



REAL SKILLS FOR THE **REAL WORLD**

Association of Iowa Workforce Partners
13th Annual Conference

APRIL 3-4, 2014
West Des Moines Marriott

9:00–10:00 am

Registration, Visit Exhibitors *Concord Foyer*

10:00–10:45 am

Welcome and Opening Comments *Concord A-B**Shawn Fick, Job Training Partners and IowaWORKS Greater Siouxland (Region 12); AWP Chair***Opening Keynote****Creating Lives of Passion, Purpose, and Prosperity** *Concord A-B**EJ Carrion, Student Success Academy and Empact*

The desire to be significant and contribute something important to the world is human nature. As workforce professionals, we have the opportunity to not only create that significant impact ourselves but to empower others to contribute in ways that are fulfilling, that give them purpose, and that allow them to provide for their families. Our opening keynote speaker will share his story and path, reminding us why we do what we do and the exponential impact it has the potential to manifest. His story will demonstrate how in the new world of work ahead, it is no longer an option to not include entrepreneurship skills in workforce development, even when we're preparing individuals for non-self-employment jobs.

10:45–11:00 am

Break, Visit Exhibitors *Concord Foyer*

11:00 am–12:00 pm

*Concurrent Sessions***The Power of Thinkership – Part 1** *Concord C**Randy Goruk, LeadersEdge360.com and The Randall Wade Group, LLC*

Quick decision-making, multi-tasking, and leveraging technology are common practices of a workforce development professional, but these are usually temporary solutions to ongoing problems. Whether the challenges are in individual performance, team building, addressing conflict, customer satisfaction, managing the budget, responding to internal and external demands, morale, motivation, personal development, or achieving targeted performance measurements, thinking is at the root of every solution.

The Power of Thinkership workshop will teach workforce development professionals how to apply the principles of Thinkership so that they can:

- Avoid crisis by solving problems before they occur, allowing more time to focus on priorities.
- Ask “great questions” that stimulate deep thinking, great conversations and full engagement.
- Make decisions that are consistent and in alignment with the organization’s goals and values.
- Achieve and maintain high levels of morale and customer satisfaction.
- Preempt problems with easy-to-implement communication strategies. Have more time to “Think” and become more productive and creative.

Innovative Marketing – Part 1 *Concord D**Maria Romano, Corporate Strategies by SkillPath*

To really succeed, you have to do more than just follow the trends. You have to set them with innovative, imaginative and incredibly effective marketing. This session on Innovative Marketing is a unique opportunity to get away from the rigors of everyday life, look at problems from new angles and develop effective ways to satisfy more customers, increase results, and get your message across.

11:00 am–12:00 pm
Concurrent Sessions

Business Services Lab: Building or Enhancing an Integrated Team – Part 1 *Salon A-B*

Mary Ann Lawrence, The Center for Workforce Learning

During this working session, participants will roll up their sleeves and begin building or enhancing their business services approach. Each part of this 4-part laboratory is stand-alone in nature, but together can help administrators and business service staff understand the fundamentals to integrating business services.

Part 1: Provides an overview of business services in an integrated format – what, why, who. Attendees will build a simple template for getting started. Already have a business service team? Bring team members and work through this together to evaluate changes you may want to make.

YOUTH TRACK: Catalyzing Youth to Create Their Future *Salon C*

Sheena Lindahl, Empact, and EJ Carrion, Student Success Academy

As youth unemployment becomes intimidating on a global scale, new approaches are needed to prepare for the world ahead. In the new world of work, jobs are different, and this has only become more apparent as recent years have passed. There is an urgency to approach workforce development differently in order to fulfill our responsibilities to youth, and that means integrating the entrepreneurial mindset into the many aspects of job readiness training.

Youth need to be prepared to think entrepreneurially in this new environment, whether they are working for themselves or someone else. But is entrepreneurship realistic for our youth?

In this session, we'll explore how entrepreneurship today is different from the entrepreneurship of 10 years ago (or even 5 years ago). You'll learn about the local and national training resources available, get an overview of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, and walk away with a toolkit of low- or no-cost tools to help individuals get started.

12:00–1:15 pm

Lunch *Concord A-B*

Remarks by Special Guests

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration: Byron Zuidema, Regional Administrator, or Marium Baker
Iowa Workforce Development: Teresa Wahlert, Director

1:15–2:15 pm

Concurrent Sessions

The Power of Thinkership – Part 2 *Concord C*

Randy Goruk, LeadersEdge360.com and The Randall Wade Group, LLC

Part 2 of a double session; see previous description.

Innovative Marketing – Part 2 *Concord D*

Maria Romano, Corporate Strategies by SkillPath

Part 2 of a double session; see previous description.

