

OVERVIEW

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FULL

EMPLOY.



Alaska State Legislature

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REPRESENTATIVE FRED DYSON

MEMORANDUM

March 19, 2001

To: All Legislators

From: Fred Dyson
State Representative

RE: American Institute for Full Employment

I would urge you to attend the House HESS meeting today, Tuesday March 20, at approximately 4pm.

This group has worked with 12 other states to utterly revolutionize their Welfare to Work programs, starting with Wisconsin. They recommend taking food stamps and TANF cash grants and using that money to subsidize employers who are putting welfare recipients to work immediately. They are offering to audit Alaska's present welfare system and make recommendation. All at no cost to us.

Participating in the presentation will be Sandie Hoback, former State Welfare Director of Oregon.

Please come and see, send a staffer—let's see if we can do better.

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

The American Institute for Full Employment is a privately funded, not-for-profit policy research and development center, a major purpose of which is to develop programs that expand and enhance employment and retirement opportunities for American workers. The Institute, chartered as an Oregon (501)(c)(3) corporation in 1994, has offices in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

The Institute's goal is full employment – universal access to jobs with career potential for all who can work, especially those who are receiving public assistance as a substitute for the opportunities and rewards of paid work. The Institute believes that goal can best be met by building public/private partnerships that encourage the efforts of private sector employers, large and small, to train and employ new workers.

Toward this end, the Institute has developed the Full Employment Program, a welfare, unemployment, and food stamp benefit replacement concept that has been developed and refined over the last seven years. The program moves public assistance recipients into the active work force by converting public assistance benefits to wage subsidies for transitional, training-oriented, predominantly private sector jobs. It has been adapted to meet a wide variety of specific state and local needs and circumstances. Two states that have implemented it on a statewide basis, Oregon (JOBS Plus) and Mississippi (Work First), have shown dramatic success in obtaining productive permanent employment for public assistance beneficiaries, thus significantly reducing welfare caseloads and costs. In addition to assisting public assistance recipients achieve self-sufficiency, the Full Employment Program has proven to be a valuable economic development tool for small businesses, especially in economically-depressed remote areas with high unemployment.

The Institute has been the driving force in the development and implementation of these programs, and has provided nationally-recognized experts and a full complement of resources to assist states and local governments to design, implement, and assess the performance and effects of their Full Employment programs.

Other issues currently being addressed by the Institute include:

- Development of fully funded individual retirement accounts as a replacement for pay-as-you-go Social Security
- Restoration of state control of the Unemployment Insurance system, including return to the states of unemployment taxing and spending power and the ability to contract with private employment service providers.

ASSESSMENT SERVICES

The mission of the non-profit education and research center, the American Institute for Full Employment (AIFE) is to promote full employment—universal access to jobs with career potential for all who can work, especially those who are receiving public assistance as a substitute for the opportunities and rewards of paid work. Toward this end, AIFE provides, at no cost to states and with no obligation for future work, an assessment of the state's public assistance programs, with prioritized recommendations to improve performance.

The purpose of the assessment is not to criticize a state's welfare program, but to evaluate goals and performance, and suggest improvements that fully utilize TANF opportunities. AIFE believes strongly in a "work-first" philosophy, but we also advocate successful "mixed strategies" and support services that encourage and promote job retention, self-sufficiency, career development, and accumulation of wealth.

Our assessments are conducted by a team of our staff and other welfare experts with whom we have worked previously. These consultants are all nationally-known specialists in the field of welfare and public assistance.

The assessments include a review of state statutes, regulations, operating policies and procedures, and other pertinent documents such as the TANF state plan. We will also interview key Department of Health and Social Services managers and staff, and observe day-to-day operations at a number of regional or field offices. In most cases, our assessments can be completed within 45-60 calendar days from notice to proceed. At the conclusion of the assessment, we will submit a report that will include the findings and conclusions of the assessment, a prioritized list of recommendations, and a recommended action plan.

OVERVIEW OF THE FULL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Full Employment Program was designed in Oregon by an individual who desired that all Americans have the opportunity to work, earn an income, and be self-sufficient.

Recognizing that people needing public assistance need work, and knowing the best training to enhance skills is on-the-job-training, the design was simple. Instead of giving people public assistance, provide real jobs, subsidized jobs, with real employers to everyone needing unemployment compensation, welfare and food stamps.

Ultimately, the goal is to eliminate the need to qualify for any of these programs, and assist any person who needs work, to find a job promptly (subsidized or non-subsidized).

