



# the SUMMIT

Fall/Winter 2009

*“the best social program in the world is a job” - Ronald Reagan*

## A PARTNERSHIP THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

*“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” - Henry Ford*

This philosophy is exemplified by the partnership between Summit Academy OIC and the site construction division of Veit Companies. Since 2006, Veit has been both an employer of Summit’s graduates and a supporter of our programs and mission. Veit complements our 20-week carpentry program by offering three weeks of training that exposes our students to the required skills and expectations for a laborer in the specialty contracting industry. Students learn what is involved with preparing a site for building construction and get the opportunity to experience excavation and utility installation first hand.



Of the partnership, Chuck Geisler, Executive Manager of Sales and Marketing, says, “Veit is proud of our relationship with Summit Academy and the results that we have collectively achieved. The partnership has created a system that accomplishes Veit’s goals of hiring qualified and diverse workers and Summit’s goals of providing job opportunities for its students. Veit remains committed to this mutually beneficial relationship and is continually evaluating ways to improve the program for all involved.”

An example of the program’s success is LeWanda Harper. She has been working at Veit since August of 2008 as a laborer in the earthwork and utilities groups. Prior to enrolling in Summit’s carpentry apprentice program, LeWanda, a financially struggling single mom, never imagined that she would be able to find a job that offered variety and new challenges as well as paid the bills. Now she works in different parts of the city on many different construction sites and feels that her new job is a “book come to life.”

Another Summit graduate and current Veit employee, Tai Larkins, thanks Summit and Veit who both played a role in giving him an opportunity to change his life after being released from prison. “I will not let either of them down!”

## WHO IS HIRING?

In addition to the personal challenges Summit graduates have overcome, they are now also facing a tougher job market. Still, many Summit graduates are earning jobs where they can put their new skills to work and contribute back to the community (and economy).

Below are companies that have hired Summit graduates so far this fiscal year (July – November):

- ABM Janitorial Service, Affordable Energy Solutions, Arbor Ridges, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Catholic Charities, Club New York, Comfort Services LLC, Command Labor, Direct Home Health Care, Disaster Recovery Instantly, Extendicare, Fixer’s Maintenance Company, Fremont Clinic, Health Empowerment, HealthEast Home Care, Goodwill, Jackson St. Village, MICS Construction Services, MNDOT, Prime Flight Aviation, Rakhama Homes, Roberts’ Remodeling, Sculptor Welder, Signcrafters, Spherion Staffing, Staffing Agency, St. Paul Linoleum/Carpet, Sunrise Senior Living, Sustainable Resources Center, Tarraff Construction, Terry Josan Contractor, Tyson Foods, Tri-Construction, Veit Companies, Waste Management, Zumbro Group Home

Everyone at Summit—especially our students—thank all of these companies for their opportunities and support.

*Summit is always seeking partners that want to make a difference in the lives of individuals and in our community. Contact us to learn ways you can help.*



## From Our President A Student

*In this issue, Shenise Scott, a current student in her second ten-weeks of our Community Health Worker Program, wanted to share a word of thanks.*



Before coming to Summit Academy, I was working a job at MSP airport. And even though it was an okay job, I was ready for something new. I had been out of school for almost five years and unsure if I wanted to go back. But, I decided I would go back because I wanted a career and not just a job. I am a mother of two boys and I want to be able to provide for my sons. Enrolling in Summit Academy OIC was one of the best things I've done. The teachers and staff are incredible; they make me feel like I belong. The Community Health Worker Program is by far a terrific program. It's a positive way to bring our community back together and show that we are here. It also shows that we can make our community a better place to live for us and our children. I've gotten a chance to tutor high school students at North High School through a program Summit Academy had helped develop. It was fun and rewarding just to be able to teach the youth of today in a positive way. I've become friends with a group of students and I encourage them to be all they can be and more, because that is what Summit taught me. It has been a journey that I believe is worth it and then some. My family is proud of the person I have become since joining Summit Academy and I enjoy the new person I am. I want to thank all the staff at Summit Academy for their love and support. And thank you to everyone else in the community who is part of helping Summit.

Happy Holiday!

*We look forward to hearing all of the incredible things that Shenise accomplishes going forward. One of the best parts of working at Summit is hearing back from former students about how they have transformed their life for the better. We are very proud of all the hardworking graduates, especially those who not only meet personal goals but also find ways to give back to the community.*

*We also welcome the 80 students who enrolled on November 23, 2009 and have just embarked on their new path.*

### Supporter Spotlight

**Paul Ravich:** Partner at Ravich Meyer Kirkman McGrath Nauman & Tansey, P.A.

Paul Ravich is a long-time supporter and friend of Summit Academy OIC. He was first introduced to Summit in 2003 by Larry Hendrickson as an invitee to Summit's Golf Classic. What started as an incredible day of golf with good friends for a good cause, turned into a long-term philanthropic passion.