Business Services Lab: Building or Enhancing an Integrated Team – Part 2 *Salon A-B*

Mary Ann Lawrence, The Center for Workforce Learning

During this working session, participants will roll up their sleeves and begin building or enhancing their business services approach. Each part of this 4-part laboratory is stand-alone in nature, but together can help administrators and business service staff understand the fundamentals to integrating business services.

Part 2: A template for how to create an integrated business services team approach along with information on “memorandum of understanding” language to formalize the structure.

1:15–2:15 pm
Concurrent Sessions

YOUTH TRACK: K-12 Entrepreneurship in Iowa *Salon C*

Dawn Bowlus, Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship

Participants will learn about programs offered by the Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship at The University of Iowa, including teacher/provider professional development, curriculum, competitions, summer camps, and conferences.

2:15–2:30 pm

Break, Visit Exhibitors *Concord Foyer*

2:30–3:30 pm
Concurrent Sessions

Employee Disengagement: The Dog that Will Bite You – Part 1 *Concord C*

Randy Goruk, LeadersEdge360.com and The Randall Wade Group, LLC

What most leaders really want is an organization that runs smoothly and efficiently. This objective is readily achieved with fully engaged employees. Employees that are engaged feel passionate about their jobs, are committed to the organization, and put discretionary effort into their work. A disengaged employee will generate unexpected costs and unwelcome turmoil. In today's competitive work environment, knowing what drives exceptional performance is critical to long-term success. In this highly interactive presentation, the presenter will share the key drivers for engaging employees and the strategies, techniques, and tips to achieve a fully engaged team.

During this session, participants will learn:

- The top drivers of employee engagement and how to implement them for results.
- How to identify and immediately diffuse the top drivers of employee disengagement.
- How to create an environment where everyone is productive and wants to belong.

Strategic Selling Skills – Part 1 *Concord D*

Maria Romano, Corporate Strategies by SkillPath

Selling is no longer a skill that is limited to "salespeople." In today's environment, people are taking in more information than ever before and our thirst for information does not seem to be waning. With so much information crossing our mental thresholds, the question becomes how do you penetrate people's thinking and move them into action?

In this session we will discuss how sales strategies and sales skills are being used, not just in traditional sales roles, but by most everyone in order to promote change, shape people's behavior, reframe outdated thinking, and move people into new action. Whether you are selling products or selling your ideas, strategic selling principles apply.

Business Services Lab: Building or Enhancing an Integrated Team – Part 3 *Salon A-B*

Mary Ann Lawrence, The Center for Workforce Learning

During this working session, participants will roll up their sleeves and begin building or enhancing their business services approach. Each part of this 4-part laboratory is stand-alone in nature, but together can help administrators and business service staff understand the fundamentals to integrating business services.

Part 3: Demonstrates business development techniques to make the "sale."

2:30–3:30 pm

Concurrent Sessions

YOUTH TRACK: How to Run a Successful Youth Entrepreneurship Program *Salon C*

Dawn Bowlus, Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship

Tim Putnam, John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center at North Iowa Area Community College

Michelle Randall, WIA Youth Program, IowaWORKS/Southeastern Community College

Mark Stanley, Economic & Workforce Development, Iowa Western Community College

Panelists will share their experiences offering youth entrepreneurship programs. From summer camps for elementary, middle and high school students to one-day entrepreneurship conferences and teacher professional development workshops, lots of successful and custom-designed programs will be shared.

3:30–3:45 pm

Break, Visit Exhibitors *Concord Foyer*

3:45–4:45 pm

Concurrent Sessions

Employee Disengagement: The Dog that Will Bite You – Part 2 *Concord C*

Randy Goruk, LeadersEdge360.com and The Randall Wade Group, LLC

Part 2 of a double session; see previous description.

Strategic Selling Skills – Part 2 *Concord D*

Maria Romano, Corporate Strategies by SkillPath

Part 2 of a double session; see previous description.

Business Services Lab: Building or Enhancing an Integrated Team – Part 4 *Salon A-B*

Mary Ann Lawrence, The Center for Workforce Learning

During this working session, participants will roll up their sleeves and begin building or enhancing their business services approach. Each part of this 4-part laboratory is stand-alone in nature, but together can help administrators and business service staff understand the fundamentals to integrating business services.

Part 4: Explores business service outcomes and performance indicators. Helps attendees understand what a balanced scorecard for business services could look like and provides a template of ideas for local areas to consider.

YOUTH TRACK: Work Ethic: The Key to Engaging and Motivating Youth *Salon C*

Josh Davies, The Center for Work Ethic Development

It seems that every day there is another story in the news about the poor work ethic of our youth today. They are called entitled, spoiled, and lazy. The reality is that today's youth still know that hard work is the key to success; what they don't know is what that means. Deficiencies in the traditional areas where work ethic had been developed have created a massive gap in these workplace basics. Rather than complain or compromise, successful organizations are instead training and coaching work ethic. They are finding ways to turn common sense back into common practice.

