

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YouthBuild Vancouver Accepting Applications for GED and Construction Skills Program

High school dropouts, ages 17-24, encouraged to attend information session

VANCOUVER, Wash. (April 7, 2015) — Clark County residents, ages 17-24, who do not have a high school diploma and are interested in obtaining a GED and job-related skills are invited to attend a YouthBuild Vancouver information session to learn more about the program.

The information session will be held **Tuesday, April 21** from 4-5:30 p.m. at Partners in Careers, 3210 NE 52nd Street, Vancouver 98663. To register for the free information session, contact Dave Cole at 360-696-8417 or dave@swwpic.org.

To participate in YouthBuild, an individual must be:

- A Clark County resident
- 17 to 24 years old
- A high school dropout in need of a high school diploma or GED
- Interested in gaining job skills and experience

Those enrolled in YouthBuild will have the opportunity, at no cost, to:

- Obtain their GED or high school diploma
- Gain two nationally-recognized construction certifications
- Participate in building a house for a family in need
- Receive services, including job, college and career preparation

Led by the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC), the YouthBuild team is a collaboration of nonprofit organizations that includes Partners in Careers, Evergreen Habitat for Humanity, Vancouver Housing Authority and WorkSource.

In addition to support from the nonprofit organizations, individuals have volunteered more than 263 hours to make presentations and give workshops to the students. In-kind donations total more than \$4,000 and include use of a van for field trips, t-shirts, school supplies and hard hats, safety glasses and vests from Vancouver Energy.

YouthBuild is a community-based alternative education program that provides classroom instruction and occupational skills training to youth who have been in the juvenile justice system, are aging out of foster care, have dropped out of high school or are otherwise at risk of failing to reach key educational and career milestones.

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YouthBuild Vancouver will help up to 67 at-risk Clark County youth, who have dropped out of high school, obtain GEDs and learn leadership and other work-related skills through academic trainings, on-site work experiences and community service activities. Participants will also have access to apprenticeships and industry certifications in the construction trades as well as transitional housing opportunities. The program will culminate with participants building two energy-efficient homes for low-income families enrolled with Evergreen Habitat for Humanity. The program is funded through a three-year \$1.1 million grant from the Department of Labor.

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Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC), a nonprofit organization founded in 2002, is the Workforce Investment Board for Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. SWWDC brings together funding, service providers, colleges, economic development and community organizations to provide employment and training services to businesses, job seekers and youth. For more information, visit www.swwdc.org.

Partners in Careers (PIC) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create self-sufficiency through specialized job training and employment services. PIC has more than 30 years of experience connecting physically, educationally and economically-challenged people to career counseling, job training, placement and coaching to achieve economic self-sufficiency. PIC provides programs for at-risk youth, low-income seniors, refugees, people with limited English proficiency, veterans, ex-offenders and individuals receiving government assistance. www.partnersincareers.org.

Evergreen Habitat for Humanity (EHFH) is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International and works in partnership with people in need from all walks of life to develop communities by building safe, affordable housing. Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. This is accomplished through volunteer labor and tax-deductible donations and materials. Habitat houses are then sold to the partner families at no profit and financed with affordable, no-interest loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are then placed into a revolving fund that is used to build more houses. www.ehfh.org.

Vancouver Housing Authority (www.vhausa.com) serves more than 7,500 very low-income children, parents, elderly and disabled people with 587 units of subsidized housing and more than 2,300 Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. The VHA Work Opportunities programs provide subsidized residents with a wide range of services as they work toward self-reliance. The VHA contributes to the sustainability of Clark County with community development activities and 2,293 units of non-subsidized affordable workforce housing that provide homes for an additional 5,000 people.

WorkSource is a partnership of state agencies, local service providers, colleges and community organizations that provide free employment and training services to employers and job seekers. WorkSource assists employers to recruit and screen for qualified applicants, provides wage reimbursement opportunities through On-the-Job Trainings, and supplies cost-savings information on employment tax credits. WorkSource serves more than 1,000 jobseekers and 200 businesses each month. Go information, go to www.go2worksource.com.