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CAN Web Site to Help Unemployed Connect with Local Jobs

Job Search Partnership Creates Online Community

A partnership between two local entrepreneurs has resulted in the formation of one of the largest job search and networking resources communities in the nation, says Chuck Proudfit, president of At Work on Purpose (AWOP), a nonprofit dedicated to helping people unite their faith and work lives.

Last spring, AWOP partnered with Bob Pautke, president of both Pro-Train and True North Career Services, Inc. and the Hyde Park United Methodist Church Job Search Focus Group (JSFG) to replicate the burgeoning Hyde Park group by offering job search help at up to a dozen local churches by the end of 2009.

AWOP has good relationships with local church leaders and accomplished that goal within three months, said Proudfit. Weekly or monthly JSFGs are now available at 18 local churches throughout the greater Cincinnati area so job seekers don't have to drive more than 15 minutes to a support group.

Proudfit and Pautke have created a Web site called Career Achievement Network (CAN), which is designed to help job seekers identify available jobs, practice skills like resume writing and elevator speeches, form support groups, share best practices, and network. The Web site went online Nov. 24.

Thirty volunteers run the job search groups at Cincinnati area churches, serving an average of 400 unemployed men and women per week, said Pautke. An electronic newsletter membership list for greater Cincinnati unemployed totals 2,600.

"This Web site will serve not only the unemployed, but the under-employed," said Proudfit. "Our national unemployment figures are officially 10 percent, but when you add the underemployed and those who have been unemployed for a long period of time, I believe that figure is greatly increased."

The CAN Web site allows free registration as well as a fee structure for enhanced organizational functions. Members join the site by creating a login ID, then upload resumes, join occupation groups, and search for available jobs.

"We would like to share this site with other cities so they can replicate the process and help their jobless populations," said Proudfit. "We have the infrastructure in place to help with the leadership process and system components."

The Hyde Park Job Search Focus Group is one of the largest and the longest-running job search group in the nation, said Pautke. About 12,000 people have been helped by the group since it formed in 1992.

True North funds the Web site because it is part of the company's mission to help people across their careers, said Pautke. Members can post individual profiles and

upgrade them by adding blogs and link social media accounts. Members can also use the site as an intranet tool and communicate with other members.

"People need to live balanced lives, and our access to available jobs can help people find work that will fulfill them over time," said Pautke. "Our view is to help people across a lifetime of a career-- from high school to retirement-- and help them on an integrated, or holistic basis."

While the job search groups are based at local churches, job seekers do not have to belong to a church in order to join, said Proudfit.

"Being out of work is a huge emotional and financial stress," said Proudfit, "particularly around the holiday season when we attend family gatherings and feel compelled to discuss career updates with family and friends.

"But being out of work also allows us the opportunity to re-assess what our true passions in the workplace are and how we can seek work that is satisfying and in accordance with our talents and mores over the long term. This is just another way that contemporary churches become relevant on Monday mornings in addition to Sundays."

The web site's address is: www.careerachievementnetwork.com.

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