History

For 25 years, from the early 1960's to the mid-1980's, the federal government waged war on poverty by providing obligation-free benefits to poor people. The expectation was that the more government aid people received, the better off they'd be.

It didn't work. Millions of people became dependent on public assistance, and the poverty rate did not fall. By 1985 it had become clear that reducing poverty would require a different approach. It was also understood that, after 25 years of encouraging dependency, it would take time, patience, and persistence to restructure the welfare paradigm.

A New Approach

The new approach was tied to work. The hypothesis was that the ability to get and hold a job is the key to economic and social well being, for individuals and families. The first form of public assistance to employ the new approach was cash welfare payments. Success was unexpected and immediate. Through work requirements and "diversion" (meeting temporary needs instead of swelling the welfare rolls) the new paradigm has decreased national welfare caseloads by more than 40 percent in three years. States, which control the new welfare policies, have succeeded in reducing dependency beyond all expectations.

The American Institute for Full Employment (AIFE) has been both a pioneer and a major force in developing, promoting, and implementing

the work-based approach to welfare reform. Its Full Employment Program has been enacted into law or implemented without legislation in 12 states, and the first three to fully implement it – Wisconsin, Mississippi, and Oregon – have experienced caseload declines of 77 percent, 75 percent, and 60 percent, respectively.

The Principles of Full Employment

The principles of the Full Employment Program are simple and tested:

- Quick and permanent attachment to work.
- Emphasis on private sector jobs.
- Temporary wage subsidies for those not immediately qualified for unsubsidized employment.
- Employment-related services (child care, transportation) until wages are high enough for self-sufficiency.
- Adequate counseling and mentoring during the transition.

The Integrated Full Employment Program

Building on its successes in welfare reform, AIFE has recently developed the Integrated Full Employment Program (IFEP). It addresses a broad range of federal programs aimed at people able to work including, in addition to TANF, Food Stamps, Unemployment Insurance, Employment Related Child Care, and other food, housing, education, and service programs that have proliferated since 1965. IFEP integrates these programs at the state level and ties their benefits to work.

How many low-income persons and families will respond positively to these reforms? Welfare caseload declines under TANF are illuminating. Two states have experienced caseload declines of more than 80 percent and seventeen additional states have experienced declines of more than 60 percent, all from TANF recipients who represent the most welfare-welfare-dependent and least job-ready part of the low-income population. AIFE estimates that 90 to 95 percent of the below-poverty population can be moved successfully into long-term above-poverty level jobs with advancement potential.

And what about the remaining five to ten percent? AIFE's answer is skill-specific education. Not the old model of the failed Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), but locally controlled job-oriented training for available work, coupled with temporary aid tailored to individual needs. And no more entitlements!

The resources to carry out such a program are already available, but need to be reallocated. Excess TANF funds from the TANF caseload declines can be used without alteration. UI trust fund surpluses can be diverted by Congress for these purposes. And Workforce Investment Act (ex-JTPA) funds can be used for incumbent worker training vouchers to move people up the job ladder.

AIFE consultants stand ready to tailor its IFEP to the specific needs of any state as the next generation of public assistance reform gathers momentum.

JOBS Plus Letter Comments
March 16, 2001

AFS DISTRICT

1. **Employer:** "As volunteers in Tillamook County Habitat for Humanity, we have seen many young housewives who need to enter the job market get excellent office training in our affiliate office. We couldn't have built 6 houses in 3 ½ years without their help in logistics – volunteers can't provide the constancy they do..." Elaine Hungerford, Habitat for Humanity, Tillamook

2. **Employer:** "We've hired an employee through this program and for us it's been an absolute Godsend! In addition, rather than the State just handing over money each month to keep someone out of poverty, it's invested in the future of the recipient and gotten them out of the house and into the workplace where self esteem can be nurtured." Sherry Mezzie, Yours Truly Caterers, Portland

Participant: "In 1999 my employer sold his company and I was let go. I was out of work for almost six months. I heard about JOBS Plus and within 10 days I had a good job. I think JOBS Plus gave me that little extra boost I needed to get that job. Now, 18 months later, I am the one interviewing prospective new employees." Chris Reese, Dennis Moving and Storage, Lake Oswego

3. **Employer:** "...we have been able to hire and train six different employees who have since been placed in permanent positions with other companies, positions that pay a living wage and provide benefits. We are proud of our record, and feel good about the opportunity to help people move from public assistance to the private sector and to provide for their families." Phil Lackaff, Advance Personnel Services, Salem