This engaging and interactive presentation showcases simple training and leadership approaches that yield lasting results. By looking at the seven core behaviors of work ethic, cutting-edge research, and real-world experiences from leaders across the country, participants will discover actionable tactics they can use to overcome apathy and inspire action: work ethic. These tactics help youth not only focus on working harder, but also on working with purpose.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the concepts of work ethic.
- See the impact of a value deficit on job performance.
- Apply at least three tactics to improve work ethic in youth they work with.

7:30–8:30 am

Breakfast Buffet, Visit Exhibitors *Concord Foyer and Concord A-B*

8:30–9:30 am

Concurrent Sessions

Reentry Simulation – Part 1 *Concord C**Dena Sikoutris, Missouri Department of Corrections*

This is an interactive session to raise awareness about the complexities that offenders encounter when released from prison. Following the interactive session, there will be discussion regarding the issues related to reentry and to identify challenges faced by returning offenders.

Secrets of Successful Classrooms: A How-To on Promoting and FILLING Your Workshop Sessions With Engaged and Committed Students – Part 1 (Preparing for Workshop Promotions) *Concord D**Cassandra Halls, 2 THE TOP - Career Advancement Strategies and Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa*

Does your workforce center offer many wonderful learning opportunities for job seekers in your region, but struggle to fill the classes, let alone achieve student engagement in the classroom? If so, this is a perfect opportunity for you to explore new ideas for promoting and communicating the benefits of your training! Learn how to assess the features, functions and benefits of each training and then how to promote the workshops as a team. What you share makes a difference in how students participate in the classroom! Part 1 of this double session will focus on preparing for workshop promotions.

Workforce Services for Military Members and Veterans *Salon A-B**Panelists:**Captain Kathy Barton, Iowa National Guard**Becky Coady, ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve)**Ted Hall, American Legion**Jeff Johnson, Hero2Hired**Dan Russell, VA Central Iowa Health Care System**Scott Silvey, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation**Greer L. Sisson, U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship**Tony Smithhart, U.S. DOL Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)**Moderator: Linda Rouse, IowaWORKS Southern Iowa and Home Base Iowa*

Due to federal spending reductions, approximately 500,000 service members will be leaving the military during the next 5 years. This panel of experts will cultivate awareness regarding programs that are offered in Iowa for our military members and veterans. They will discuss issues that military members and veterans face as well as programs that are available to help them overcome their barriers and reach their employment goals.

YOUTH TRACK: The New Face of Manufacturing: Cultivating a Workforce to Meet Industry Needs *Salon C**Panelists:**Stacie Halverson, Geater Machining & Manufacturing, Co.**Laura Hubbard, CNH Industrial**Gena Gesing, Northeast Iowa Community College**Leisa Fox, Iowa Association of Business and Industry**Moderator: Debbie Dowell, IowaWORKS Southeast Iowa*

The changing workplace is accelerating the demand for new skills and the rise of a new type of workforce. The high-growth trend in advanced manufacturing is requiring businesses to “think outside the box” in outreach efforts to better appeal to today’s high-tech, social generation. Come to this session and hear directly from individuals in charge of improving their company’s human capital system, who will discuss the innovative approaches being used to educate and target students, parents, and educators about the new face of manufacturing. The panel will also include representatives from a community college and the statewide Elevate Iowa campaign to increase student interest in advanced manufacturing careers.

9:30–9:45 am

Break, Visit Exhibitors *Concord Foyer*

9:45–10:45 am

Concurrent Sessions

Reentry Simulation – Part 2 *Concord C*

Dena Sikoutris, Missouri Department of Corrections

Part 2 of a double session; see previous description.

Secrets of Successful Classrooms: A How-To on Promoting and FILLING Your Workshop Sessions With Engaged and Committed Students – Part 2 (Implementing the Promotional Plan) *Concord D*

Cassandra Halls, 2 THE TOP - Career Advancement Strategies and Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa

Part 2 of a double session; see previous description. Part 2 will focus on implementing promotional plans.

Less Walk, More Talk: Creating a Culture of Integrity and Accountability in Your Organization *Salon A-B*

Josh Davies, The Center for Work Ethic Development

One of the greatest challenges a leader faces is creating a culture of ethics and accountability. How do you ensure the people you're leading demonstrate integrity on a daily basis? Do you practice it yourself? Do you model accountability throughout your organization in your interactions with others, operating practices, and personal work habits? Personal and organizational ethics are one of the easiest things to talk about, but hardest to walk.

This highly interactive session will address ethics and accountability directly through a practical, proven methodology you can employ to build accountability throughout your organization. Using a collaborative and positive approach, participants will go through an experiential assessment and use the results to focus on how to get themselves, their team, and organization not just talking, but walking ethics and accountability. The workshop's content is driven by best practices, cutting-edge literature, and real-world experiences of leaders across the country. Don't miss this opportunity to transform yourself and your team from talkers to walkers.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the business impacts of integrity and accountability.
- Recognize gaps in accountability.
- Apply at least three tactics to improve their personal and organizational integrity and accountability.

