



# the SUMMIT

SPRING 2009

"the best social program in the world is a job" - Ronald Reagan



935 Olson Memorial Highway  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
55405  
www.saoic.org

Join  
HIRE  
Minnesota  
at the  
Capitol  
April 20th  
3-5PM  
on the  
South  
Lawn

## Summit Launches HIRE Minnesota

It was standing room only as 400 community members, elected officials and organizers met at the Lao Family Community Center in St. Paul for a HIRE Minnesota Town Hall Meeting.

HIRE Minnesota is a coalition of community organizations that is seeking jobs for low-income people and people of color in the Healthcare, Infrastructure and Renewable Energy industries. It is co-chaired by our own Louis King at Summit Academy and Will Steger, famed explorer, educator and global warming activist, of the Will Steger Foundation.

This was the second in a series of Town Hall Meetings being held to build the community movement and rally people behind the goals of HIRE Minnesota. Attendance doubled from the first Meeting; communities are excited by this growing movement and are embracing the cause wholeheartedly.

During the meeting, many elected officials spoke, including State Senator Ellen Anderson, State Senator Mee Moua, Rep. Karen Clarke, Rep. Jeremy Kalin, and representatives from the offices of Congresswoman McCollum and Councilmember Melvin Carter. All were intent on emphasizing that they cannot do it without you, the people, and that it is movements like this that do truly make a difference and bring about change.

Perhaps Bill Means from the Minnesota State OIC Council said it best when he said "we give a hand up, not a hand out," referring to the OICs. Essentially that is what the HIRE Minnesota campaign is all about: Creating employment opportunities for those with the skills to work, but that have been traditionally overlooked, so that they can have a hand up in the world, not a hand out from social services.

Summit is proud to be part of making this vision—a healthy economy and environment for all—a reality.



An attentive crowd

at the Lao Family Community Center in St. Paul



Louis King, President & CEO of SAOIC and Will Steger of the Will Steger Foundation

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For more information on HIRE Minnesota and Capitol Day, please visit [www.hiremn.org](http://www.hiremn.org).

### Hire Minnesota Coalition Members

African American Men Project, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Alana Green, ARC Greater Twin Cities, ARISE, American Indian OIC, Asian American Press, Catholic Charities Office for Social Justice, East Metro OIC, East Side Neighborhood Development Company, EMERGE, Environmental Justice Advocates of Minnesota, Family & Children's Service, Goodwill/Easter Seals, Green Water Energy, House Green, Indigenous Green Jobs Task Force, Insight News, ISAIAH, Lao Family Community of MN, League of Young Voters, L.I.F.T., Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota, LVI Investments, MACC Alliance of Connected Communities, Minnesota Baptist Convention, Minnesota Multicultural Media Consortium, Minnesota OIC State Council, MBTV, OneMN.org, Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, Pillsbury United Communities, The Public Policy Project, Sabathani Community Center, Stairstep, Urban Embassy, and the Women's Environmental Institute.

## We Are All In This Together

**A**s I stepped out of my office in early February, there was Lee Madison with a big smile on his face. “Look,” he said, holding up an identification card. “I told you not to give up on me. I told you I would not quit. I’m a member of the laborers union now. I made it!”

Lee had just made my day. In the midst of trying to raise money in the face of the financial meltdown, he was just what I needed to get back on the phones asking people to support our efforts. You see, Lee had been a student at Summit last year when his relatives put him on the streets. Our efforts to secure housing for him came up empty. However, with just a few weeks left until graduation Lee would not quit. At night he slept on the streets, taking showers in gyms before coming to class everyday. We gave him money to help and we offered encouragement. He never complained and his spirit never broke. Now, he had found employment and his own apartment.



Lee Madison

Lee is not the only example of the spirit of Summit students. I often tell people that if I was trapped in a video game that called for survival skills and heart, I would want Kelly Estes with me.

Kelly first came to us as a participant in the Connections program. He was about to age out of the foster care system. He had no family. After finishing school, he began to experiment and made some bad choices that landed him in the workhouse. But, instead of quitting, he made up his mind to get his life on track. One day I looked up from my work and there he was with “that look” on his face and then started to tell me his story. He was enrolled in the carpentry program and was trying to get an apartment. He needed help with the deposit. “Are you ready to grow up?” I asked. “Yes, sir,” he responded. “Okay, go see Mr. West. He will help you.” A week later, he was back. He needed a reference. I made the call. A week later, he was back. He needed a bed. We talked through the logistics. He got the bed. Next, he needed identification. And, finally, Kelly needed a job. I called a church member and he got on at McDonalds. A few weeks ago he told me how he leaves school, catches a bus to work and works until midnight. He does his homework on the bus. Kelly is happy and determined to make it. I’m betting on him. He is a winner.

