

# On Site

Playa Vista Job Opportunities and Business Services

Volume 4 Number 2 ■ Summer 2003

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Ernest Roberts  
Executive Director, PVJOBS

**P**VJOBS turns five years old this summer. Since our inception, PVJOBS has placed more than 600 individuals in career-track employment, filling more than 900 positions at Playa Vista and other development projects. We have partnered with more than 50 community-based organizations that work with us to prepare our clients for a career and lifestyle transition. Through our work, we have formed relationships that have been fruitful, meaningful and impacting. Our accomplishments are

directly attributed to the work of our partner organizations. Our success is really their success.

The successes we have achieved through our collaborative efforts, coupled with the inspiring stories of our workers' determination and triumph, continue to inspire us at PVJOBS. Together, we are illustrating what can be done with a little commitment, common sense and empathy.

The stories we present in this issue are but a mere sample of what we hear on a daily basis. It is our hope that, through our newsletter's profiles, you too can share in the satisfaction of knowing that lives are being transformed...one at a time.

## PVJOBS Employment Update

**C**onstruction activities continue to move forward at the Playa Vista construction site. We are providing job placements at the City of Los Angeles East Central/Northeast Interceptor Sewer sites. We also hope to provide job placements with Century City's 2000 Avenue of the Stars development project this fall as well as the Los Angeles Community College District's campus improvement project this winter.

Our job development team is experiencing some success at placing our candidates in construction and industry related jobs at construction sites beyond Playa Vista. All referrals to employment are made from our database, using our existing selection procedures.

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## Sandy Medrano: Staying on Course

**A**lthough PVJOBS receptionist Sandy Medrano is only 20, her perseverance reflects someone well beyond her years. A hard-working, single mother of her three-year-old son, Jason, Medrano believes in going after your dreams in spite of life's setbacks. "Even though you may be a single parent, you still need to pursue your goals," she says.

Medrano has lived by those words throughout most of her life. While raised the oldest of eight children in a single-parent household, Medrano learned then about the importance of responsibility. "Being the oldest of eight taught me a lot about raising kids because I helped raise them, too." She also excelled in school, earning straight As and Bs during her first two years in high school.

But Medrano's bright educational future seemed to darken when she became pregnant during the second semester of her junior year. To make matters worse, her boyfriend deserted her, forcing Medrano to go through her pregnancy on her own. She remembers the experience as being terribly difficult. "I wouldn't recommend anyone to have a child at such an early age, especially when the father isn't helping, because it's real hard. It's a struggle," she says.

Despite her challenges, Medrano continued attending school, maintaining a 3.5 grade point average throughout her pregnancy. After giving birth, she left her school to finish her education at a nearby adult school, where she remarkably earned a nearly 4.0 grade point average.

To better take care of her son, Medrano enrolled in a nonprofit job



Sandy Medrano

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# PVJOBS At Work

## Anthony Lankford: A New Way Of Life

Sheet metal apprentice Anthony Lankford is not afraid of hard work. In fact, Lankford's ability to work hard recently influenced Western Allied to hire him on at a school development project soon after his original assignment ended at the Playa Vista construction site.



Anthony Lankford

"Being in construction means you're always experiencing something new because you're working on different things everyday," says Lankford, 35. "And the work is always consistent."

Although Lankford is a hard worker, his focus was often misdirected earlier in his life. Raised by divorced parents in a tough neighborhood in South Central Los Angeles, Lankford enjoyed playing with his friends in the streets, just like most other kids. But because of the neighborhood's rampant gang activity, he and his younger brother and sister didn't feel the freedom to play beyond their home out of fear of being bullied by gang members. Out of peer pressure, Lankford eventually joined the gang so he could "get respect" and help protect his younger siblings. "I was tired of being pushed around by people in my neighborhood," he says. "The gang knew I could fight, so they saw me as a solidier. But I chose them, they didn't choose me."

Lankford's gang activity sharply escalated over the next several years, even though he still managed to graduate from high school. He continued his gang involvement throughout his early 20s, hustling to get money. Yet, what started off as petty crimes grew into far more serious illegal activity when the gang began committing bank robberies. At age 23, he was caught and sentenced to six years in prison. Lankford entered prison with a hard attitude, but incarceration ultimately became torture for him, leading him to change his perspective about his life. "I thought I would die in prison," he says. "After my third year there, I decided to change my life by getting my AA, studying the bible and writing to my family."

Shortly after his release from prison, a friend got him a job as a credit consultant, which lasted two years. He then landed a job as a

## Walden House Works To Reclaim Lives

In today's competitive job market, it's difficult enough to employ the average job seeker. But for the at-risk community, particularly those with a prison history, job placement is especially challenging. That's why nonprofit centers like Walden House are so welcome in the at-risk community. Since 1972, the San Francisco-headquartered organization has served as a leading drug and alcohol treatment center that has in recent years become a national leader in developing strategies to help addicts reclaim their lives.

Because many alcohol and drug abusers are ex-offenders, Walden House created a unique program that specifically targets the needs of former convicts. To rehabilitate those who are still serving prison sentences, the organization runs five in-prison programs throughout California. One of those programs is based in Downtown Los Angeles, home to the state's largest prison population.