YOUTH TRACK: Stop Bullying, Speak Up: A Guide to Bully Awareness and Prevention Tips *Salon C*

Mary Lou Warner, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa

Because of their unique relationship working alongside children and youth in the community, youth professionals and mentors at all levels – such as coaches, arts instructors, academic or extracurricular advisors, mentors, or youth workforce program providers – have a unique role to play in bullying prevention. Children and youth who are struggling with this issue may be more comfortable with approaching these trusted adults. In addition, youth professionals and mentors know the importance of setting clear, reasonable, and developmentally appropriate expectations for children and youth.

This workshop will examine the bullying epidemic that is sweeping the nation and provide techniques to help youth effectively deal with bullying issues. Topics include the definition of bullying, warning signs, and techniques to help youth through issues related to bullying.

10:45–11:00 am

Break, Visit Exhibitors *Concord Foyer*

Closing Plenary

“Recalculating!” Skills for When Life’s GPS Takes an Unexpected Turn *Concord A-B*

Brenda Clark Hamilton, Fresh Coffee Professional Growth Programs

We’ve all experienced that moment when, traveling our journey of life, the road takes a sudden, unexpected turn, and our life’s GPS announces, “Recalculating!” For most of us, these sharp turns are laden with a certain discomfort or even dread of what might lie ahead. This fun, upbeat, and interactive session is chock-full of practical, take-home strategies, based on current research into how to face times of uncertainty with strength, wisdom, and creativity. The next time your life’s GPS announces, “Recalculating!” you’ll be looking forward to the opportunity, not anticipating the worst.

Closing Comments and Prize Drawings

AIWP thanks the following for generous support of this year’s conference.



With additional support from
U.S. Department of Labor Technical Assistance and Training

Thank you to our exhibitors:



Visit all the exhibitors for a chance to win prizes! Turn in your completed Bingo card at the registration desk by 11:00 am on Friday, April 4. Winners will be drawn after the Closing Plenary. **Must be present to win.**

About the Speakers

Captain Kathy Barton

Government Relations Officer, Iowa National Guard – Johnston, IA

Dawn Bowlus

Director, Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship – Iowa City, IA

As director for the Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship, Dawn Bowlus has been instrumental in developing the University of Iowa's youth entrepreneurship programs. Since 2000, Dawn has built a nationally recognized program – geared around teacher education, curriculum, and outreach – that has reached more than 460 educators and 24,000 students. The Institute's YouthBizCentral curriculum is being used in 48 states. Dawn's program is an integral part of the University's Entrepreneurship at Iowa initiative and plays a key role in teaching the "entrepreneurial mindset" to the next generation of young entrepreneurs.

EJ Carrion

Co-Founder, Student Success Academy – San Antonio, TX

Featured on ABC, NBC, and Fox news affiliates, EJ Carrion is the #1 Amazon Best-Selling author of *Accelerate Your Success: How to Create A Future and Stand Out When College is Not Enough*, which teaches students how to market and brand themselves when everyone is going to college and no one is hiring.

After writing his book *Ignite Your Dreams* while in college at the University of Oklahoma, he became the co-publisher of the internationally recognized brand "Collegiate Performance Magazine," which featured NFL athletes including quarterback Tim Tebow and BMX gold medalist Dave Mirra.

EJ has spoken to over tens of thousands of students in more than 20 states, all before his 23rd birthday. His main entrepreneurial venture is the Student Success Academy, a modern coaching solution that helps high school students leverage their education and build a personalized plan to defeat current issues in the economy and in their own life.

EJ's childhood dream job is to become a platinum rapper. He has shared the stage with platinum-selling artists and has had one of his raps used by ESPN.

Brenda Clark Hamilton

Founder, Fresh Coffee Professional Growth Programs – Algona, IA

Brenda Clark Hamilton is a dynamic keynote speaker and workplace trainer who provides fresh perspectives in leadership, communication skills, team-building, and offering one's best self to life, relationships, and career. A skilled and respected educator, Brenda's career experiences include coordinating professional development for 1,200 teachers, serving on the Iowa Department of Education's Professional Development Stakeholders Group, and managing multiple projects as Professional Development Consultant for an Iowa education agency. Brenda holds a Master's degree in English Education, has supervised student teachers for two Iowa colleges, and has taught numerous graduate-level courses for teachers.