Employer: "...I've used the JOBS Plus program several times when looking for 'key' employees. All employees that we've hired through the program have stayed on in permanent, productive positions. It has helped me find good people quickly. I value this resource." Patrick Glancy, Pacific Custom Products, Salem

4. **Jobs skills trainer:** "Let me describe a typical client: early twenties – early thirties, two or more children, never worked, unhealthy relationships, transportation in unreliable, low self-esteem, health issues and the majority have no work experience or a little as a housekeeper. Many of these individuals have been on public assistance for many years. JOBS Plus provides jobs training to these individuals allowing them to learn new skills, they gain a positive self-esteem, take care of their families needs and be contributing members of the community... They gain a respect for themselves that is wonderful to see develop because then they can do so much more." Christine L. Bellavita, Oregon Coast Community College, JOBS Plus skill trainer, TANF Clients, Waldport

Employer: "I am a District Manager for Farmers Insurance Group. Our agents are independent contractors. It is nearly impossible to afford staffing, while starting a new business. This program has allowed our new agents to afford employees, and therefore enables them successfully to grow their business. In our entrepreneurial society, this program helps not just the person on unemployment and the government, but also the small business owner." Jennifer Marshall, District Manager, Corvallis

Employer: "It has been a great program for us, and we have hired 3 out of 4 employees through JOBS Plus." Steve Allen, Allen & Sons Sealcoating, Newport

Employer: "I don't know where I found the courage to get a second mortgage and then actually start a business from scratch, but I did. I could have applied for welfare and I qualified for food stamps, but I did neither...Those first months were grueling...I needed an employee desperately to say the least, but I couldn't afford even paying me a salary... What a 'God sent' JOBS plus has been to me. It wasn't very long before I could leave [my JOBS Plus employee] in the office alone and I was able to go out into the community and grow my business...[and] I am able to be with my children in the evenings because of JOBS Plus. How grateful I am!!!" Gaylyn Gelleagante, GoFigure Salon, Albany

5. **Employer:** "The two employees we have hired through this program have done a great job for us. They were able to quickly pick up several clerical skills that will help them as they seek permanent employment." Kristi Berg, Office Manager Admissions, University of Oregon, Eugene

Participant: "...I have had to make a career shift from being a therapeutic pre-school teacher, to a more sedentary office position. JOBS Plus has given me the work experience I needed to find a position that will meet my needs. Working in a law office has also exposed me to other ways to use my past experience and prevent costly re-training...benefits that most likely would have been funded by State government sources." Jennifer Orchard, Legal Assistant, Eugene

Employer: "Although the person receiving is no longer employed by us, she has a better job. The schooling she received helped make her employable." Molly Hansford, Controller, Visions Technology Education, Eugene

6. **Participant:** "While receiving Unemployment Insurance and going through what could have been a devastating career ending nightmare, instead I received training, a paycheck and the dignity of self-sufficiency. My employer would have been unable to hire me and keep me in the position while the sales caught up to my salary if it wasn't for him receiving the subsidy. Additionally, I have a scholarship fund of \$800 available for me to get further training, good for a period of up to 5 years." Karla Sinclair, Legal Assistant, Roseburg

Participant: "I had been unemployed (for months) in search of a permanent job until I came across the JOBS Plus program via the Oregon Unemployment [sic] Department's web site. I immediately called the office in Roseburg to verify that I was eligible to participate, which was confirmed. To make a long story short, thanks to JOBS Plus I am now employed." Marilyn R. Marshall, Tenmile

7. **Employer:** "Our current staff has three JOBS Plus graduates, one is our kitchen supervisor. [Name] began on the program as a dishwasher in August 1997. He has progressed and continued his training until now he earns over \$11 per hour plus benefits. The JOBS Plus program has allowed us the opportunity to give employees that extra training time that can be beneficial in their overall performance and advancement." Beverly Rice and Gary Goodson, Pancake Mill Restaurant owners, North Bend

Employer: "...coming from a state that does not have this program, I can assure you that JOBS Plus is very beneficial. When someone is on welfare, it is very debilitating, and the incentive of having a job to go to can break the cycle of familial welfare. Many people remain on welfare because they honestly have never seen anyone outside their immediate family hold jobs and act in a responsible way. With JOBS Plus intervention, the cycle is broken as individuals see themselves as employable and learn new skills." Kim Maxwell, Educational/Employment Specialist, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, Coos Bay

