

SE WORKS NEWSLETTER

A newsletter for SE Works friends, supporters, donors, employees, students, volunteers, and customers

SE Works Dahl Family Youth Education and Career Development Center

Fostering Successful Futures through Positive Relationships, Education and Career Development

Since 1997 SE Works has provided youth education and career development services to students age 16-21. We are certified as an Alternative Education Program through Advanced Education and serve over 120 youth annually.

The Youth Center has historically focused on preparing students to take the General Education Diploma (GED) exam and go on to college. We have always focused on the individual needs and goals of each student and worked hard to remove barriers and provide opportunities for success.

Due to increased fundraising in 2015, we are now able to serve students who are 16-24 years old and have dropped out of high school. Due to our fundraising efforts we can now serve students in SE Portland as well as students from all over the Portland area. Students come to us from as far away as Beaverton, Clackamas, Mollala, North Portland and Gresham. Some of our students have been out of school for quite a while. Most have experienced multiple barriers to success which may include poverty, homelessness, neglect, abuse, teen parenting, hunger, criminal backgrounds, and problems with drug or alcohol abuse. Our students have made the decision to make changes in their lives, complete high school and move on to college or a career. Throughout their time in the program, students build positive, deep and lasting relationships with peers and adults that help enable their path to col-

lege and career.

With the generous support and leadership of our Board of Directors and many sponsors and donors, the *SE Works Youth Dahl Center* has been developed to serve more students in deeper ways. In 2015, we tripled the size of the *Dahl Family Youth Education and Career Development Center* at our location on 79th and Foster. Our expanded center includes two complete classrooms with plenty of space for 15 students and eight computers each. The center also includes an expanded kitchen with plenty of counter and storage space and seating for the entire cohort. We have developed a computer lab with a dozen computers for students to use for GED studies, job search and to remain connected with family and support systems outside of school. In addition; we are building a library for our youth from donated books that will encourage them to read.

The expanded space has allowed us to increase our staffing to better serve the needs of our students. In addition to our two certified GED Cohort Teachers, we added a third certified teacher to oversee the Tutoring Center. We also added a College and Career Readiness Specialist and a Case Worker with a Master's in Social Work.

As stated in our mission statement above, our goal is to "foster successful futures" in whatever form is most appropriate for each student that walks in our door. We work closely with each student to identify their goals, assess their current academic and career readiness status and make a plan for them moving forward. While we have a tradition of providing GED instruction and transition to college, we understand that not everyone wants or needs a college diploma. There are many options for students to move into living wage careers through internships and apprenticeships. What drives us is helping students get to the next step in their academic and career

Friends, sponsors, partners,

As warmer weather approaches, programs are heating up at SE Works!



Dan Stein
SE Works President

The biggest change occurred in the *Dahl Family Youth Education Center*. Since January, we now utilize 10,200 square feet of classroom, counseling, computer lab, library, tutoring and kitchen space. We have a licensed principal, three licensed and certified teachers, an MSW case worker and a highly skilled College and Career Readiness Specialist! Our new Youth Director, **Gary Myers**, has initiated new and innovative programs that challenge our youth to discover and develop themselves beyond the attainment of a General Education Diploma. Our teachers are preparing the youth for the new and very challenging General Education Diploma based on Common Core Standards. Time in the classroom and in-depth tutoring are assisting our youth to pass the GED exam and transition to college and careers of their choice.

None of this would be possible if not for the generous support of our sponsors and donors. Of special note are the generous contributions of **Mark O'Donnell, Glenn Dahl and Dennis and Marie Gilliam**. Their heartfelt commitments are detailed in this newsletter. Their commitment and generosity has assisted in breaking the cycle of poverty for these youth who now have a bright future.

Finally, I wish to thank the volunteers, board and staff of SE Works. Their dedication to the mission of helping our less fortunate neighbors is humbling.

If you would like to join us as a donor or volunteer in this most worthwhile mission, please feel free to call me at **503-936-5411**. I promise you that you will get more than you give.

Dan Stein
SE Works Board President
503-936-5411

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Spring 2015

SE Works

An equal opportunity employer

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Oxana Shapovalova: "Without SE Works ... I would not be in fortunate position that I'm in today."



