



Santa Cruz Works!

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Cultural Partnerships : La Vida en Artes Grant projects

As part of the three-year U.S. Department of Education La Vida en Artes grant, four Santa Cruz County schools are learning academics and life skills through the arts. The grant is being funneled through the Santa Cruz County schools department and administered by Santa Cruz County Workforce Development.

- Kino Academy participated in an acrylic painting/mural project where the importance of color schemes and aesthetics was stressed, lending an authentic Latin American feel to the Hispanic-themed artwork. The project concluded with an art exhibition at Kino on March 14.
- Students at Kino Academy began working with Artist Joseph Birkett on mosaic benches, in math, culture and science themes. The project began in January and will end at the beginning of April.
- Also under Joseph Birkett, the students at Santa Cruz Alternative High School are participating in publishing and creative writing workshop. They are learning various aspects of the publishing trade, such as format and design. Students at Santa Cruz Alternative High School and Wade Carpenter Middle School are working on a photography project, under the supervision of Tucson artist Sharon Parker.

Starting with disposable cam-

eras, they have moved on to 35mm, and are learning various concepts in design and visual communication.

Wade Carpenter students will have an in-school exhibition on April 28. On May 5, they will host a photography exhibition at the 1904 Courthouse, which will be open to the community. On May 12, the exhibition will travel south to the Nogales, Sonora Casa de Cultura. The high school's exhibitions

dates have yet to be determined.

- Kino Academy students are beginning web design training, working with Barbara Johnson of Alianza Marketing.
- The students at Wade Carpenter are also making a film with Armando Romero, Wade Carpenter teacher and artist-in-residence, and graduate students Andrew McCabe and Alicia Barron. Students hope to have public showings of their film, "Making Up Megaboy," to be announced at a later date.
- At Mexicayotl Academy, Artist Luis Mena led the students in a mural project which decorates the side of the school facility on Morley Avenue. The students are now beginning a corridos workshop in which they will learn musical fundamentals and eventually write their own songs.



JoAnn di Filippo, Workforce Development consultant, and employees Clariza Barron, Irma Martinez, Vanessa Quintero and Stephanie Bermudez view the colorful designs produced by the students at Kino Academy



Photo by Wade Carpenter student Edgar Gonzalo as part of La Vida en Artes

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Anyone with a 35mm camera is encouraged to make a tax-deductible donation to the ongoing arts program. Workforce Development is also asking for donations of guitars and electronic keyboards for an upcoming corridos module of the La Vida en Artes grant at Mexicayotl Academy. To make donations, please stop by 2935 N. Grand Ave or call 375-7670 to arrange for pick up.

For questions regarding this newsletter or Workforce Development's programs contact:

Genevieve Gutierrez:
2935 N. Grand Ave. Nogales, AZ 85621
(520) 375-7670
ggutierrez@co.santa-cruz.az.us

WIA Reauthorization

State and local workforce officials have expressed a need for more funding in light of current economic conditions.
-General Accounting Office

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which is the primary source of funding for Santa Cruz County Workforce Development, will expire on Sept. 30. The Bush Administration has proposed a plan for renewal which includes a significant reduction in funding.

WIA provides for One-Stop systems across the U.S. Locally, there are the Nogales One-Stop located in the 1904 Courthouse and the Santa Cruz County One-Stop located on North Grand Avenue.

The purpose of WIA is to facilitate economic growth on a national, regional and local level through increased productivity, enhanced employment opportunities and through a better skilled workforce.

Budget cuts

The proposed reauthorization plan drastically reduces WIA funding. According to a September 2002 report by the General Accounting Office, the Bush Administration proposed a \$359 million reduction in fiscal year 2002 and a \$343 million reduction in 2003.

"In both cases, the administration has cited the states' large amount of unexpended funds carried over from the prior year. However, state and local workforce officials have expressed a need for more funding in light of current economic conditions," the report states.

The Senate approved a bill on March 25 to restore WIA to its 2002 funding levels, adding \$678 million to the budget. However, the House recently voted on a bill that closely adheres to the original proposal.

The 2003 workforce investment budget took a 15 percent cut in 2003, according to David Briggs, the National Association of Workforce Boards public policy specialist. After months of wrangling with the proposal, more than \$650 million in cuts were made, he said.