8. **Participant:** "I was an Unemployment Insurance recipient following a car accident, which left me unable to return to my usual employment in health care. The JOBS Plus Program was of great benefit to me (and my two kids) and I didn't need to get welfare assistance (which I needed in the past). I received training (I have college education with no on the job experience), a paycheck and the dignity of self-sufficiency. The subsidy employers receive enabled me to have this job opportunity and my new employer, a small business, to have a much needed office worker... The JOBS Plus program gave me an opportunity to gain on the job experience and be trained in updated office skills." Janet M. Shults, Office Manager, American whitewater products, Central Point

Employer: "Of the nine JOBS Plus participants working with [name of organization] over the last couple of years, four have been hired as regular full-time employees. The four were hired for positions within the agency other than the original JOBS Plus position." Deborah Tipton, Human Resources Manager, Community Works, Medford

Participant: "...like me, so many people have been benefited with it [JOBS Plus], I was hired and never have to go back to [a] welfare program." Carmen McFarland, Grants Pass

Employer: "We have used the program and are currently looking at using it again to create a position in Klamath Falls." Eugene Schulke, Hometown Mortgage, Medford

Employer: "I have used this program for the last 5 years...I have trained & hired many people that would not have been qualified to enter my profession. Several of my trainees have gone off to start a business of their own because of the training they received." Sherri Smith, Kids Kastle Day Care owner, Grants Pass

10. **Participant:** "I am a single mother of two small children and have been recently hired in a wonderful position through the JOBS Plus program. At this time I am currently off any State assistance." Stormie Nelson, Prineville

Employer: "The JOBS Plus program has been very beneficial to my company...It has allowed me flexibility that I normally may not have enjoyed, and as a result saved my company a considerable amount of money, while offering opportunities to those that otherwise may not have applied for our position." Trevor T. Berg, Dearborn Classics, Bend

Employer: "I'm on my 4th JOBS Plus employee. My first now has his own business. [Numbers] 2 & 3 are still in my employment and running crews." B.J. Fisher, Construction Company owner, Redmond

11. **Employer:** "JOBS Plus is a program that you need to be involved in to truly understand it. It is about people working and caring about people, accepting them as they are into the work place and helping them to be all that they can be." Susan McDaniel, Court Operations Supervisor, Klamath Falls

Participant: "I came back to the work force after a serious injury and lots of therapy. I could not find a job on my own. I was on food stamps and getting a State grant. I'm a single mother of two wonderful teenage boys. I was at the lowest a person could get. I had some computer training but not enough for this modern world of today...after many weeks of computer training and upgrade, I got a job. With the JOBS Plus position and computer classes I now have better people skills, computer skills and upgraded on areas that needed improvement. The program is wonderful..." Ruth Truppner, secretary, Klamath Falls

Employer: "I am a small business owner in a small town and have used JOBS Plus more than once when I needed an employee but couldn't afford to pay them while they were getting their training. It gets the employee off welfare and gives them an opportunity to learn a trade..." Diane L. Perkey, Diane's Corner cafe owner, Lakeview

12. **Employer:** "The JOBS Plus program was brought to my attention and I decided to give it a chance. I had varied success with the first couple employees I tried, however in each case I benefited and so did the employee. I currently have a young lady working for me that successfully completed the JOBS Plus program...[she] has been full time since November 2000 and has subsequently been given a raise. I intend to place her in school to get her insurance license and she will probably use her JOBS Plus education funds to pay for the schooling." Quinten C. Blinn, Blinn Insurance Agency, Hermiston

Employer: "This program is invaluable in allowing untrained employees [to] get the skills they need to land jobs and get off public assistance. Not only has our agency benefited by using JOBS Plus trainees, but many of our trainees have been able to get and keep jobs in the community..." Kricket Nicholson, Executive Director, Domestic Violence Services, Pendleton

Employer: "I personally have used people from the program here in my real estate office several times. The person I have now is wonderful, but was almost unemployable because of her lack of job skills. She is so excited as she learns to become computer literate and accomplishes many new skills that she is learning. She just beams and her family is so excited for her and very proud." Donna M Bieber, Broker/Owner, Century 21 Real Estate, Hermiston

Employer: "This program has been a tremendous help to us as a small business, and the men on the program have greatly benefited as well. We definitely would not have been able to hire them without the JOBS Plus program." Jim Schroeder, Owner, Northwest Building Contractors, Athena

13. **Employer:** "Here in Wallowa County, unemployment is among the highest in the State. This program has helped [name] provide jobs. Most of the employees who began working for our company through the JOBS Plus program still work for us, and at higher income levels." Jeff Harman, Owner, Joseph Bronze Art, manufacturer, Joseph