Since launching Fresh Coffee Professional Growth Programs in 2005, Brenda has become a nationally recognized speaker and audience favorite at conferences, conventions, association meetings, and within workplaces in every field imaginable. The content for Fresh Coffee presentations comes from Brenda's everyday career and life experience combined with her ongoing study of how to maximize individual potential. "I'm someone who really pays attention to how people live their lives, and I'm an avid reader of materials related to personal and professional growth. I'm always trying to come up with new ways to educate, intrigue, and challenge individuals to come up to the next level."

Becky Coady

Director, Iowa ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve) – Johnston, IA

Rebecca (Becky) Coady attended the University of Northern Iowa and South Dakota State University. Becky worked in the Family Programs Office for 4 years assisting families before, during and after deployments. Becky has been with ESGR for 7 years. She mentors, trains and assists volunteers statewide. She developed and continues to enhance the Employer Outreach Lunch and Learn program, coordinates volunteer training, and continues to foster a working relationship with Reserve Component customers and their employers. In the fall of 2010 she was selected as the director of the ESGR program.

Josh Davies

CEO, The Center for Work Ethic Development – Denver, CO

Josh Davies is passionate about helping others make a difference in their lives, jobs, and community. Through his work as a speaker, trainer, and mentor he has produced results around the country. He has delivered keynotes and training workshops to a wide variety of organizations across all 50 states, including the American Society of Training and Development and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. Training Magazine recently named him as one of the top 10 trainers under 40 in America, and the Denver Business Journal tapped him as one of Denver's 40 Under 40.

Davies is also a published author and is frequently cited in national publications, including the New York Times and Hotel Motel Management. He is the past President of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers (CHART), served on the American Hotel and Lodging Association's Education Committee, and has been appointed by Governor Hickenlooper to serve on the Colorado Workforce Development Council and as chair of the State Talent Development Council.

Debbie Dowell

Regional Director, IowaWORKS Southeast Iowa – Burlington, IA

Debbie Dowell is the IowaWORKS Regional Director in Burlington, Iowa, where she has worked for over 25 years. She started as a Pre-Employment Training Specialist and has moved through the ranks while experiencing a number of challenging opportunities and assignments, resulting in a broad range of knowledge and experience. Through the years, she has worked with a number of fascinating colleagues internally and externally, and this work has led to long-lasting relationships/partnerships. She attended Iowa Wesleyan College and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management. Debbie is a Certified Workforce Development Professional through the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP).

Leisa Fox

Senior Vice President for Revenue and Programs, Iowa Association of Business and Industry – Des Moines, IA

Under Leisa Fox's leadership, ABI has received numerous national awards for highest member retention, recruitment, and revenue. Her primary focus is creating products and services that help Iowa companies grow and prosper. She previously worked for LaMair, Mulock, Condon as a Commercial Property Casualty Consultant. She is a member of the State Society of Human Resources Managers Council, is Chair of the Association of State Chamber Professionals, and is a graduate of Leadership Iowa and the Iowa Society of Association Executives Leadership Program. She holds a degree in Interpersonal and Rhetorical Communication from Iowa State University.

Gena Gesing

Associate Director of Career and Intermediary Programs, Northeast Iowa Community College – Calmar, IA

During her 8 years with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), Gena Gesing has seen the partnerships between high schools and NICC expand and flourish. Her connection to high schools focuses on concurrent enrollment offerings, meeting Career and Technical Education state and federal requirements, creating pathways from high school to college, and career exploration events for students. She also serves as the primary Project Lead the Way contact at NICC. Gena began the Program Fair event, which allows high school students to learn about NICC programs during a one-day visit to campus. In 2013, she partnered with NICC Business and Community Solutions to launch the Northeast Iowa Business and Educator Networking Summit, an event to assist businesses and educators in creating partnerships and solutions. As Associate Director for Career and Intermediary Programs, she directs programs and activities to connect high school students to businesses in a variety of ways including events, job shadows, and tours. Expanded services to provide high school personnel exposure to business and industry are also planned as a part of the NICC Intermediary programming. Gena holds a B.A. in English from Central College and an M.A.E. in Postsecondary Education – Student Affairs from the University of Northern Iowa.

Randy Goruk

Founder, LeadersEdge360.com, and President, Randall Wade Group, LLC – Alpharetta, GA

Randy Goruk is the founder of LeadersEdge360.com and the President of the Randall Wade Group, LLC, a leadership development firm focused on maximizing personal and professional achievement. Having personally led multi-million dollar organizations through many challenging times, Randy has developed a reputation of delivering "Real Experience and Real Results." He is known for his compelling and inspiring speaking style, and is masterful in executive and leadership coaching that propels each client forward to meet their strategic goals, improve skills, and elevate performance.

Randy has a personal and casual delivery style that earns the trust and confidence of large audiences. In smaller groups Randy excels at interactive "town hall meeting" venues. Randy's audiences roll up their sleeves and get engaged. His memorable presentations are designed to provide knowledge and to help plant seeds of creative thought in leadership for results.

