

Training, Inc.

A UNIQUE APPROACH TO JOB TRAINING, OFFERED BY THE YWCA OF GREATER PITTSBURGH.
AFFILIATED WITH THE TRAINING, INC. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Job program gives welfare recipients a chance

By Jerry Vondas

The Pittsburgh Press

IN 1978, TED was a 19-year-old ex-convict living on welfare in Chicago. He had spent time in jail for theft and recently had been paroled.

Since he had earned a General Equivalency Degree while in prison, Ted was encouraged by his welfare worker to participate in a Training, Inc. program that offered him the basics in general office work.

"After completing the program, Ted joined the office force at Peoples Gas & Energy Co. in Chicago," says Shirley Mueller, now director of Pittsburgh's Training, Inc. program.

"I've been in contact with Ted through the years. He's done very well and has been promoted several times."

Mrs. Mueller had been in charge of the Chicago program for nine years before coming to Pittsburgh in November to start a similar operation here. She is working through the YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh, which is sponsoring the program.

She and her husband, Theodore, an instructor and eight-year veteran of the program, are making their home in Emsworth.

Training, Inc. is a 14-week office career training program for men and women ages 18 to 60 who are on welfare. They must have high school diplomas. The program has operated successfully in Chicago for 12 years, Indianapolis for six years, Boston for three years and Newark for one year.

Initially, there will be two 14-week training sessions here. The first begins Jan. 22 in Room 240, 550 Wood St., Downtown. "We'll only accept 36 men and women for our first class," Mrs. Mueller says. "We will expand if we see the interest is there. We are encouraging women with children under 6 who have been on welfare to sign up for the program."

The city provides 50 percent of the funding for the program, and the county 50 percent (via state funds). At present \$200,000 has been allocated for the two training sessions.

Seed money for the project came from such foundations as Eden Hall, Richard King Mellon, PPG Industries, Alcoa and Buhl, Rockwell Inter-

national, Pittsburgh Presbytery Task Force on Employment and the Airport Area Chamber of Commerce also contributed.

The program involves instruction in typing, accounting, general office procedures, data and word processing, business math and English.

There will be six teachers who have had clerical experience.

"We're not just an employment agency," Mrs. Mueller says. "We're primarily interested in human development. People need to have the financial means to be independent. Anyone who's been on welfare for a long time is caught in a dependency cycle."

"Our aim is to motivate their self-confidence and enable them to become financially independent."

Mrs. Mueller says the clients are also taught to write resumes. "We do look for job leads and introduce them to employment personnel. Once they're given a lead it's up to them to sell themselves to the employer."

Please see Training, E5

"When her husband died, Nellie went on welfare. She had no skills. After completing our program, she was hired by an insurance company in their accounting department at \$6 an hour."

Scott Morris, owner and manager of Software World in New York City and a volunteer for Training, Inc., in Newark, N.J., says the retention rate of Training, Inc., graduates in Newark after one year is 87 percent.

"It's a credit to the program when you consider this is happening in Newark, a city with a large high school dropout rate and high unemployment," Morris says.

Morris hired a Training, Inc., graduate for his small staff in Manhattan.

"Gerrie has done a fine job. She's 24 years old, married, with two children. She was on welfare for a long time. I pay her \$6 an hour to handle all telephone calls and inquiries. We do a lot of consulting, so she has her work cut out for her."

Morris says when he was working for the First National Bank in Chicago,

The jobs are primarily entry-level clerical positions, Mrs. Mueller says, and the pay is usually in the \$5- to \$6-an-hour range.

The clients will attend classes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. If they have young children and need baby-sitting assistance, there are funds provided for that service, too. There also are funds for transportation and clothing allowances if needed.

Mrs. Mueller points with pride to Marie, a 46-year-old single parent with three children, who completed the course in Chicago.

"Marie had been on welfare for at least 15 years. She has three children, ranging in age from 17 to 22. While she was in her third month of the training cycle, her 17-year-old daughter became pregnant.

"At first she was devastated and wanted to quit. Then she decided it would be the wrong thing to do. She told me she was going to finish the program so she could be an example to her daughter — that welfare was not the ultimate goal."

