

What does God require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. — Micah 6:8

My Experience with the Job Readiness Program at Pullen

by Michael Watkins, participant

I recall my initial reaction when my friend, Ricky Caldwell, mentioned the idea of going over to The Hope Center at Pullen to enroll in their Job Readiness Program. It was like, "Yeah right...another program with no end result." I could not have been more wrong. I first sat and interviewed with Porter Bell, who was friendly and made quite an impression. She introduced me to the program and its expectations and asked if it was something I would be interested in; I responded that I was interested. Porter, always pleasant and enjoyable, is a "no-nonsense" woman: when it is time to play, that is fine, but when it is time to get down to business, she means just that and no excuses.

At one of Pullen's Wednesday night dinners, Porter came to me and mentioned that I would be assigned a mentor and would be meeting her on a particular night. Immediately I began to do my usual...clam up into a tight ball, let nothing out and most importantly, let no one else in. Then I met Mary Hamrick, my Job Readiness Mentor. She too was very pleasant and personable, but a real stickler for knowing details and that made me a bit uneasy at first, because I don't like to let strangers into my life or my heart; the proverbial brick wall had to be encased around me again.

Mary wanted to meet with me over lunch and I agreed. Our first meeting was kind of odd for me, but I survived it nonetheless. By the end of that meeting, I felt as if I had found a true friend in the Job Readiness Program. As time went on, Mary and I began to develop an even closer bond than I had anticipated and I felt as if we were really getting used to one another. One thing I used to tell Mary was that I was beginning to learn to be brutally honest with ME...which let me be honest with her; I think she knew it.

The Job Readiness Program is a valuable tool for those like me who are trying to find out just who they are and where they belong. I now know who I am and am still searching to find where I belong, but that is fine because of my relationship with the fine folks at The Hope Center. My official time may have ended in the Job Readiness Program, but the love that is within it never ends and I am confident that I will get there. I will attain my goals because of the invaluable tools given to me by the supportive and caring people at The Hope Center.

The Job Readiness Program at The Hope Center works, and as the old adage says, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. I feel the collaboration of mentors and participants along with The Hope Center staff and the addition of the JobLink Access Point make the possibilities limitless.

In closing, I would like to say to all the upcoming Job Readiness mentors and participants...

Icons aren't drawn, they are written.
It's not about race, religion or color
But it is all about LOVE
This is what The Hope Center at Pullen Memorial
Baptist Church stands for.

May God continually bless the people of Pullen!



Return from Cuba

Thank you so much for all of your support, which helped make our Cuba trip a reality. The trip to Primera Iglesia Bautista de Matanzas (PIBM) July 17-28 was a huge success and an event in which Pullen can be very proud. The church and those who have traveled before were well-represented by this group of 16.

Our trip was an adventure before we even arrived in Cuba. Once we arrived in Miami, we found that our flight to Havana would be leaving much later than we had anticipated. We finally arrived at the church in Matanzas near midnight after a very long day of travel.

The days were filled with opportunities to spend time with new friends and this group embraced every opportunity to form strong bonds with our Cuban brothers and sisters. Our time included playing and praying together. We explored some of the rich history and natural beauty of Matanzas. And we even had an opportunity to work together as we helped put a fresh coat of paint on some of the doors at the church. During the fun times, devotional times, and work times, Pullen and PIBM were getting to know one another better and better.

One would think that we loved it so much we stayed an extra day. Yes, we were originally scheduled to return on July 27 but our flight out of Havana was inexplicably delayed, which caused us to just miss our connection in Miami. The reaction of the group was the definition of cooperation. We found a good dinner and a place to sleep and were on the first flight home the next morning.

Time and again we remembered our Pullen family. We remembered the generosity that had been shown during our fundraising efforts. We remembered those who had visited PIBM before us and took greetings on their behalf. And we knew that prayers of support were being offered on our behalf. To say "Thank you!" seems woefully inadequate. We hope you will come to the Wednesday night program, September 16, as we present our report and share our experiences. We welcome the opportunity to say thank you in true Cuban fashion with a hug and a kiss on the cheek!

—Brooks Godfrey