"With the large influx of incarcerated individuals, the California Department of Corrections had an increased need to provide substance abuse and other lifestyle programs for the prison population," says



Walden House's Wayne Garcia.

Wayne Garcia, program director for Walden House's Los Angeles center. "We primarily work with people who are serving a year or less in prison, but we also have lifers in our program."

Walden House's six-month program focuses on substance abuse counseling, behavioral modification and treatment recovery monitoring. The organization also operates the Female Offenders Treatment Employment Program, an El Monte-based center that provides recovery services for women and their children. A vocational program is offered to both centers to help individuals make a successful transition back into society.

Several years ago, Walden House began referring their clients to PVJOBS, which has led many individuals to transform their lives through developing steady construction careers. "We have both male and female clients who have landed jobs through PVJOBS," says Garcia. "Our partnership has worked out fantastically."

As Walden House counselors continue to help their clients transition into the workforce, they emphasize that instilling hope is a major factor in bringing them onto the road of recovery. "We teach them that their history doesn't have to be there future," says Garcia. "With new information and education, they can defeat their old lifestyle, reunify with their loved ones and become a productive member in their communities."

# PVJOBS

## Employment Update

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As of June 2003, nearly 600 PVJOBS candidates have gained employment, filling almost 900 positions. Approximately 265 candidates have completed a minimum of 500 hours, with eight candidates completing more than 3,000 hours. We expect to fill up to 150 positions this quarter at Playa Vista and elsewhere. Bear in mind that many candidates listed in the table below are already working.

We specifically need candidates to fill positions as sheet metal workers, operating engineers and electricians. Candidates for these specific trades need to submit an application to the applicable union and pass the union test before they are eligible for referral to work through PVJOBS. For more details, please call us at (310) 448-4684.

CONSTRUCTION TRADE	ACTIVE IN DATABASE
Carpenters	924
Flooring/Carpet Layers	50
Concrete Masons/Finishers	150
Electricians*	98
Iron Workers	192
Laborers	1544
Tile/Marble/Brick Masons	290
Operating Engineers*	26
Painters	426
Plasterers	119
Plumbers	296
Roofers	165
Sheet Metal Workers*	21

*\*Trades Specifically Needed*

### Sandy Medrano: Staying on Course

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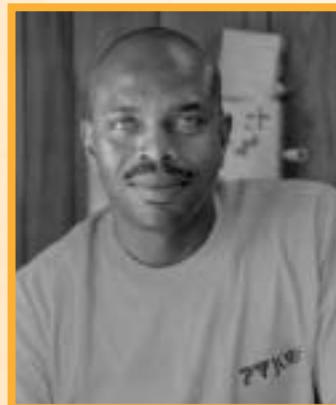
placement program at the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. The program's first job referral was a clerical assignment at PVJOBS. Although the position was only a three-month assignment, the PVJOBS staff was so impressed with Medrano's work that they hired her full-time once her assignment ended. "I love my job," beams Medrano. "I always saw myself working in a clerical position in a professional office."

Since being hired two years ago, Medrano is making plans to pursue the next steps of her career. She's currently developing skills to one day work as a case manager, and she's taking business administration courses so she can learn how to run a business in the future. Medrano says that her earlier struggles have made her stronger today, and she encourages others to stay on the right course, regardless of their struggles. As she puts it, "No one should ever discourage you in what you want to do."

# PVJOBS At Work

## Thomas Blackmon: Showing What He's Made Of

When 36-year-old Thomas Blackmon started his laborer job at the Playa Vista construction site three years ago, he made it a point to show his potential. Since being promoted as a punch technician last spring, it appears that his strategy has paid off. When you show people your smarts and assume responsibilities beyond your job, then you start getting promoted," he says.



*Thomas Blackmon*

When listening to Blackmon's work history, it is clear that he knows how to get a job done. But he could have reached many of his goals sooner in life had he not made earlier choices that knocked him off course. Still, he's making up for lost time as he continues to move forward in his career and his personal life.

Raised the youngest of three sisters in South Los Angeles, Blackmon felt that he had just as promising a start in life as anyone. After his parents divorced when he was 13, Blackmon discovered his passion of sports, particularly in football and golf. He went on to play football at Pasadena City College, but later felt pressured to drop out when he couldn't afford to continue putting himself through school. Undeterred, he decided to join the U.S. Army so he could gain job training as an ammunition specialist while traveling the world. "I loved the military. It was the most enjoyable time of my life," he says.

Following his three-year service in the military, Blackmon found a job as a security guard at Northrop, where he leveraged his connections to become a structural assembler at the company. His work experience and ambition led to a wide range of technical positions at other companies over the next several years.

But in 1994, Blackmon regrettably "fell into the wrong crowd" that led to his involvement in a serious confrontation, resulting in a seven-year prison sentence. Focused on transforming his life while still incarcerated, Blackmon studied an air conditioning trade in the prison's training school.

When he completed his prison sentence, Blackmon sought work in his trade by visiting the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, which referred him to PVJOBS. Six months after enrolling in the job program, he was hired to work for Warmington Homes, a Playa Vista contractor.