Employer: "I hired my first JOBS Plus person in late October. I pay her \$? an hour more than required, so you can see we're not 'using' her. I have nothing but good things to say about the person and the program...I have yet another position opening up next week and based on past performance, I will try to fill it through the JOBS Plus program." Carolyn Stout, Manager, Grant County Fair and Rodeo, John Day

14. **Employer:** "JOBS Plus helped [us- public agency] stay open during the budget cuts of the '90's. I would be interested in seeing it continued, even under revised conditions." Faith Adams, Librarian, Nyssa Public Library, Nyssa
15. **Employer:** "The program gave our company the financial incentive to take a chance on individuals that normally may not have made it through our screening process. These individuals did not come with the computer/technical skills, clerical skills or even all the social skills necessary to be successful in the working world. What they did come with was the overwhelming desire to make their life better. That desire, coupled with training time has developed positive employees for our company. In all cases we have had successful relationships. Of the six JOBS Plus employees we have hired, three are still working for our company at a salary range of \$25,000-\$40,000, two moved away, and one went on to finish college and develop a new career path." Lauren Dailey, CFO, The Studio Resource, Inc., Clackamas

"I saw a need and I realized that, through the periods of struggles in my life, there was always someone there to help me."

Anita Moore



Woman *to* Woman

MENTORING

By VALEREE LANE
H&N Lifestyles Editor

During the past 18 months, a quiet revolution has been staged in the Klamath Basin.

A campaign to provide resources for citizens who would normally be

his belief in the women's program and continues to support its efforts, he knew that a man could not meet or understand the



Kim
Brooks
— are
prepar-

for citizens who would normally be marginalized was launched in the Woman-to-Woman Mentoring program and the success of the endeavor is being enjoyed by participants and organizers alike.

"We respect ourselves more and know that we are better than other people thought we were," said Melissa Watley, a recent graduate of the program and now training to be a mentor herself.

Many of the participants are new to the workforce, having previously provided for their families via public assistance. Through the Jobs Plus program, which provides employment training opportunities in partnership with government agencies and local employers, many of the women are in a place they never imagined being and are in need of additional emotional support.

"It's darn hard to make it on minimum wage," said mentor Amy Hathaway. "These ladies are in need of additional social support and this network is vital to their success."

The statewide welfare-to-work initiative focused on the self-actualizing need for human beings to be engaged in productive work, but there was no means to provide a resource for the newly employed to acquire the life skills necessary to maintain employment and improve their circumstances.

In 1989, Robert Kingzett, Jeld-Wen's assistant director of public affairs, was touring the United States providing information to others about Oregon's Jobs Plus program. In his travels, he found a non-profit women's program in Kansas City, Kan., which focused on the total person — addressing employment needs, development of functional skills for every-day life and providing the network of support necessary to assure success.

Everyone needs someone to lean on at one point or another.

"We begin by addressing the issue of self-esteem," Kingzett said, following the monthly Women-to-Women meeting June 16, which also marked the inaugural meeting for Men-to-Men Mentoring. "Without improved self-esteem, these people's problems become insurmountable."

While Kingzett is quick to affirm

understand the needs of a woman the way another woman could. Enter Anita Moore, an employment specialist with Jobs Plus, working for Jeld-Wen under the umbrella of the American Institute for Full Employment.

"I saw a need and I realized that, through the periods of struggles in my life, there was always someone there to help me," Moore said, explaining her initiative to take the program from concept to reality.