Oxana Shapovalova immigrated from Russia to the United States six years ago. She was told of SE Works from a friend who had also immigrated, and was engaged in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program and the Professional Immigrant Credential Program (PICP).

According to Oxana, "after hearing about the good things SE Works does, I applied for the program, and can say that this was one of the best decisions I could have made at that time."

Oxana is an Electrical Engineer for a Design/Build Engineering firm. Oxana is an Electrical Engineer for a Design/Build Engineering firm. Oxana has volunteered as a tutor for ESL and is on board of directors and program committee.

"I can say without a doubt that without SE Works, and the volunteers and staff that make it so successful, I would not be in the fortunate position in my life that I am today, reports Oxana.

SE Works Sponsor, Cooper DuBois

Cooper DuBois, a successful designer and entrepreneur, came from humble beginnings and believes in giving back. Says Cooper, "I'm interested in helping our youth and community, especially in the arts."

He became aware of SE Works through his friend, DJ Guild. "I'm a believer in SE Works and how it helps our community, and what a difference it is making in a lot of people's lives ... especially young ones."



SE Works Sponsor, Dennis Gilliam "... this was real"



Dennis Gilliam was introduced to SE Works when his friend, Glenn Dahl, invited Dennis to a SE Works dinner and auction. Dennis heard students speak and was impressed with their stories. He later took a tour of program where he met and talked to several students.

Says Dennis, "these young people weren't reading some copy, or reciting some words, they were speaking candidly. They were dipping into their own personal experiences. They told me their stories ... about how they got to SE Works, and their life before that.

They explained how the SE Works program turned them around, and gave them a hope for the future. I'm really impressed when it's real ... and this was real. These conversations really gave me the insight to where these students were coming from, and how the program was helping them. I came away mightily impressed."

Dennis is a partner in a food manufacturing business ... in charge of sales and marketing. "I'm looking for ways to give back that are meaningful to the community and people," says Dennis.

Here's how you can help! By DJ Guild, Resource Development Committee

We are looking for more supporters and prospective donors who are touched by the youth in our program.

Our youth program offers hope and makes a difference in a troubled youth's life.

Our development committee has created a sustaining scholars program to provide

long-term stability for our youth education program.

We have raised over one million dollars in the last five months. Our goal is to raise \$2,500,000 over the next five years.

Contact Dan Stein at 503-936-5411 about becoming a donor.

Job Corps Data Center an Onsite Partner at SE Works



Since 2003 Job Corps has been located on site at SE Works.

Job Corps is fully funded, free career

training and education program for students ages 16 through 24 who meet low-income requirements. It is designed to help students find the path to personal and career success – all at no cost to the eligible students.

How Does Job Corps Work?

- Hands-on training is offered in more than 31 career areas, including Welding, Automobile Technician, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Computer Technician and many more. We have 31 campus in our NW region which includes Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

- Opportunities are provided for high school graduates to continue their education at the college level. For those who haven't graduated from high school, Job Corps helps students earn a high school diploma or GED.

- A career transition services counselor assists students with transitioning from Job Corps into the working world for up to 21 months after graduation.

What Does Job Corps Offer?

- Most of a student's time on center is devoted to career technical training and education. Students learn the skills needed to become independent, successful professionals.

- Job Corps staff helps each student create an individualized training and education plan to stay on track for success.

- Most students live on campus in dormitories. While enrolled in the program, students receive housing, meals, basic medical care, and a living allowance.

- Job Corps is a self-paced program. Our most successful students stay in the program for 1 to 2 years.

Grace Smith has been working and collaborating with SE Works for over 12 years. Her presentations are at SE Works on Mondays at 1:00 PM she can be reached at 503-326-6806 or email at smith.grace@jobcorps.org.

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SE Works Dahl Family Youth Education and Career Development Center

path. Below is an outline of the academic and support model we implement at SE Works.

Recruitment/Outreach:

We partner with Portland Public Schools, private alternative schools, local non-profits, social service agencies, Oregon Youth Authority, community corrections, and other community based organizations to recruit students. Word of mouth has also been a significant source of information about the youth programs at SE Works for the past 18 years. Since all of our services are free of charge to students and a significant portion of our funding is from sponsors, we are very flexible in who we serve and what we can offer. Many of our students have tried and either failed at, or been removed from, several other schools and alternative programs in the past and find success with SE Works.