Of the federal funds available to local WIA providers, funds allocated to dislocated worker programs were cut by \$86 million from 2002 to 2003, and another \$80 million in cuts are proposed for the coming fiscal year.

Youth monies were cut by \$127 million or 11 percent in 2003, and youth opportunity grants were cut by 80 percent. In the coming fiscal year, the administration has proposed elimination of youth opportunity grants.

Migrant and seasonal worker program funding was cut by \$10 million in 2003 and is also facing elimination in 2004. Youth offenders monies, currently budgeted at \$55 million will, as well, be done away with.

Under the reauthorization bill, funds will pass through the state and will then be distributed to local One-Stop Centers. The governor of each state has authority to create policies affecting all in-state One-Stops. A number of programs and funding streams will be grouped to reduced duplicity and inefficiency.

The Bush Administration's proposal for renewal hopes to make the One-Stop system more responsive to and individualized for customers and employers; clarify the roles between government entities; and improve overall performance of the program.

There are a number of

changes being proposed. They include:

Local Boards

Local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) members will represent community industry sectors and geographical areas. Also, the board will be whittled down. Partners will no longer be required to be on the WIB, but will remain involved through memoranda of understanding.

This is to allow greater representation of businessmen on the board, education officials and community groups. Thus far, it has been the common belief that boards are too large to be fully productive.

Youth Councils

The Bush Administration's proposal eliminates the requirement for youth councils, which have proven ineffective in enhancing local efforts.

Services for Adults

The bill combines funding streams for WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker and Wagner-Peyser (Employment Services), which currently are separate, to provide for streamlined program administration. The President's FY 04 budget request for this program is \$3.08 billion

Reemployment Funds

Per the Administration's proposal, the bill provides \$3.6 billion in mandatory funding for the creation of Back to Work accounts to provide eligible individuals up to \$3,000 to purchase intensive, training, or supportive services through the One-Stop Delivery System.

(Continued on page 3)



Photo by Wade Carpenter Middle School student Susana Melendez through the Cultural Partnerships grant.

(Continued from page 2)

One-Stops, under these personal re-employment accounts, will operate on a fee-for-service basis. If an individual becomes employed within 13 weeks of the receiving the account, the balance of account will be paid to the client as a cash bonus.

Youth Program

WIA currently targets in-school and out-of-school youth, but bill reforms target only out-of-school youth. A minimum and maximum change in state and local area allotment percentages and a small state minimum allotment is included in the fund-

ing formula. The bill authorizes this program at \$1 billion, reduced 11 percent from the 2002 level.

Adult Education

The Adult Basic Education Skills Act (ABE) is Title II of the WIA, and is a mandatory partner in the One-Stop system. ABE also serves those who are working to get a GED, are preparing for higher education, or are taking English as a Second Language (ESL). The bill authorizes this program at \$584.3 million.

Locally, the ABE program is run by Nogales Unified School District and by the Literacy Volunteers of Santa Cruz County at the Nogales One-Stop.



NAWB Conference brings new light to WIA

By Genevieve H. Gutiérrez

As the snowstorm subsided in Washington D.C., four Santa Cruz County Workforce Development staffers arrived for the annual workforce convention.

I had the opportunity to attend the National Association of Workforce Boards Forum 2003 in D.C. from Saturday, March 1 until Tuesday, March 4, and as the snow gently melted into the earth, a new storm began.

A brainstorm. More than anything, and I believe I speak for my colleagues in saying so, the conference gave us the opportunity to see what other workforce investment areas are doing well and what we can do better in serving the residents of Santa Cruz County.

Workshops began bright and early Saturday morning and continued through Tuesday afternoon. After each workshop Deputy County Manager Carlos Rivera, Workforce Development Director Nils Urman, Program Manager Vanezza Gallego and I at-

tended, we'd rush at each other with a fluid stream of ideas – things we'd like to see happen in our program, truly doable things.

In our free time, we'd continue discussing these ideas. In our sleep, we dreamed up new ones.

I, personally, attended workshops mainly targeted at workforce investment board (WIB) members (read: I am Santa Cruz County Workforce Development's staff to the board). I learned my role in the larger picture and how to facilitate positive changes on the board, as staff.