Kelly and Lee are two snapshots of the reality for many people across this community and across the country. These are tough economic times for so many. They could have chosen to quit. But, instead, they chose “hope over fear” and they chose to make Summit a part of their lives. We are thankful that they chose us and we are thankful that you have chosen to support people like Kelly and Lee through your participation in Summit. I know that you are under tremendous pressure and that there are many demands on your time, talent and treasure. We believe that because of people like Kelly, Lee and you, our families, this community and this country will be okay in the future. Again, thanks for demonstrating that the best social service program in the world is a job. ■



Louis King is President of Summit Academy OIC. He can be reached at [ljking@saoic.org](mailto:ljking@saoic.org).

**“He does his homework on the bus. Kelly is happy and determined to make it. I’m betting on him. He is a winner.”**

## Connections Program: A Brighter Future Ahead

While the cards have been stacked against Deshawn Woods, he has not only overcome adversity, but has excelled during 16 years in foster care. He has an amazing spirit and his drive to succeed is contagious among his peers in Summit's Connections program.

Connections works with youth in long-term foster care and/or wards of the state to assist in stabilizing their placement and to prepare them for a successful emancipation out of the foster care system, (this means they do not reconnect with the "system" through the criminal justice system, open child protection cases of their own, or receiving welfare). Connections provides a combination of programming—educational, vocational, independent living skills, and personal development. The strong relationships built between counselors and youth are the foothold to the programs success. Deshawn is thankful for what he has gained through the program: "Connections has helped me learn to trust again. I don't think I would be as driven without the support of Connections."

Deshawn entered the foster care system when he was two-years-old. Shortly thereafter, he became a ward of the state and has since lived in five different homes. Now Deshawn is on his way to a successful emancipation and looking forward to a bright future.

He will be graduating this spring from High School with a 3.25 GPA. In addition to Connections, Deshawn is also a part of Upward Bound and AVID (college preparatory programs) and holds a part-time job at Bethel Care Center Nursing Home. He also was recently awarded the ACAP scholarship from Augsburg and the St. Paul Optimist Club Scholarship. He plans to go to college and pursue a double major in communications and history.

Though Deshawn is still undecided as to where he will attend college (a tough decision since he was accepted to all he applied to!), there is no doubt a bright future awaits him.



Deshawn Woods

**"Connections has helped me learn to trust again. I don't think I would be as driven without the support of Connections."**

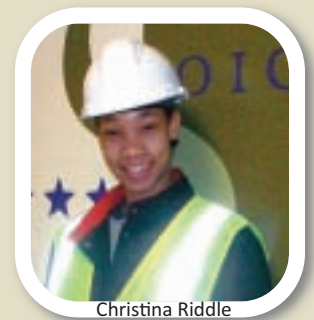
## 100 Hard Hats Program: Women Wear Hard Hats Too

Christina Riddle can do more than just draw the pretty pictures. As a graduate from Summit's Hundred Hard Hats (HHH) carpentry program this February, Christina has ambitions of melding the interior design world and the carpentry world into one.

Christina heard about Summit's HHH program through a former student. Realizing that she didn't have the financial capability to go to an out-of-state interior design school, she made the decision to first complete Summit's construction program. This would provide her the opportunity to be placed in a full-time, living-wage job where she could realize her plans of moving into her own apartment, purchasing a car and supporting herself. From there she can pursue design school from a more stable place.

Christina sums up her experience at Summit as completely her own: "It's something no one can ever take away from you." She enjoyed meeting other students, learning to work as a team, and even the strict instructors and cold weather—which both made her appreciate the work she has accomplished that much more. She believes Summit has provided her with real-world experiences to expect on a job site.

Currently, Christina has an internship lined up with Castle Building and Remodeling and is looking for a full-time position in the construction industry.



Christina Riddle

# Student Success

## Summit Health Care Programs: Taking Care

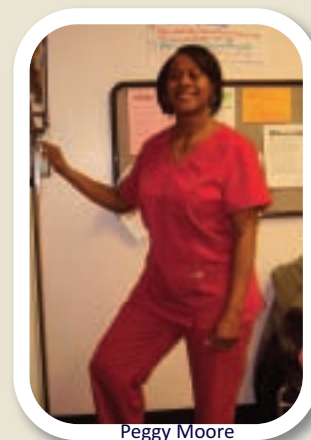
Peggy Moore has dreams that one day she will inspire others in the same way that Summit Academy OIC has inspired her. She has the long term goal of becoming a motivational speaker so she too can “lift people up.” Peggy graduated from both the Community Health Worker (CHW) and the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) programs here at Summit.

After spending nearly 20 years at the same company in the customer service industry Peggy was laid off; she was at a loss. With a string of temporary positions and a child to support, she was overwhelmed with the thought of changing occupations and looking for a new position. That was until one day when she picked up the phone, called Summit Academy and came to an informational session.

Peggy’s compassionate nature drove her interest in the medical field where she could care for and help others. Pushing through fears that she was “too old” to change careers and many other self-doubts, she started training in the CHW program. Immediately she was amazed by the level of care and concern that the Summit Academy staff displayed for their students; they were concerned about her transportation, child care and housing.