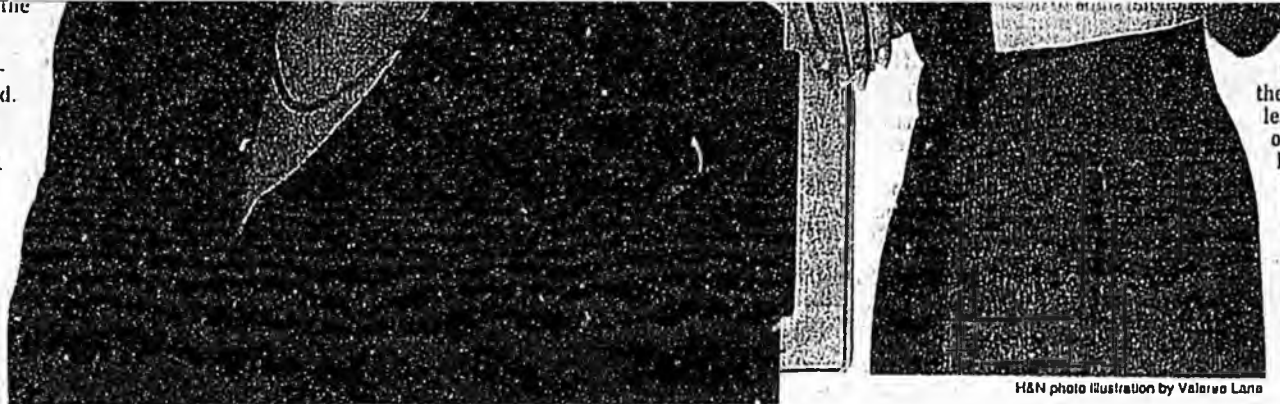
"Anita has done a fantastic job putting this together," Kingzett said. "There is very little cost involved, because it is all volunteer and Anita is able to get donations when necessary. She does this over and above her regular job and it is successful because she has the gift of being able to see the needs of the whole person."

She has been assisted in the facilitation of the program by Tracy Jeffers of Adult and Family Services and a board of directors dedicated to helping others improve their lot in life.

Moore said that there has been a conscious decision for the program to be run on a basis of volunteerism and requests for goods and services when needed. "It takes us back to the days when communities pulled together to help each other and did not rely on the government for help," she said, noting applying for a grant would be limiting the possibilities of the program.

"If we apply for a grant, how can we go to other communities and say: 'This is how it can be done?'" said Moore, who has traveled to other Oregon cities in recent weeks discussing the program with those interested in making a difference in their own communities.

"People do not participate



H&N photo illustration by Valeria Lana

preparing to share the lessons they've learned with others. Cool helped lead the home decoration discussion June 16, a marked improvement from her initial days in the program when she seldom

Mentoring makes a difference

Many of the participants in a statewide meeting held last fall were concerned that working with the harder-to-place portion of public assistance recipients will require more training and mentoring.

One means of addressing the need is a program called Woman-to-Woman, which was developed in Klamath Falls 18 months ago. The program was designed to help women develop skills that will lead to better job retention. Its focus is to develop self-esteem and self-sufficiency and assist women in setting goals for themselves.

The program involves women mentoring women outside the workplace and draws on community volunteers to partner and

meet weekly with specific participants.

Participants also take monthly classes in a wide array of topics including budgeting, time management and personal presentation. In Klamath Falls, the program also partners with YMCA so participants have easily accessible child care. After one year, participants graduate and become mentors for the next group of participants.

The program has now grown large enough that applications are being taken in advance. A men's program is now underway, too.

Those interested in participating, either as a mentor or being mentored, may call Anita Moore, 850-2600 ext. 2, or Tracy Jeffers, 883-5511 ext. 211.

because they are drawn to some political agenda," Hathaway said. "They believe in the ideal of helping others and in turn helping themselves."

Debi Catron, another mentor, says the program is very good for her. "It gives you a reality check and makes you assess what you are doing, as you are encouraging someone else to set goals and plan," she said, noting

that everyone needs a mentor.

"I don't believe there is a time in my life when I don't need mentoring," she said. "People in my life have taught me and I may never be able to repay them directly, but I can pass the knowledge on to someone who will pass it on to someone else and we will all benefit."

Watley and other recent graduates — Toni Clark, Charity Cool and

spoke, according to Moore.

"I've never been a people person, but (speaking in front of others) is not as difficult as it would have been before," Cool said. "The mentoring has been very beneficial to me. It's been great and a lot of fun. Tracy and Anita have been very supportive and we've all become good friends."

Shelley Ryan-Aungst is a mentor and a member of the mentoring board of directors. She says that she is excited about the progress she's seen the women make and can relate to some of the alienation they may feel, as she is disabled.

"I love the program. It is so wonderful. Here are some ladies with big battles in life and they are receiving the support they need to keep going," she said. A recent article she wrote for the program's newsletter focused on Toni Clark, who recently was married and is managing a video store.

"It's been a lot of hard work for her, but her life is really coming together," said Ryan-Aungst.

Catron notes that the weekly contact outside the monthly group meetings is integral to the women's success. "Something devastating can happen in one day, but they are able to call and talk things through."

"It's an extremely trusting environment," Hathaway said. "Some of these women are overcoming incredible obstacles, like drug and alcohol addiction, but they are learning they can do a lot more than they gave themselves credit for and have support in doing it."

