utilize their networks to find job opportunities for program participants.

Moving Ahead gives women the tools to balance themselves physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Sessions will empower women to be confident, prepared, and career ready; helping participants learn how to seek and keep jobs.

In an age of technology, our goal is to foster close relationships and promote a community development approach as we train women to become more independent and aware of who they are.

For more information, or to apply for this free program, contact Lisa Schuetz at lschuetz@ywcabergencounty.org or 201-444-5600 ext. 353.

