

## **WIA Participant Success Stories**

### **Andrea Burnett**

**Andrea Burnett** did not know her life with UPS would take a turn to a dead end; however, **Burnett's** UPS Truck Driving job blew out overnight leaving her jobless. This would be the first time she faced unemployment since she had begun working when she was only 14 years old. She went to the **South Carolina Employment Commission** where she heard about the **One-Stop System**. After choosing the **McAlister Square One-Stop location**, **Burnett** began to work on her resume and look for a job. During her job search, she kept hitting roadblocks as she sought a full time position. It was before the Christmas holiday in and finding a permanent job in the trucking industry was next to impossible. **Burnett** lacked the required Class A License to be a truck driver for positions she would otherwise have qualified for. **Burnett** knew that she needed a career in the field that she enjoyed so much instead of going into a nowhere position. **Dawn Darrington, Program Coordinator**, saw that **Burnett** was struggling searching persistently for the right job and encouraged her to attend orientation to become a WIA participant. **Burnett** took **Darrington's** advice and qualified for **WIA's** program in December, 2006. The horizon began to look promising when her **Case Manager, Denise Gary**, was able to place her in the CDL program at **Greenville Technical College** that would enable her to earn the license she would need to drive an 18 wheeler. **Burnett** stated that, "If people want to have a career, are willing to put the effort into reaching their goals, and succeed, the **One-Stop System** is the place for them." Knowing the ups and downs on the road of life, **Burnett** understood the importance of taking advantage of this unique opportunity that had been offered to her. **Burnett** knew that with the ever evolving and changing global economy, a strong educational background is a must, or it would be impossible to excel in any field, job, or career. At the age of 50, she took the incredible challenge of going back to school at **Greenville Technical College** in the **Truck Driver Training Program**. Her driving motivational source enabled her to transition her gravely path into a concrete reality. **Burnett** stated, "A person is never too old or too young to learn." In March, 2007, **Burnett** traveled the highway on a Greyhound Bus to Cookeville, TN where she is currently training for her new position with **Averitt Express**. When **Burnett** completes her nine week orientation, she will return to the upstate to become truck driver with her new company. **Burnett** now glances out of the rear view mirror at the passing of dead end jobs, and looks forward to the wide open road full of new opportunities, and her dream of becoming a truck driver fulfilled.

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### **Sherri McDowell**

**Sherri McDowell** has maintained a 4.0 GPA at **Greenville Technical College** in the **Human Service Program**. **McDowell** is a member of the prestigious **National Technical Honor Society**, and the **International Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa**. She has worked diligently in her training since 2005 when she joined **WIA** on her quest for employment and a better tomorrow. **McDowell** had an absolute fear of school because she did not believe in her academic abilities; however, with the help of her **Case Manager, Denise Gary**, **McDowell** has proven that she is not only a scholar; she is a confident, skilled asset to our community. **McDowell** is currently working with **Rosewood House Recovery** as a **Patient Technician**.

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### **Rhonda Sissel**

Like so many others, **Rhonda Sissel** felt the sting of NAFTA in 2005 when her company, Kemet Electronics Corporation and employer of 18 years, moved her position to China. **Sissel** was a manager working with engineers that tested electronic products. With advancements in technology, the Bachelors Degree in Computer Science she earned in 1984 was not the asset it once was. **Sissel** went to **South Carolina Employment Security Commission** in June, 2005 to seek new employment. She was then guided to **WIA's Trade Orientation** where she was informed about the **One- Stop System** and how **WIA** could help her. After registering and working out a case management plan, she and her **Case Manager, Carmelita Nelson**, concluded that it was imperative she upgrade her skills in the computer area to make her marketable. After enrolling in the **Workforce Technical Certification Program** at **Carolina Computer Training**, she focused on the MCSD program. After obtaining one of her certificates, she became an instructor at **Carolina Computer Training**. She then elected to participate in the **Work Experience Program** with the **Greenville County Administration Information Services Department**. This gave her the opportunity to demonstrate her skills and work in her chosen field. Meanwhile, she continued her job search, and networking with friends and associates paid off. **Elliott Davis, LLC**, the largest CPA firm headquartered in South Carolina not only interviewed her but also extended her a position as a Pension Assistant. She began her position in February, 2007 with **Elliott Davis, LLC**.

**Sissel's** degree, training, and background, gave her the edge she needed to secure this exciting and new opportunity.

**Jill Williams**, Shareholder in the Retirement Advantage group at **Elliott Davis, LLC** with **Rhonda Sissel**, **Pension Assistant**.

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## **Aristotle Mendez**

*"I'd like to extend a special thanks to Denise Gary and the Workforce Development and One Stop for believing in and allowing me to become a realtor." - Mendez*

**Aristotle Mendez** resided in New York City with his wife and two children. Mendez worked with Leor Management as Property Manager, Administrator, and Bookkeeper for five years gaining experience in the Property Management field. However, he wanted more for his family. **Mendez** sought a safe environment where his children could get a good education and play outside during the winter without freezing or being in any type of danger. **Mendez** and his wife visited Greenville, South Carolina where his wife's aunt was building a new home. They fell in love with the area after they found everything he and his family were looking for in the Upstate of South Carolina. He promptly packed up his family and moved to Greenville not only looking for a new house but a place to call home. After researching for gainful employment, he located the **Greenville County Workforce Development** via the internet. He went to orientation and took all of the steps he needed to do to qualify. **WIA** and his **Case Manager, Denise Gary**, began working with him in August, 2006. **Mendez** needed to find a way to build onto his work experience for his new career path in South Carolina. Real Estate classes were approved and he was on his way. When **Mendez** came to **WIA** he was unemployed, conducting job searches and was not able to secure a fulltime position. In five months, **Mendez** has proven to be a great success. He is now very accomplished holding certificates in **Property Management, Real Estate First Year Sales, Real Estate Post Licensing**. He is also a member of the **Greater Greenville Association of Realtors, the National Association of Realtors**, and is employed with **Century 21 Bob Cates Realtors** in **Powdersville, South Carolina**.

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