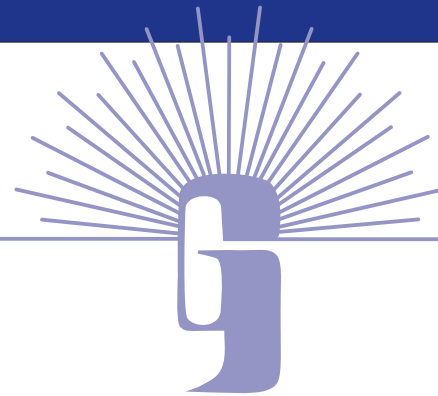


# Opportunities



## New Partnership Helps Parents Help Their Families

By **Sandy Alexander** *Opportunities* Editor

Trainers from GenesisJobs will begin a series of seminars in March that are intended not only to help adults find fulfilling employment, but to improve the lives of the job-seekers' children.

GenesisJobs' new partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore kicks off this spring with three training sessions for parents of the clubs' young participants.

The partners hope to reach about 45 adults with information and strategies for finding a job. In the future, they hope to build on that foundation with one-on-one employment counseling, according to **Alonda Simmons**, assistant executive director of the Boys and Girls chapter.

"It was a perfect fit for us," Ms. Simmons said, "because in addition to our services for young people we also have an initiative called Family Plus that focuses on classes and programs for our parents."

The Boys and Girls Clubs were re-established in Baltimore a year and a half ago after a former chapter closed. The organization is currently headquartered at Mt. Vernon Place and has locations in Park Heights, O'Donnell Heights and Brooklyn.

Since the club was established, Sim-



Alonda Simmons of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore, is looking forward to a new partnership between her organization and GenesisJobs.

mons said she has seen the need parents have for employment programs. Because it is a relatively new organization, she said the staff is still training to work with youth participants, and it is helpful to have outside assistance with the programs for adults.

"Our trainers for this session, **FloJean Speck** and **Terri Houck**, are experts in this field and will play a critical role in

the training experience," said **Felicia Wells**, program manager of GenesisJobs.

She added: "We are so very excited about this partnership. We believe in their mission and appreciate the opportunity to help parents seeking career development guidance. We look forward to a beneficial partnership that will make a real difference in the lives of local families."

Ms. Simmons said the benefits of employment trickle down to positively impact the workers' children. Some results are specific, such as having the money and transportation to buy healthier food. Others effects are more general but equally important, such as more hope and better self-esteem.

"I am really excited," Ms. Simmons said.

## Hawkins is Effective and "Beloved"

By **Sandy Alexander** *Opportunities* Editor

GenesisJobs' job placement coordinator, **Emma Hawkins**, knows how clients feel when they come to the organization seeking help. That is exactly what she did more than 20 years ago.

After she spent 20 years as a machine operator with Westin Electrical, the company closed its doors and she had to figure out what to do next. Ms. Hawkins said a friend of her mother's suggested GenesisJobs, which was then being operated out of the rectory of the Church of the Guardian Angel on Huntingdon Avenue.

Ms. Hawkins recalled that the interview she went on was not successful. Shortly after, she was hired on part-time as a receptionist for GenesisJobs and for the church.

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Emma Hawkins



# Opportunities

THE GENESISJOBS NEWSLETTER

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The newsletter *Opportunities* is a publication of GenesisJobs, a division of Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, Inc. It is circulated among the businesses and community partners, houses of worship, financial supporters, volunteers, successfully placed employees and applicants in the GenesisJobs network.

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## "People Person" Finds Success

By Marilyn Murray *Opportunities* Editorial Board Member

**Sheron Williams** is at a good place in her life right now. She enjoys her job, is buying a house and is raising a son whom she adores. She has been employed at the Belair-Edison Family Health Center, part of the Baltimore Medical System, for over eight years.

She started there inputting medical records and has received two promotions. At the present time she works at the front desk as a receptionist and she checks medical records, insurance, co-pays, and medications.

