

America's Promise: Participant Success Stories

Grand Rapids Community College

Growing up in Greece, Lizzie spent a lot of her time with her Grandfather who worked in the healthcare sector, igniting an early passion in her to also help people who were in need. Years later Lizzie would go on to become a nurse and work in a family practice in Greece that allowed her to care for patients of all different ages.

After getting married, Lizzie, her husband, and their three children, moved to Michigan to be close to her husband's family. Shortly after moving to Michigan, Lizzie found out that her Greek nursing degree was not recognized here in America. Also at this time, she and her husband divorced and she was faced with raising three boys – one with special needs –alone. That was when Lizzie decided to reinvent herself, and she enrolled in the Certified Nursing Assistant Training program at Grand Rapids Community College. Since completing the training, she has passed her state certification exam and has accepted a position working for Mary Free Bed, a Rehabilitation Hospital in Grand Rapids, MI. Lizzie intends to continue pursuing a degree in nursing. America's Promise program launched her nursing career in this country. It has enabled her to land a job that allows her access to educational advancement and equips her with the ability to provide for her family.

Monroe Community College

Providing the right supportive services can make all the difference in the world. A Monroe Community College participant was having difficulty with transportation. The program provided gas cards that enabled with the participant, (along with two others) to travel to the final work experience activities needed for program completion, and later, the location for the state exam. These three participants would not have successfully completed their certifications without these supportive services.

A participant, who was chronically either unemployed or underemployed, had been taking physically demanding jobs that were difficult for him to maintain. Through the America's Promise program, he enrolled in the Accelerated Precision Tooling Certificate program offered at Monroe Community College (MCC). He obtained funding for the 6-month certificate training, supportive services for transportation to get to class daily, case management and job search assistance, and job placement assistance. One week after successfully completing the 6-month program and attending job interviews set up through MCC's job placement assistance services, the graduate obtained a job as a CNC Machine Tool Programmer. This has enabled him to achieve his goal of moving into a career with steady, stable work opportunities.

United Way of Central Iowa (Central Iowa Works)

Kimberly was let go from her previous position due to the business being downsized. She had managed

a veterinary clinic for 15 years and was having issues marketing her skill set. With her customer service and organizational skills, she decided that sterile processing would be a good entry into the healthcare field for her. She joined the America's Promise Grant and completed the Sterile Processing Technician Class held at the Workforce Training Academy through Des Moines Area Community College. There she learned the technical skills she needs and worked with our employment specialist to overcome her anxiety about interviewing for the first time in 15 years. She did so well in both areas that she had a job offer from Mercy Medical Center before the class even completed. She was such a good fit that she moved into a full-time position with a raise within her first 3 months. As a result of the America's Promise program, she is now considering continuing her education to become a surgical technician or a registered nurse in the future.

Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas, Inc.

Glenn, a 38 year-old, single father of one, was most recently a sales person at a local car dealership working on commission when he was terminated in August 2017. He is a high school graduate, with some college courses, but no certification or degree. Glenn had been searching for a new career opportunity where he could learn, grow, and further his education, but he was also concerned with mounting bills from being unemployed for six weeks. Glenn realized he needed post-secondary education, but the cost of training was a barrier, and he was unable to afford post-secondary education on his own. Spirit Airlines hired Glenn as a Sheet Metal Assembly trainee. He completed the Structural Assembly Mechanic Program at Wichita Area Technical College which is an 8 credit hour program yielding a technical certificate. Spirit and the technical college worked together to embed this program into the worksite and offered on an accelerated timeline, an innovation that is possible because of the America's Promise Grant. Glenn was also able to utilize supportive services from the America's Promise program allowing him to focus on training until he received his first paycheck. Glenn successfully completed the training program, earned a Structural Assembly Certificate and was retained by Spirit as a Fuselage Assembly Mechanic, earning \$14 per hour plus benefits.