Summit has helped Peggy to build her self-esteem; giving her a sense of fulfillment, proving that hard work always pays off and that she can do anything she sets her mind to. Peggy’s experience at Summit also allowed her to set a strong example for her daughter. Peggy got a job before graduation as a CNA at First Premiere Healthcare in North Minneapolis. With a renewed sense of self, Peggy now works her CNA job, in addition to being enrolled in the Medical Assistant program at the Minnesota School of Business.

In the short-term, Peggy wants to complete her Associates degree, work in clinics and possibly get involved in the radio technology aspect of the medical field.



Peggy Moore

## 2008 Program Results

### 2008 Placement Wages

<b>AVERAGE PLACEMENT WAGE</b>	<b>\$14.65</b>
100 Hard Hats	\$20.72
Community Health Workers	\$12.15
CNA	\$11.09
Administrative Assistant	\$12.90

**\$20.72**

per hour is the average placement wage for 100 Hard Hats graduates

### 2008 Graduation Rates

<b>TOTAL GRADUATES</b>	<b>88</b>
100 Hard Hats	48
Community Health Workers	18
CNA	17
Administrative Assistant	5
<b>TOTAL PLACEMENTS</b>	<b>82</b>
Industry-Related	48

## Summit Goes Green!

Summit has unveiled a new campus-wide green initiative. Since late fall Summit's leadership team has been researching and planning a complete environmentally-friendly "green" overhaul.



Summit Academy received a grant from the Conley Family Foundation to fund this Green Initiative and to implement a Green Collar Job Training Program, scheduled to begin at Summit this Spring (watch for more information on this exciting new training program in the next newsletter).

To kick off Summit's green initiative, the entire campus received compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) in

replacement of incandescent bulbs. CFLs are proven to be more energy efficient and reduce energy costs and waste. Summit and all of its tenants have implemented a recycling program throughout all campus buildings.

Education and awareness is the first step in making long-term green changes. Our staff has participated in the Minnesota Energy Challenge and an informational workshop held in partnership with the Center for Energy and Environment. Continuing workshops are scheduled as part of our ongoing staff development.

Be part of our green movement. Join the Summit Academy OIC team in taking the energy challenge at [www.mnenergychallenge.org](http://www.mnenergychallenge.org). Also, be sure to attend one of our Town Hall Meetings and join us at the State Capital on April 20 in support of the HIRE Minnesota campaign (see front page for details).

For additional "green" information or other ways to get involved, contact Earl Rogers at 612-278-6575 or [erogers@saoic.org](mailto:erogers@saoic.org).

In conjunction with our Green initiative, we are moving to an electronic version of The Summit newsletter. E-mail [hwidell@saoic.org](mailto:hwidell@saoic.org) to update, add or confirm your e-mail address on our distribution list.

## Students Speak!

### What does "being green" mean to you?

#### Harrison Woodard:

"Green means striving to keep the earth clean by recycling and stop polluting. I am happy that we can all come together and get involved in this movement to keep the earth clean, it's good to know everyone's on the same page on helping the environment."



#### Rita Plair:

"Green means making a conscious decision to leave the earth better for future generations and to deliberately take it upon yourself to learn more and do more to save the earth everyday. I am so excited to have a team of people across the country, across economic, religious and racial lines, coming together to ensure we are speaking the same green language. This green movement means creating jobs, along with saving the environment – it is a win-win situation."



#### Brandon Brown:

"Green means using alternative and recyclable sources that have the least effect on the environment. Many industries are being affected by pollution and the depletion of natural resources, including the construction industry. These industries will need to use creativity to solve problems, like using soy based paint because it releases less toxic fumes; green solutions are almost guaranteed to be safer because the materials are often organic."



## 100 Hard Hats Receives Budget Increase

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has recently approved a budget increase for the Hundred Hard Hats (HHH) training program at Summit. The \$150,000 increase nearly doubled the previous budget allocated by Hennepin County.

This exciting budget increase will allow for the continued growth and success of the HHH program. The HHH program has continued to produce qualified men and women ready for employment in the construction trades of carpentry, plumbing, electrical, painting and heavy equipment laborer. Since its inception in 2003, the program has produced 350 graduates with a 75% job placement rate.

## Summit Staff Gives 100%

The entire Summit Academy staff showed their dedication to Summit's mission during their recent annual campaign drive. Reaching the goal of 100 percent staff participation, \$17,530 was raised in staff donations. Staff annual campaign gifts are used toward additional student expenses in times of hardship.

### UPCOMING EVENTS



**May 7, 2009**

2nd Annual  
Scaling the Summit  
Fundraising Breakfast at  
Minneapolis Marriott  
City Center



**June 1, 2009**

7th Annual  
Golf Classic at Bearpath  
Golf Course

**For more information, contact Luisa Panter at [lpanter@saoic.org](mailto:lpanter@saoic.org) or 612-278-5237**



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