"What I really like about PVJOBS is that they include everyone," says Blackmon. "PVJOBS is doing what other construction companies should do – hire people from their own communities."

# PVJOBS Community Partners

## APPRENTICE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Century Community Training (Ms. Clinkenbeard)	310/673-3941
Los Angeles Technology Center (Ms. Kerr)	323/732-1053
Testimonial Community Love Center (Mr. Hammond)	323/296-2082

## WORKSOURCE CENTERS

Career Transition Worksource Center (George Fernandez)	562/570-3736
Community Centers WorkSource Center (Mr. Ruvalcaba)	323/752-2115
Compton Career Link WorkSource California (Mr. Smith)	310/605-3050
Hollywood WorkSource California (Ms. Gardner)	323/960-1300
LA. Urban League W. Adams/B.H. WorkSource (Mr. Parham)	323/732-7867
Marina Del Rey WorkSource Career (Ms. Waters)	310/309-6000
Wilshire-Koreatown WorkSource Center (Mr. Wilson)	213/736-8567
Wilshire Metro WorkSource (Ms. Shakoor-Akbar)	323/365-9829
WLCAC Southeast/Watts WorkSource (Mr. Williams)	323/563-5669

## YOUTH AND ADULT PROGRAMS

Chrysalis/New Directions (Ms. Fontaine)	310/914-4045
Chrysalis/Santa Monica (Ms. Zepeda)	310/392-4117
Communities in Schools (Mr. Arredondo)	818/891-9399
Community Build (Mr. Bektamba)	323/789-9950
CRTD FaithWorks (Mr. Russell)	310/673-0287
DARE U TO CARE (Ms. Parker)	323/756-3208
Employment Development Dept. S.M. Branch (Ms. Thomas)	310/576-6431
FAME Renaissance (Mr. Collier)	323/730-8354
Housing Authority of LA. (WtW Division) (Ms. Rasheed)	213/252-1800
Jobs of the Future/Homeboy Industries (Father Boyle)	323/526-1254
Joint Efforts Inc. (Mr. Twain)	310/821-2358
IAM Care Carson (Ms. Kimbrough)	310/518-8235
LA. Family Housing Corporation (Ms. Ramirez)	818/982-4091

## (YOUTH AND ADULT PROGRAMS CONTINUED)

Mar Vista Family Center (Ms. Diaz)	310/390-9607
NO GUNS (Mr. Marroquin)	310/695-7438
Radio Sin Fronteras (Mr. Magallanes)	213/250-3319
Santa Monica Barrios Unidos (Mr. Lares)	310/453-9492
Save Our Future (Mr. Jordan)	323/544-0039
South Central Projects With Industry/SCRS (Ms. Williams)	310/345-5713
The WorkPlace (Mr. Solis)	213/386-1994
Union Rescue Mission (Mr. Hopkins)	213/347-6300
Unity One (Mr. Taylor)	213/963-5843
U.S. VETS (Ms. Harris)	310/348-7600
Walden House Inc. (Mr. Medina)	213/763-6238
West Angeles Community Development Corp. (Ms. Welch)	323/291-1472
WtW Partnership Bizlink LA. Program (Ms. Samuels)	213/251-1436

## YOUTH PROGRAMS

Archdiocesan Youth Employment Services (Mr. Gutierrez)	213/736-5456
Boyle Heights Youth Opportunity Movement (Mr. Burks)	323/260-4796
CCEO YouthBuild (Mr. Starks)	310/225-3060
Covenant House of California (Mr. Sterle)	323/957-7455
Goals for Life (Mr. Berry)	562/698-1501
LA. Youth at Work (Ms. Herrera)	213/580-7505
PACE YouthBuild (Mr. Leonares)	213/580-0020
Peacekeeper ARK (Ms. Adams)	310/276-9046
United Friends of the Children (Ms. Raphael)	213/580-1850
VCHC YouthBuild (Ms. Murphy)	310/399-4100
YES YouthBuild (Mr. Whelchel)	323/567-0091
Watts Youth Opportunity Movement (Mr. Burks)	323/789-2773

For more information, call PVJOBS at 310/448-4684.

## Anthony Lankford: A New Way Of Life

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production consultant for a film studio, where he worked on the television series, "Family Law." After the show's cancellation, another friend told him about PVJOBS. "He knew I always worked hard, so he thought I'd be interested in working in construction," says Lankford. PVJOBS immediately referred him to the Apprenticeship Preparation Program, where he received training as a sheet metal worker, preparing him for his first construction job with Circulating Air, a Playa Vista contractor. Since landing his job at Playa Vista, he has now earned third level apprentice status with the Sheet Metal Workers Union.

Today, Lankford considers his life fully transformed, as he enjoys his new construction career while living with his wife and 10-year-old daughter, Aliah, at Playa Vista's Fountain Park Apartments. He credits PVJOBS for not only helping him, but also hundreds of other at-risk individuals. Says Lankford, "Very few nonprofits follow through with what they say they'll do. But PVJOBS has come through with all their claims – and then some."