Ms. Williams is obviously a "people person." She has been a Certified Nursing Assistant and has experience as an aide to elderly people who need special care at home, in the hospital or in an assisted living facility. That work gave her the opportunity for caregiving in a one-on-one relationship. She also has worked as a sales person in retail stores, which she enjoyed.

When she wanted to make a change in her employment, Ms. Williams applied at GenesisJobs. She credits Job Placement Coordinator Wendy Frank for encouraging Baltimore Medical System to give her a chance. According to **Michelle Liberatore**, head of human resources at the Belair-Edison center, "Sheron has been here over eight years and excelled in her position and is doing quite well."

Ms. Williams was born in Baltimore and graduated from Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School. She has taken classes at Baltimore City Community College and Sojourner-Douglass College.

Growing up, she said she would



Sheron Williams found a good fit with her job at the Belair-Edison Family Health Center.

complain to her mother about her father's rigid rules, but now as a parent she realizes the benefit of following the rules. She is proud that her son Dayvon is in sixth grade at Patterson Park Public Charter School.

"I do have a supportive family — my mother and brother," she added.

Ms. Williams thinks about one day branching out, perhaps opening her own business selling jewelry. She also considers someday returning to individual patient care and explains, "I can't express enough how much I like companion care and working with elderly patients."

Ms. Williams is grateful to the help she has received from GenesisJobs over the years, particularly from Ms. Frank and her fellow job placement coordinator, Emma Hawkins.

Ms. Frank summed up their relationship stating, "Sheron has the loveliest upbeat can-do personality, is willing to learn anything, doesn't resent criticism and takes feedback as a plus."



GenesisJobs would like to recognize the valuable assistance given to us by **Sharon Ridley**. Ms. Ridley, a former employee with expertise in administration and special event planning, returned to the GenesisJobs office recently as a volunteer. She was instrumental in streamlining the intake process for the program.

On behalf of everyone at GenesisJobs, thank you Sharon Ridley!

# Volunteer Gives More Than Time

By **Andrew Lenich** *Opportunities* Editorial Board Member

Among the amazing and impressive people that contribute their time and service to GenesisJobs there are those that stand out, even in a room full of saints. One such person is **Kenneth McElroy**.

Since retiring 10 years ago, Mr. McElroy has been coming in every Monday morning to help counsel job searchers at GenesisJobs.

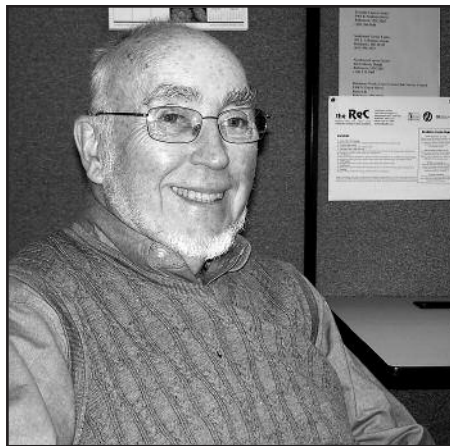
He said he has learned a lot about helping individuals search for employment and prepare for the interview process. In the beginning it was difficult, he said, because he wanted to help the individuals personally with their issues. He soon learned to teach them to help themselves.

Mr. McElroy's dedication comes from his own personal life and the guidance of a higher being. He is very active with the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Baltimore where he and his wife received the Bishop's Award for service.

In addition, Mr. McElroy said, "Emma Hawkins and Wendy Frank have been instrumental in my success at GenesisJobs." He says their knowledge

and experience have been very appreciated over the years.

A native of Richmond, Virginia, Mr. McElroy moved to Baltimore in 1967. He graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in civil engineering and earned his master's in business/finance at the University of Baltimore. He worked on the Great Lakes Long Range Conservation Plan and the Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Policy for the State of Maryland. He was also in the Uniformed Services as a commissioned officer.



Kenneth McElroy has been counseling GenesisJobs clients for more than a decade.