Ted Hall

American Legion

Ted Hall is a retired Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialist who has also given 41 years of service to veterans through the American Legion and other service organizations. He is a 12-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Navy Reserve, and Iowa Air National Guard.

Cassandra Halls

President, 2 THE TOP - Career Advancement Strategies; Vice President – Workforce Development, Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa – Des Moines, IA

Cassandra Halls is the founder and president of 2 THE TOP - Career Advancement Strategies. Halls believes in helping the workforce develop independent skills to plan and prepare for positive career transitions. It was this passion that led her to establish 2 THE TOP - Career Advancement Strategies to provide career development services to individuals, corporations, and nonprofit organizations. Career development curriculums developed by 2 THE TOP have reached over 40,000 Iowans in the last 3 years.

Halls has spent many years in public administration in Iowa. As City Manager for two cities and as CFO for third, Halls was responsible for managing significant budgets, resolving employee issues, and overcoming controversy, among many other items. As Vice President of Strategic Accounts for ISGN, a global technology company, she worked with mergers and acquisitions, human resources, and with forming client relationships.

Halls focuses on providing cutting-edge career coaching and serves as Facilitator for Central Iowa Careers in Financial Services. In addition to providing consulting services, Halls serves as Vice President – Workforce Development for Goodwill Industries of Central Iowa. As a working, adult student, Halls was proud to earn her Bachelor of Arts degree from William Penn University in Oskaloosa, Iowa, with a major in Public Administration.

Stacie Halverson

Human Resources Manager, Geater Machining & Manufacturing, Co. – Independence, IA

Stacie Halverson has been with Geater Machining & Manufacturing, Co. for about 7 years as the Human Resources Manager. Changes of customer expectations, increased sales, and new customers have challenged GMM with finding the skilled workforce needed. An additional obstacle was being located in the small town of Independence and competing with companies in the Cedar Valley for the same workforce. Under Stacie's direction, GMM started their School Outreach Initiative in an effort to "grow their own" in towns northeast of Independence. Since then GMM has reached almost 1,000 students in more than 15 school districts in Northeast Iowa. They actively go to schools to speak to students, participate in career days, allow high school and college students to job shadow and intern, as well as serve on advisory boards for Independence, North Fayette Valley, and Allamakee Community Schools. GMM is also active with Hawkeye Community College and Northeast Iowa Community College as well as the University of Northern Iowa and Iowa State University. Stacie has a degree in Elementary Education from The University of Iowa and has spent the majority of her career in manufacturing, including Pepperidge Farm/Campbell Soup Co.

Laura Hubbard

Human Resources Manager, CNH Industrial – Burlington, IA

Laura is the HR Manager at the Burlington, Iowa CNH Industrial plant, which manufactures Case backhoes, forklifts, tractor loaders, and CaseIH and New Holland combine headers. She has been involved in Des Moines County's initiative to increase programs related to career tech fields by chairing the Project Lead the Way program and the Regional Industrial Technical Advisory Committee.

Jeff Johnson

Hero2Hired; Employment Transition Coordinator, IIF Data Solutions – Des Moines, IA

As a disabled veteran of the United States Navy (1989-1996) who served during Operation Desert Storm, Jeff Johnson brings firsthand knowledge of the struggles that a veteran can face trying to find employment after leaving the military. He is experienced in military and veteran community outreach, cultivating public awareness of military and veterans' issues, community partnerships, and business growth and expansion. Jeff is a resourceful and enthusiastic individual with a proven record of effective networking and strategic planning results. Military awards: Operation Desert Storm Veteran, Surface Warfare Qualified, Navy Marine Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Sea Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Kuwait Liberation Ribbon (Saudi Arabia), Southwest Asia Service Medal.

Mary Ann Lawrence

President and CEO, The Center for Workforce Learning, Inc., and PowerNotes Publications, Inc. – St. Louis, MO

Mary Ann Lawrence is the President and CEO for the Center for Workforce Learning, Inc. and for PowerNotes Publications, Inc. She has been a workforce system professional for over 36 years and has worked at the local, state, regional, and federal levels. Mary Ann does both board and staff training in a vast array of subjects. She serves as an executive leadership coach to help new board chairs and board executive directors transition to the workforce system. Mary Ann has extensive experience in non-profit board development, volunteerism systems, and fund development activities. Mary Ann specializes in strategic planning, business plan development, marketing plans, policy development, organizational development, business services, team-building, balanced scorecard creation, board development, mystery shopping of one-stops, fee-for-service activities, chartering and certification of workforce systems, and third-party organizational evaluations. She facilitates planning for a variety of groups including welfare reform, school-to-work, vocational rehabilitation, community-based organizations, economic development, educational institutions, and one-stops. Mary Ann has been active in helping local and state workforce investment boards establish the reengineering needed at each level to successfully administer, manage, and operate all functions within the workforce development system. Mary Ann serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals as the regional representative for Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri. She was elected to serve as Vice-Chair of NAWDP.