What first connected Paul to Summit's mission? "There are many great causes. Of course, Summit's track-record of successful outcomes impressed me right away. What really got my attention was how it worked as a partnership versus a handout. Students had to make a decision to change their life and take the first step. If they had the dedication and commitment to work hard then Summit was there to provide education and support," explained Paul.

Paul quickly became more involved and joined the board in 2005. This year, he has also become co-chair of the development committee. Paul sees his role as simply introducing more people to Summit's work, "It is a learning institution where you see results. Everyone deserves a chance to learn, work and provide for their family—no matter where they come from."



**Paul and Jeanne Ravich**

In honor of Paul's dedication to Summit and his recent birthday, his wife, Jeanne Ravich, and five children all donated to Summit toward building an updated resource room to help students ready to graduate in their job search. "Education, challenging yourself and giving back are key to Paul—Summit is a perfect match to Paul's values and heart," summarized Jeanne Ravich.

"It's amazing the growth and reach that Summit has accomplished in a short time. It has surpassed what I could envision, yet always staying true to its core mission. I am proud to be part of it," ended Paul.

*If you would like to go "green" and have your Summit newsletter e-mailed to you, simply e-mail [hwidell@saoic.org](mailto:hwidell@saoic.org) with your request.*

### Students Speak!

*"What effect do you think Summit's presence has on the North Minneapolis community?"*

**Georgianna Miller**  
**CHW Program**



"Summit Academy has given the North Minneapolis community an opportunity to further their education and therefore gain access to a career. Summit has also allowed African Americans the chance to become successful and avoid being just another statistic."

**Robert Green**  
**CHW Program**



"Summit has had a very positive effect on the North Minneapolis community in that it provides positive alternatives to many who may feel that not many options are available to them."

**Latrice Blandon**  
**HHH Program**



"Summit Academy breaks some of the barriers that the people in the North Minneapolis community face. Being located on the bus line, preparing students for interviews, and having daycare on-site all help to reduce many common barriers. I will always encourage my fellow residents in North Minneapolis to join the Summit Academy family."

## Behind the Sheetrock

Recently, Summit hosted four Behind the Sheetrock events where an intimate group of guests received an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the new Twins Stadium and Target Field. This once-in-a-lifetime experience provided a great opportunity to engage new friends and partners with Summit and highlight Summit's existing partnership with Mortenson Construction. (Mortenson hired 28 of our graduates to work on the Twins Stadium project.)



Guests left with a commemorative Twins baseball, a first look at the stadium before it opens its doors next spring, and of course a clear understanding of Summit's mission and the impressive projects that graduates have had the opportunity to work on.

During each event, Summit graduate Joanne Hager, volunteered her time to share her personal Summit success story. Previously an unpaid caretaker for her father, after 20-weeks of training Joanne not only learned the skills to be successful in carpentry, she also lost more than 40 pounds. The combination built up her self-esteem as she went into the workforce as a concrete laborer employed by Northland Concrete and Masonry and Mortenson Construction.

In addition to losing another 50 pounds while working, Joanne is benefitting from having dental insurance for the first time. Her teeth, which had always been a source of embarrassment, have since been fixed. She also is building a retirement fund. Though she loves her work, it is a comfort to know she will someday be able to have a nest egg to retire on—something she had never before imagined.

Joanne is grateful for Summit and its supporters. They have played an important part in stabilizing her family, building her self-esteem and helping her find her place in the workforce. She was excited to play a part in Behind the Sheetrock events to introduce Summit's mission to more people in the community and serve as an example of the change that it is creating.

*A generous thanks to Richard Copeland, Michael Conley, Paul Sween, Ryan Tlustosch, Paul Maynard and Jon Ruth for hosting these successful events.*



**Mark your calendar!**  
"Building a Better Twin Cities"  
Golf Classic and Summer Party  
June 14, 2010

For sponsorship or registration details, contact Kris Ackley at [kackley@saoic.org](mailto:kackley@saoic.org).

## Take Note

### Challenge Grant

David Dayton has generously provided a \$25,000 challenge grant to Summit. This grant will match, dollar-for-dollar, gifts of \$500 or above from new donors. Existing donors who increase their past gift (new gift of at least \$1,000) will also receive a match for the increased amount. This is a great way to maximize your dollars' impact.

### In the News

Summit has recently earned increasing exposure in the media. We have been featured on KARE11, Fox News, WCCO, *Finance and Commerce*, MPR and *Sierra Club* to name a few media outlets. If you missed the coverage, visit our Web site under "About Us/News." To ensure you don't miss further coverage and other important updates, e-mail [hwidell@saoic.org](mailto:hwidell@saoic.org) to be added to e-mail announcements.

### New Board Members

We are extremely pleased to welcome Robert Lund of Target Corporation and Elisa Johnson of UnitedHealthCare to our Board of Directors. We look forward to the wealth of experience, leadership and expertise they will provide.