He uses that knowledge and experience to impart life lessons and help empower job applicants. He said, "I am not getting them the job, they are getting themselves the job."

Mr. McElroy understands the importance of family with his wife Dorris, four grown children and seven grandchildren. He has also embraced GenesisJobs and other community organizations as part of his family. He is the treasurer for the Children's Peace Center, an outreach group with the Cathedral of the Incarnation, and chairman of the board of the Pimlico Road Youth Program, which offers an after school program and a summer camp for kids.

Mr. McElroy said he enjoys giving people the skills they will need from youth through adulthood. He sees the importance of continuous support of the community for all ages noting: "It is good to be at both ends."

At GenesisJobs, he said, "It is very satisfying to be at our staff roundtable and to hear that someone I have been working with has been placed in a new job."

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She went on to become a full-time staff member and learned all about employment coaching and job placement.

"They saw something in me that I didn't see in myself," she said.

Today, Ms. Hawkins and her fellow job placement coordinator, **Wendy Frank**, work with a team of volunteers to help applicants locate job opportunities, fill out applications, get training if needed and prepare for interviews.

Ms. Hawkins manages the follow-up program to support clients in their new jobs and networks with local employers about job opportunities. She also conducts career development trainings.

Ms. Hawkins is "very empathetic,"

Ms. Frank said. "She makes applicants feel very comfortable. ... She's got a wonderful rapport with clients, employers and volunteers. She's beloved, really."

Marilyn Murray, a long-time volunteer, said, "I can't picture GenesisJobs without Emma. Everybody depends on her memory. She remembers every person that come through the doors."

Ms. Hawkins said the job certainly has its challenges, as applicants arrive with personal barriers and mental challenges. But, she said, GenesisJobs does not turn anyone away.

"I really love working with the people," she said. "I really love helping people, letting people know that there is something out there for them. I know that we all deserve a place in society."

## GenesisJobs Needs Your Support

Over the past 23 years, GenesisJobs has helped over 5,000 Baltimore area men and women find work. With a network of over 110 volunteers, 80 religious organizations and numerous businesses, we offer a compassionate response to people seeking employment.

**We are supported with donations from the community and are in critical need of financial support from individuals to keep our doors open.**

Please make a financial donation to GenesisJobs and become a part of a community mission of employment and workforce development.

## GenesisJobs Offers Tips for Finding, Keeping a Job

By FloJean Speck *Opportunities* Editorial Board Member

When you are job hunting, it helps to know a few “tricks of the trade.” Below are a few hints about what goes on behind the scenes in a hiring company:

### **Never underestimate the power of the receptionist.**

She/he sees you while you are waiting and may contribute his/her opinion to the hiring process. Be pleasant, polite and professional. Be careful not to fidget and don't monopolize the receptionist's time.

### **Prepare a cheat sheet for filling out applications on-site.**

Have someone check it for spelling and grammar. Most employers ask you to fill out an application even if you have a resume. Impress them by having all of the information at your fingertips. You can pick up some applications from local business or look online for sample

ones to put together your cheat sheet.

### **Dress for the interview, even if you are just stopping in to fill out an application or to drop off a resume.**

You never know when you may get the opportunity to talk to someone right away and even if not, the receptionist will see you.

### **Interview dress should be one step up from what you would wear on the job.**

Don't overdress or over accessorize. You want the interviewer to remember you, not what you were wearing.

Once you are hired, know the important things that are expected by every employer:

#### **Attendance**

Just because you have sick time doesn't mean you should use if you

aren't sick. Make back up arrangements for childcare. Have an alternate plan if your transportation falls through. Think ahead to make sure you are there when your employer needs you.

#### **Punctuality**

Employers expect you to start working at your start time. That means you should be there early enough to get your coffee, put your lunch away and settle in so you can start when your shift starts. Being on time does not mean pulling into the parking lot and running through the front door at your start time.

#### **Scheduling**

If you told an employer you can work weekends or evenings, work what you promised. Going back on your word will only limit your future with the company. It may even put you out of a job.