

**Try-A-Trade reaches 432 young people from 24 different schools in our region.** Organizers are appreciative of PacMtn's ongoing support for this event highlighting the occupations and work of the skilled trades and allowing young people direct interactions and hand-on experiences with the people, equipment and tools of the skilled trades.

**Microsoft Software & Systems Academy, a Camo2Commerce program** was mentioned during a hearing before the House Committee on Veteran's Affairs! One of the graduates of the program working at Microsoft sent the message to Camo2Commerce staff thanking them again for their great work.

**PacMtn presented the MyJOB (Journey Out Beyond)** program at the Governor's Results WA Goal Council. Invited by the State Rehabilitation Administration, MyJOB was used as an example of the partnerships needed to create success and limit recidivism for incarcerated youth.

**Forest and Wood Products Sector Partnership Kick-Off Meeting** was held May 26<sup>th</sup>. Employers from the Forest and Wood Products Industry came to talk about their workforce needs and to brainstorm options. Using funds from the National Emergency Grant for Industry Sector Development, staff will develop a work plan that supports the industry and present it back to participants in September.

**Olympic Panel Products begins employee lay-offs in June.** PacMtn immediately applied for Rapid Response funding (\$344,000) that will continue the Transition Center in Mason County, bringing important resources to those workers. The application for Federal Trade Act Assistance that will enhance those services and supports is also underway.

**Workforce Integrated Technology (WIT) system called WorkSourceWA** went live May 3 with an internal staff launch. While there is still much to do and to learn about the new system and its capabilities, the roll out and conversion went pretty well. Some tweaking and a few major refinements are still needed, but owing to the commitment of Employment Security staff and the local trainers, it was not as problematic as anticipated. July 6, Governor Inslee will announce the public launch of WorkSourceWA.com promoting its services and capability to seekers, employers and partners.

**Washington Service Corps struts at state Capitol.** Washington Service Corps members educated state Capitol visitors about their programs during AmeriCorps Week earlier this quarter. Andrea Springer, Washington Service Corps member serving at WorkSource Thurston, took time from WorkSource duties to reach out to prospective members. One of Andrea's many jobs at WorkSource Thurston is helping customers with their computer skills.

**One Life at a Time...** Responding to Board Member's desire to hear from customers and about the services that helped them, four newly hired PacMtn employees, all of whom were recently served by programs in local WorkSources will share their stories and describe the programs that made a difference. See also the attached individual statements.



# Workforce Development Career Pathway – Success Stories –

Name: Charles Romero

Employer: PacMtn WDC

Position: MyJOB Workforce Development  
Specialist

Location: Green Hill School, Chehalis, WA

## Personal Story

I am driven by a need to serve others. It is, therefore, not surprising that I now find myself working for PacMtn, an organization likewise focused on service. The very circumstances under which I first came on board revolved around that same core value! I responded to an ad for an AmeriCorps position at PacMtn that asked, “Do you want to change the world?” I, a more-than-a-little-cynical, recently-returned Peace Corps volunteer, thought to myself, “Yeah. Yeah, I do.” And that’s how I first stepped into the world of workforce development.

The next year was filled with everything from familiarizing myself with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to having heart-to-hearts with participants in Uplift!, our program designed for out-of-school youth. Through the myriad experiences afforded me during my time at PacMtn, I began to grasp the full complexity and depth of what it means to be a trailblazer in a system that had too often been governed by thousand-page laws instead of the needs of those we serve. The example set by both my supervisor, Sarah Wilkins, and our CEO, Cheryl Fambles, encouraged me to stretch my vision beyond what has already been done and maybe even make a “Great Learning Mistake.” I was inspired—

And then I left to pursue my dream of becoming a high school English teacher... only to realize 6 months into my program that working in direct service to marginalized youth is where my passions lie and, furthermore, that working for an organization in which I wholeheartedly believe is not something to be casually cast aside.

So, now I’m back! I am a proud Workforce Development Specialist for the MyJOB program, guiding incarcerated youth as they “journey out beyond.” I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of this amazing organization, and I can’t wait to see how far we’ll go in the years to come!

## What workforce development based programming made a difference in your life?

### AmeriCorps

Serving at PacMtn gave me the chance to try my hand at tasks I had never done before and to gain valuable work experiences I would not have found elsewhere. The strong focus on both professional and personal development gave me the room and the grace I needed to grow, all while doing meaningful work that fed me literally and spiritually. I realize now more than ever that it was no accident I saw that ad asking if I wanted to change the world, because I did want to change the world, and now I *am*.



# Workforce Development Career Pathway – Success Stories –

Name: *Autumn Anderson*

Employer: *Pacific Mountain WDC*

Position: *Workforce Development  
Specialist*

Location: *WorkSource – Thurston/Lewis*

## Personal Story

After having spent approximately 10 years as a case manager in the field of Domestic Violence, I found myself laid off for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. I was in the process of obtaining my Bachelors of Science in Psychology, 5 classes away, when I found myself on unemployment. As a single parent, bringing home 1/3 of what I was making, and very little food stamps, I felt lost and alone.