A number of workshops stressed the importance of a strong public relations campaign – letting the community know what it is you do and all the positive changes brought to local residents. Reaching out makes the community aware of the services being provided at the one-stop and lets them know that federal tax dollars are being reinvested for the overall economic welfare of the community.

Former Wisconsin Congressman Steve Gun-

person stressed the importance of outreach, especially when it comes to senators and congressmen. "You need to bring your business community, and your policymakers together back home – with the media present – to articulate your message," he said.

Arriving back in sunny Arizona, it was time to put what we learned to work. So in an attempt to let the community, clients, potential clients, partners and political representatives know what it is we do at Santa Cruz County Workforce Development, we've compiled a newsletter detailing changes and happenings in the local and national workforce system.

Should you have any questions, comments or concerns, feel free to call us at (520) 375-7670 or e-mail me at ggutierrez@co.santa-cruz.az.us.

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Future CNAs climb to the top

Santa Cruz County is feeling the effects of a nationwide crisis. There is an excess of job vacancies in the high-tech and medical fields and an enormous labor pool that doesn't have the skills to fill the jobs.

Santa Cruz County Workforce Development is conducting continuous training for people wanting to be Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs).

Workforce Development Business Relations Manager Shannon Rivera said the objective is to train service industry workers with limited English language skills to become CNAs. The graduates of the program will earn higher paid positions in their field and leave vacancies for new entry-level workers.

The grant, funneled through Pima County Community Services, will train 20 low-income workers each in Pima, Cochise and Santa Cruz counties. Participants will receive state credentials and wage gains of up to \$4 per hour.

Individuals will work their way up a skill ladder toward higher paying medical careers, and the community will

benefit from a continuum of entry-level medical positions.

Twelve students began the class on Oct. 23, 2002. "To address the limited English barriers," Rivera said, "students were placed in a contextual English class for 120 hours." They learned English through a base of medical terms, immediately applicable in their current place of employment.

The same students then began a 120-hour CNA course taught by Pima Community College's Center for Training and Development. "Those students are going to be graduating on April 10, and the instructor estimates that all of them will pass their state exam," Rivera said.

Instructor Laura Zeinun, who has taught the class since January, said of her students, "They're all young people with a vision to improve themselves and I guess I'm a part of that, so that's nice."

"We're getting down to the end and I'm sure that each and every one feels good about the time they spent and the effort they put into this - and I do too."

A second phase of English classes began in January and the CNA training will begin in April.

"They're all young people with a vision to improve themselves and I guess I'm a part of that, so that's nice."

-Instructor Laura Zeinun

WIA Youth programs on wheels:

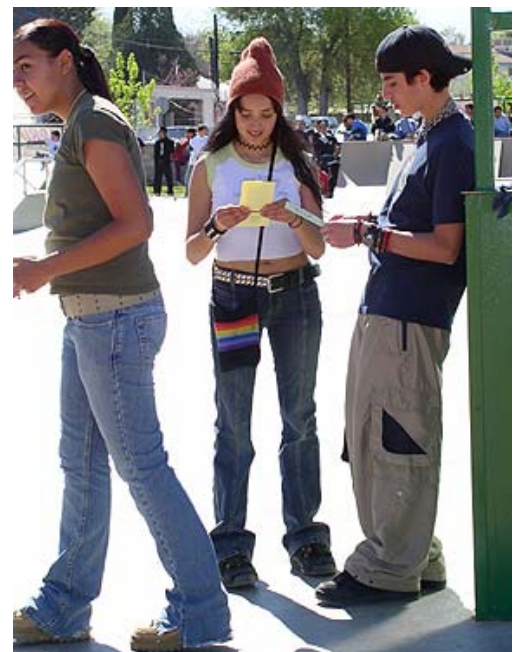
One-Stop uses local skate competition to circulate information



Local WIA Youth participants set up a booth at a skate competition held at the Nogales Skate Park on March 29. They passed out informative flyers regarding all the services available to those ages 14 to 21 at Santa Cruz County Workforce Development. An estimated 600 adults and children attended the event.



WIA participant Jenny Pina



WIA participant Ivy Baez hands out flyers to skate contest attendees.