Sheena Lindahl

President and Co-Founder, Empact – Princeton Junction, NJ

Sheena Lindahl is President and Co-Founder of Empact (www.iempact.com) and has led the development of its programs, including the Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour (www.extremetour.org), where it has held over 400 events bringing top young entrepreneurs to college campuses and the annual Empact100 (www.empactshowcase.com) celebration of young entrepreneurs, with recognition events held at the White House, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and United Nations.

Sheena has spoken around the globe on entrepreneurship education, ecosystem development, and economic development through entrepreneurship. She is an expert contributor for Entrepreneur.com. In 2011 and 2012, Sheena was acknowledged by President Obama for her work as a young leader in entrepreneurship in America. Sheena and her company have appeared in numerous media including the AOL homepage, on ABC, CBS, NBC, and in USA Today. BusinessWeek named Sheena one of the top 25 entrepreneurs under 25 in 2006, and she was named to the Inc. Magazine 30 under 30 list in 2011.

Before Empact, Sheena was a senior associate at GreenHills Ventures, where she managed the due diligence process and gave recommendations on whether to invest \$1.5-\$5 million in early-stage, high-growth companies. She is a 2005 graduate of New York University.

Tim Putnam

Associate Director, John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center at North Iowa Area Community College – Mason City, IA

Tim Putnam is Associate Director for the North Iowa Area Community College John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, which offers comprehensive entrepreneurial training and support programs for entrepreneurs, small business owners, communities, and students. Tim has led presentations and workshops on entrepreneurial education, creating an entrepreneurial community, creating a community angel seed fund, and small business development at state and national conferences. Current areas of focus include community outreach and partnership initiatives, creating an innovative culture, concurrent enrollment for entrepreneurship education, development of youth programs for K-16, and regional economic development through entrepreneurship. Tim is currently a NACCE Fellow for community outreach and is a board member for the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. He has served on the Lt. Governor's committee for STEM and Entrepreneurship Education, the Mason City Economic Development Corporation board, the Iowa Entrepreneurship Task Force, and the Iowa Business Council Entrepreneurial Task Force. Tim has over 12 years of management experience with Pizza Hut of America, Inc. and served in the Army National Guard in Kansas and Illinois for 10 years. He has a B.S. in Business Administration from Kansas State University and a Master's in Public Administration from Drake University.

Michelle Randall

WIA Youth Program Coordinator, IowaWORKS/Southeastern Community College – Burlington, IA

Michelle Randall is the Coordinator for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program in Southeast Iowa serving the counties of Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa. She has been the Coordinator for 2 years and previously had been an Employment and Training Specialist with the WIA youth program for 6 years. Michelle also served as the Coordinator for the Des Moines County YouthBuild program for 2 years, and as Coordinator for GRADE A PLUS (Great River Alcohol & Drug Education Alliance, Parents Linking in United Support) in Des Moines County for 6 years.

Maria Romano

Corporate Strategies by SkillPath

Maria Romano is a respected trainer with a distinguished career in leading productive training operations on cold-calling, federal contract marketing, sales strategies, and conflict resolution techniques. She leverages her extensive knowledge in human resource optimization when consulting with clients regarding leadership development, performance strategies, personnel coaching, sales training, and conflict resolution. She provides individualized coaching to emerging leaders and delivers transformational workshops to management personnel.

Maria specializes in creating and implementing sales strategies in complex selling environments, from Fortune-level organizations to the federal government. She develops targeted and compelling sales strategies that capture customers' attention and get them to take action. Maria has worked with companies such as IBM, Sun Microsystems, Thomson Micromedex, and Microsoft, and midsize businesses across multiple industries, representing a range of products and services. Maria holds a B.A. in Business with a major in accounting from The George Washington University. She is a Certified Facilitator and Executive Coach and holds an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) credential with the International Coaching Federation (ICF).

Linda Rouse

Operations Manager/WIA Director, IowaWORKS Southern Iowa; Project Manager, Home Base Iowa – Ottumwa, IA

Linda Rouse enlisted in the United States Marine Corps out of high school and honorably served 20 years active duty. Following her career in the Marines, she joined the Veteran Representative team with Iowa Workforce Development in 2006. Her team in Ottumwa was awarded the Mark Sanders award for exceptional services to disabled veterans. In 2011, Linda was selected to be the Operations Manager/WIA Director for Region 15 in Ottumwa. In summer of 2013, she was selected to be Iowa Workforce Development's project manager for the Home Base Iowa initiative and she co-leads the Veteran program. Linda has her B.A. in psychology from National University.

Dan Russell

Program Coordinator, VA Central Iowa Health Care System – Des Moines, IA

Dan Russell is Program Coordinator for the Therapeutic and Supported Employment Services programs at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Des Moines VA Medical Center.