In February 2015 I received a letter from Employment Security saying I could be eligible for a program and forwarded me information for an orientation. I attended the orientation, had a chat with Michael, and he said he doubted I would be able to do what was required in a short period of time. I called him the following Monday, made an appointment, cried a lot, and filled out more paperwork than I think I have my entire life. Proved his time line for me inaccurate. Unfortunately, I could not get help finishing my bachelors, so I had to choose a new program. I had always planned on going into the legal field and becoming a Guardian Ad Litem, but this was about 5 years earlier than I had originally planned. I jumped in and trusted the journey and ended up changing my educational goals, and will be going to law school in the very near future.

I felt supported by Michael every step of the way. Shortly after I had started my classes he introduced me to Mieko and Stacey, who in turn introduced me to Lauren and I became her intern. I was able to make additional money from my training benefits, get assistance fixing my car, clothes, new experiences, extra food, help paying bills, and have built lifelong friendships with co-workers.

I was coming to the end of my internship, and desperate for a better job. Knowing that I still had to finish my AAS in Paralegal Studies, and having applied to law school, I knew I needed a job. I was so sad to be leaving the PacMtn family, and then one day Karen asked me to apply. I did, a few days later I had my interview. I felt it was just meant to be. I love helping people. I love empowering people to be the best they can be. I love case management. This job has given me more than a paycheck. It has given me stability, family, friends, and support for my education.

## What workforce development based programming made a difference in your life?

Dislocated Worker – Michael challenged me and made me think outside of the box. Gave me a huge boost in self confidence, connected me with other training benefits and assisted with payment of tuition and books.

Journey to Jobs – This program helped me with food, gas, car repair, clothes, bills, and my internship with PREP and eventually my job as a Community Jobs Case Manager, which has taken me out of poverty.



# Workforce Development Career Pathway – Success Stories –

Name: *Loretta Thomas*

Employer: *Thurston County Chamber*

Position: *Business Service Representative*

Location: *WorkSource – Grays Harbor*

## Personal Story

I started my career in the Forest Industry cutting brush in the woods in the Lake Quinault area. After a year or so I transitioned into working on the cedar shake claims in the same area cutting shake blocks and running a shake claim until the mid-90s. I eventually moved to the Aberdeen area and took a job as an Operations Manager for 6 years fabricating tanning bed acrylics. The experience I gained during that time provided the skills necessary to facilitate additional career advancement opportunities. I transitioned to a higher level position at Westport Shipyard in 2003 as a Fiberglass/Top Coater Finisher. I continued to work there running projects and training all new employees for our department until the layoffs started throughout the company.

With the layoffs occurring at the Westport Shipyard I managed to last until round 3 of the layoffs and was unsure what to do next. I was afraid and frustrated by the fact I had to find another job. I went to WorkSource to apply for unemployment and was given a better understanding of the resources in place to assist. I was notified that I was on a list to receive benefits and training if I chose to accept it. That meant I could go to school and be retrained to work in another field because I had come from an industry in decline. At the time I was in my late thirties and had not been engaged in school for many years, but I decided to jump in head first and pursue the opportunities placed in front of me. I was unemployed on Dec 4<sup>th</sup> 2009 and started my first day of college on January 4<sup>th</sup> as a dislocated worker. I graduated Evergreen State College in 2015 with my Bachelor's Degree.

Being part of the Public Workforce System has changed my life in so many ways. I went from a woman that worked in the dirt and grime, which took its toll on my entire body, to an amazing job full of amazing people that I get to collaborate with and assist our customers daily. The transition between industries and learning the cultural differences between working in production to working in an office environment has not always been easy, but the Workforce System and the programs offered gave me the opportunity to figure out what else I am great at, and the ability to be here today to help others like myself, that want to make a change in their lives.

I began working at WorkSource Grays Harbor as an intern while in school, and then advanced to an AmeriCorps position housed at WorkSource as well. In these roles I found myself assisting the business services team in the office and spent time connecting with employers and assisting in posting jobs and pre-screening candidates to help employers find the right talent to meet their needs. I was responsible for sending all the materials to the employers and I enjoyed engaging with our community and working to assist employers in meeting their needs. When the position came open for the B2B Representative I knew it was a great opportunity to move my career forward.

## What workforce development based programming made a difference in your life?

WorkFirst Program in 1998 was an OJT. I was a single mother at the time and the this program landed me my job at SunCorp supply as the Operations manager for the next 5 years.

Dislocated Worker 2009 - along with that was the Commissioner Approved Training that was attached to my unemployment. This allowed me to jump right into college and be able to support myself while I got my AAS in Human Service.

AmeriCorps 2012-2015 - In September of 2012 I became the AmeriCorps Member at WorkSource and continued in the program for the next 3 years, while I worked on my Bachelor's degree at Evergreen State College.