Pre-GED Tutoring:

Upon initial contact with SE Works, students meet with the program director or a teacher and learn what the program has to offer. Interested students then take a quick initial assessment to determine their academic level in reading and math. Students work closely with the Tutor Center teacher and volunteer tutors to bring their academic levels up to a minimum of ninth or tenth grade level as they prepare to enter the GED Cohort. Students could spend up to four months in tutoring, coming in 3-5 days a week for an hour or two per day. Persons interested in volunteering to be a Mentor or Tutor should contact **Gary Myers** at **503-772-2314**.

GED Cohort

We run three 4-month cohorts per year, starting in July, November and March. In the cohort, students attend school five hours a day, four days a week and study with our certified teachers in classes with 14 other students. Fridays are reserved for one-on-one meetings with teachers, individual tutoring and internships/work experience. While study for the GED is the primary goal of the program, students also gain meaningful work experience in an area of interest to them personally. The students' ultimate goal is not just to pass the GED exam, but to move on to college and career.

The internships and work experience allow students to "test drive" careers and thus focus their academic and career readiness efforts.

During the cohort, students have the opportunity to earn cash incentives for attendance and participation. We provide students with bus passes and help them overcome other barriers to learning. We help student attain state ID, support with food assistance, referrals for housing supports, etc. We have a special education teacher to work with students with special learning needs and staff from partner organizations like *DePaul Treatment Centers* to support students for drug or alcohol treatment as needed.

Another key element of the cohort is preparing for the transition to college. Our College and Career Readiness Specialist teaches a college readiness course and assists student with financial aid and college applications.

Post Cohort Transition

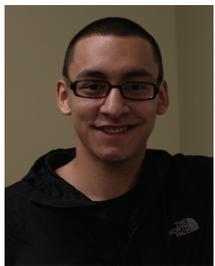
After students graduate from SE Works, we continue to support them in college and career for a year. We have close relationships with PCC and make a point of introducing students to the services and service providers at the campus. We maintain ongoing contact with student via phone, email and special events. Students are assigned volunteer mentors who serve as a bridge between the graduate and SE Works. Students are welcome back to the youth center for help with or just have a familiar place to access a computer and do their own studies.

Students who transition to careers are supported also. They are invited back to the youth center for special events or just to reconnect with teachers and staff. Our staff and mentors help students navigate the first year of employment.

For more information about the program, please contact **Gary Myers** M.Ed., Director at **503-772-2314**. If you are interested in supporting the work of SE Works Dahl Family Youth Education and Career Development Center please contact **DJ Guild** at **503-936-7156**.

Client Interview

Jose Martinez "This is a big change for me."



Tell us something about yourself

"I'm 17 years old and live in southeast Portland with my mother, two brothers and a sister. My grandma helped raise me. I do not know where my father is. I never really had a father but don't really think about it."

What about school?

"I went to a lot of different grade schools because we moved a lot. I went to three high schools, Westview in Beaverton, Madison and then Parkrose. I was a good student. I had good grades. I was especially good in math.

We were moving so much I was having a hard time keeping track of school. I dug

myself into a hole and got way behind. So I decided to get my GED ... it would be faster."

How did you get involved at SE Works?

"My brother really encouraged me to get off my butt and get in here. When I dropped out of school I was not motivated to do anything. I stayed home and watched TV. My brother is going through this program at SE Works and he told me about it."

What's it like for you at SE Works?

"Right now I am waiting for the next GED class to open. I'm being tutored in science, math, reading, and writing. I come every day 9 to 1.

I've made friends here. I like the teachers here... and staff. I'm getting individual help here that I've never had along the way."

Outside of SE Works?

"I play basketball at the park near my house. Three-point shooting is my strength.

I'm really creative and lots of different things like building... carpentry stuff. I work with my uncle who is a carpenter. I'm also artistic. I like to draw.

I have lots of friends. I do chores around the house. I like to read I am currently reading the Harry Potter series."