## Student Success



### Changing A Legacy

Congratulations to Dean Peters who was ranked number one in our most recent carpentry program's graduating class. As with all our students, the path that led him to Summit is unique and filled with both challenging obstacles and personal growth.

In 2003, Dean lost his mortgage company after being involved in several dubious mortgage loans. "I was egotistical, arrogant and self-serving. It was wrong. Period." Unaware that he was also fighting depression, Dean turned to alcohol and drugs which only worsened the problem. He fell into a downward spiral. "I plummeted head-first into a deep, dark abyss and I didn't know how to get out."

Dean checked himself into a VA clinic, quit using and got psychiatric help. He went from living under a pine tree in a park reserve to recovering at a friend's home. Then on Feb 19, 2007—a day Dean won't forget—he went to pay a fine. He didn't know there was a federal warrant for his arrest from his past actions. When he was released on June 4, 2009, he entered back into society, "humble and appreciative."

Though ready to work, Dean was facing a bad economy. At his halfway house, all anyone could find were jobs paying at the most \$8.50 an hour. Between taxes and 25 percent of income going to the halfway house, he knew he couldn't survive. When he learned about Summit through the American Indian OIC, he got a bike and he spent the next 20 weeks riding to Summit 14 miles each way (4,000 miles since enrolling).

Dean says Summit helped him rebuild his life, priorities and "get back on my game." Dean has formed an LLC to run his own construction company but his plans don't stop there. He has written out a long-term strategic plan. "It is my turn to give back. I don't want my legacy to be that I went to jail. I want to be remembered as the man who went to Africa and built a school."

## Hennepin County and Connections

For seven years, Hennepin County and Connections have been partnering with a proven track record of working hand-in-hand to assist youth in foster care down the road to independence. Due to the recent budget cuts, social workers have become overwhelmed with the number of foster care youth on their case loads. Connections is helping fill the gap and the relationship is deepening, with one goal in mind—best serving the youth.

As the old saying goes "it takes a village to raise a child." Non-profits, local businesses and corporations have taken the place of the village for these youth. In today's economic climate, partnerships need to be practiced now more than ever. If you or your organization are interested in partnering with the Connections Program please contact Jessica Rogers, program manager, at [jrogers@saoic.org](mailto:jrogers@saoic.org) or 612-278-5281.

## SUMMIT FACTS

### Demographic Served

- 20% 16-20 years old
- 72% 22-54 years old
- 2% 55+ years old
- 72% Male
- 28% Female
- 73% African American
- 6% Caucasian
- 5% Native American
- 2% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 2% Hispanic
- 8% Other
- 4% Unknown

### Student Expectations

- 85% attendance
- 70% minimum on any test
- Zero tolerance on behavior

### FY 2008-2009 Success

- Enrollment Goal: 379 students
- Actual Enrollment: 493 students

- Graduation Rate Goal: 70%
- Actual Graduation Rate: 70%

- Job Placement Goal: 70% of graduates
- Actual Placement: 80% of graduates

- Placement Wage Goal: \$12.50 an hour
- Actual Placement Wage: \$13.05 an hour

### Current Offerings

Pre-Apprentice Carpentry: Weatherization, Electrician, Plumbing, Sheet Metal, Welding

Community Health Worker

### Additional Student Benefits:

- Job Placement Assistance
- Financial Planning (M&I Bank)
- Life Skills: interviewing, resumes, meeting employer expectations

# Summit Advocacy

## Tour Dates

Tuesday, January 12, 2010  
Thursday, January 21, 2010  
Tuesday, February 2, 2010  
Thursday, February 18, 2010  
Tuesday, March 9, 2010  
Thursday, March 25, 2010  
Tuesday, April 6, 2010  
(all tours 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.)

To register, contact Kris Ackley,  
event coordinator, at  
kackley@saoic.org.

## Scaling the Summit Luncheon

Thursday, May 6, 2010  
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Great Hall at the Depot  
Minneapolis, MN



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*Follow us on Twitter at  
www.twitter.com/saoic*

*You can also connect to us on  
both Facebook and Twitter  
through our home page:  
www.saoic.org*

## "Training for Life" Tours

To get the word out into the community about our work and to get feedback about our programs and services, we are offering a series of one-hour "Training for Life" tours for people to see the work firsthand.

A new feature of our tour is the student-built Green House located on the grounds of Summit Academy OIC—a learning tool for future students as well as the community.



Summit's Green House

Even if you have been on a tour in the past, there have been many new and exciting changes at Summit, so we encourage you to join us at one of the upcoming dates. The tours (dates listed on sidebar) start at 8:30 a.m. and end promptly at 9:30 a.m.. No one will not be asked for a financial contribution, as we simply want to showcase our programs and gather feedback.

This is also a great way to introduce your friends and colleagues to Summit. These tours have proven to be a great way to get new people excited and involved with Summit's mission.



Summit Academy OIC  
935 Olson Memorial Hwy  
Minneapolis, MN 55405-1359

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