Dena Sikoutris

Reentry Program Manager, Missouri Department of Corrections – Jefferson City, MO

Dena Sikoutris is a 24-year veteran of the Missouri Department of Corrections. She worked for the Division of Probation and Parole as a Probation and Parole Officer and a Unit Supervisor for 22 years. She accepted a position as the Missouri Department of Corrections Reentry Manager at Missouri Department of Corrections Central Office and has worked in this capacity for the past 2 years. Her unit oversees reentry efforts and assists staff in 21 institutions and staff in more than 41 Probation and Parole Districts in regards to both preparing offenders for a more successful transition back into the community and to address reentry barriers within communities. Assistance is provided to offenders who are seeking resources to sustain positive and productive lives. Her unit also assists in the oversight of Community Reentry Grant contracts and Memorandums of Understanding with numerous community partners and treatment providers.

Scott Silvay

Employment Coordinator, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation – Des Moines, IA

Scott Silvay is the Employment Coordinator for the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation program, which provides service-connected disabled veterans with training (On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeships, 2- and 4-year degrees, advanced degrees where required, and skills certifications), job assistance, and Independent Living services. Scott helps veterans find and maintain suitable long-term employment, assists with accommodation needs, and provides expertise on resume development, interviewing skills, and a host of other assimilation needs. Scott meets with employers throughout Iowa to explain the benefits of hiring service-connected disabled veterans and helps employers with questions related to hiring veterans, such as reasonable accommodations, tax credits, and incentive programs. Scott is a service-connected disabled veteran and is a graduate of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. He served 12 years on active duty in the United States Army.

Greer L. Sisson

Iowa State Director, Office of Apprenticeship, U.S. Department of Labor – Des Moines, IA

Greer is the Iowa State Director for the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship. Her duties include registering “Standards of Apprenticeship” and providing professional services and technical assistance to employers and labor organizations. Greer develops plans for and promotes the establishment of training in numerous industries. She works closely with state and local officials and groups representing business, labor, education, government, faith and community-based organizations, and with industrial development commissions to advise on community training problems that afford opportunities to job seekers, as well as the hiring and retention needs of organizations. Greer works closely with Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa Economic Development Authority to ensure integration of services. Greer retired from the United States Air Force with 20 years’ experience as an Air Traffic Controller, including 4 years in Europe serving as the Chief of Air Traffic Control Training and Standardization.

Tony Smithhart

Iowa Director, Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS), U.S Department of Labor – Des Moines, IA

Tony joined the U.S. Army shortly after graduation from Ottumwa High School. He served for 10 years until he was injured and received a medical discharge from the military. After returning to Ottumwa he was hired as the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program representative for what was then the Ottumwa Job Service. He became the Assistant Director for Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) within the U.S Department of Labor in 1991, and in 2000 was promoted to his current position as the Director of VETS.

Mark Stanley

Executive Director, Economic & Workforce Development, Iowa Western Community College – Council Bluffs, IA

Mark is the Executive Director of the Division of Economic & Workforce Development at Iowa Western Community College. He is responsible for all college workforce and economic development programs and services including Entrepreneurial Services, Workforce Development Services, and Economic Development Services. He holds a Master’s in Business Administration with an emphasis in finance from Drake University. He is a Certified Economic Developer (CED), a Certified Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP), and a Certified Business Appraiser (CBA), as well as a certified FastTrac and NXlevel entrepreneurial trainer/consultant. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Heartland Economic Development Course. He has provided consulting services related to business valuation, business planning, strategic planning, and financial analysis. His business ownership and management experience includes the start-up, operation, and eventual sale of a franchise restaurant. Mark has provided seminars on business valuation, new venture feasibility planning, business planning, finance for manufacturing, and entrepreneurial finance. As an adjunct instructor for Buena Vista University, he has taught courses in finance, accounting, statistics, management, and entrepreneurship.

Bob Steben

Executive Officer, Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs – Johnston, IA

Bob Steben is Executive Officer for the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs and is also a benefits specialist. He is accredited at the federal level to assist veterans and dependents in obtaining the benefits they may be entitled to. He has served in the U.S. Navy as a corpsman and has been involved with the federal VA as a service officer for about 47 years. He is now located at Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa.

Mary Lou Warner

Chief Operations Officer, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa – Des Moines, IA

Mary Lou Warner has been with the Boys & Girls Clubs Movement for 13 years and believes she has found her calling in human service. She brings tremendous passion for our young people and has become a leading expert in bullying prevention for central Iowa. Beginning at Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa as a program director, Mary Lou soon rose to become a Club unit director, and currently serves as chief operations officer, managing the staff and operations of all Club sites. In 2012, she was voted “Most Valuable Person” by her staff and peers. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Physical Education from Central College in 1996 and her Master’s of Business Leadership from William Penn University in 2014.

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