Next?

"After I complete my GED I plan to go to Portland Community College. My dream is to be an engineer. I am good at math, but not so good with writing. So we're concentrating on it here right now.

I'm going to get through the GED program and get to college ... and I didn't think that was possible before he came to SE Works. I did not think about my future until I got here. This is a big change for me."

Client Interview

Devon Martin Avery “... what you’re going to do is up to you.”



Where did you grow up?

“I was born in Oregon. When I was in elementary school my father was in prison in Pennsylvania. My family moved back-and-forth from Oregon to Pennsylvania many times.

In the first grade I was diagnosed with tremors, epilepsy, and ADD. I currently live with my dad and my brother, and sleep on a couch.”

What sort of student were you growing up?

“I was a good student grades one through five but at grade six, I sort of gave up. I went to high school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In the 11th grade I dropped out of school.

I was really a good student in high school with computer-based programs. Math was my best subject.”

How did SE Works come into your life?

“My aunt had worked with the job program at SE Works, and she told me about the youth program they had here.”

What were you doing before you came to SE Works?

“Before I got here I was just ... ‘whatever happens.’ I acknowledge that I made some poor decisions, and I take responsibility for that.”

So, what’s going on with you at SE Works?

“I walked in, and on the first day they had me take the GED pre-test. And a month later, I was actually in the GED program and taking classes.

I was going through a rough time and they gave me direction. I love this place, and all the people here. I had hardly any friends when I came here, but I’ve made lots of friends here. A lot of the kids here have had difficult situations just like me. Coming here and getting direction is really great ... now I know what I need to do, and I can make it happen.”

What do you do for fun?

“I play a lot of video games and I also read a lot. The last book I read was *Catcher in the Rye*. Even though the book was written in the 50s it’s still relevant today. He has family problems just like many of us.”

Next?

“When I’m done I’m going to apply for the Job Corps. And I may be going to PCC or Portland State College. I want to be a forestry technician... You know like park ranger maintaining the natural parks.

You’re given what you’re going to get ... and what you’re going to do is up to you.”

Client Interview

Shelby Perry “Everybody comes in here with a broken wing ...”

Did you have a normal and ideal childhood?

“My father was murdered when I was four when we lived in Pasadena, California. It took a tremendous toll on my mother she became her horrendous alcoholic. She went to a rehab program in Compton California when I was eight. She had lots of relapses.

My mother has two college degree, but after my father’s death, I saw her confidence dropped, and mine dropped with it.

I ran the streets trying to cope with everything going on. I made a lot of wrong decisions.”

What other challenges have you faced?

“I believe I’ve been tested more than other people. I’ve been around death a lot. My father was murdered, my uncle and aunt both committed suicide, my grandfather and grandmother, who were my world, died. I had a daughter who passed away in 2013 ... she was a year-and-a-half-old. She was born with a large heart.”

Were you a good student?

“I dropped out of school when I was in the six grade. I never went to high school. I’ve always feared schools because at school in Compton I got beat up a lot. I never really had the confidence to go back to school.”

What were you up to before SE Works?

“I was in jail for a while before I came here. Before jail I was working.”

What brought you to SE Works?

“My mother, who’s now fully recovered, lives in Portland, and she works as a property manager. One of the tenants at my mom’s property went through the SE Works program here, and she told me about it.”



So, what’s going on with you at SE Works?

“When I showed up, I immediately took the pre-GED test, and started receiving tutoring. At first I was apprehensive until I saw how much I had in common with the other students. It’s really a great support system. Everybody comes in here with a broken wing, and they help you.”

Read any good books lately?

“I love reading. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was the last book I read. I’m now reading *Pregnant and Butch*.”

What is your biggest strength?

“I allow myself to cope. Many people try numbing themselves, and their pain but it doesn’t really work.”

Next?

“I finish the GED program in June and then I will go to college ... probably Mt. Hood Community College. I’m going to study mortuary science.

I always knew I wanted a better life. My mother had a career, but when my father died she came apart. She had gone to college, and was doing well. I wanted to have that.

I’ve been through a lot and I am strong I am focused... I am 22 now and I need to make it in life.”

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