

## JOBS MEAN HOPE

A single mother with no education and no job skills has limited options. She can either apply for public assistance or perhaps find employment where she may make a little above minimum wage. If she does the latter, a large chunk of her paycheck goes for child care. The rest will go for rent, utilities, transportation, food, and of course, miscellaneous items. Does the term "spread too thin" strike a bell?

One doesn't need to be a rocket scientist to figure which course this lady chooses.

But now with the new Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program slated for take-off in Randolph County on January 2, 1993, this person, along with many others have hope.

Based on the Welfare Reform Act of 1988, the JOBS program will provide job training and basic skills education to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients. The program will be administered by the Department of Social Services. Though the program has federal roots, each county will exercise a great amount of autonomy in how it's run. Eighteen agencies and institutions were selected to the JOBS Advisory Committee to formulate Randolph County's plans.

Basic skills education will be offered to those recipients with less than a high school or equivalent education.

According to Gray Gaskins, Recruiter/Job Developer for Learning Skills, and representative from the college to the committee, "In January of 1992, the AFDC population was 900. Of that amount, 526 were mandated to participate in the program. Sixty-two percent of these have not completed high school or its equivalent and will be required to enroll in a basic skills program."

Federal law states AFDC benefits may be cut or eliminated if recipients do not comply with training. It's important to note here that the parents' share would be affected, and not the children's portion. Some recipients may be exempt because of the age of the child (for instance, if the child is too young to be separated from the parent), their health, or for a variety of other reasons.

The remaining 38% of mandatory participants will be required to enroll in some type of job training, whether this takes the form of On-the-Job-Training (OJT) or enrolling in post secondary training.

"In the JOBS Advisory Committee study, the two main barriers to AFDC recipients are transportation and child care. Monies will be provided for both transportation and child care," says Gaskins. And if the future does mean post secondary education for a recipient, then all tuition, books, and school fees will also be covered.

All educational referrals to RCC are handled by Mr. Gaskins. Most incoming JOBS students first enroll in Human Resources Development class where the main thrust is motivation and orientation.

If OJT is a viable avenue for a prospective client, then another committee member, Larry Richardson from the Employment Security Commission, aids in placing them.

Funding for JOBS is split three ways, though not equally. The federal government pays about 67%, the state about 28%, and the county roughly 5%.

Melanie Mize, from the Department of Social Services, is the JOBS Unit Supervisor, and oversees this monumental and innovative project. She says, "The first groups we'll be working with will be the unemployed. Education is going to be the number one thing now." Showing obvious excitement for the program, she states, "I just think it's wonderful."

Richard Anderson,  
Randolph CC

## ALTERNATIVES: A NEW BEGINNING

As an intern in Human Resources Development at Haywood Community College, I have been able to see the JOBS program in action. The JOBS program is a federally mandated program through the Department of Social Services with the goal of setting a course toward independence for welfare recipient families. Haywood Community College began its involvement with the JOBS program in January of 1992.

To be a participant in the JOBS program a person has to: be receiving AFDC and/or be on food stamps, and have children. The starting point in the JOBS program is a class at HCC called "Alternatives". After the Alternatives class, participants choose to go into Basic Skills, Developmental Studies, regular curriculum programs or on to a job. Five students have passed the GED, fifteen are enrolled in Basic Skills and twenty-one students are in curriculum programs.

During this summer, I have mainly observed the Alternatives class. The class is taught by Carolyn Holcomb and Henry Warren, through the Human Resources Development component. This team of instructors does a wonderful job of motivating and boosting the self-confidence of the participants. The class helps students learn job-seeking skills and to develop a job resource package. The instructors emphasize the importance of self-confidence, motivation and personal appearance. The instructors also conduct various assessments to help students to determine a career that is best suited to their aptitudes and interests. I have seen students start out being very quiet and not really concerned about their appearance. By the end of this class, they are very participative and their whole physical appearance improves.

Several students have said that the Alternatives class has given them self-confidence, hope, and a desire to better themselves. They have also commented on how the class has helped them to find a career that is best suited to their aptitudes and interests.

Alternatives is definitely a new beginning for these students. Through this class they discover that there are alternatives for their lives. They come to believe they can have a career and discover strengths they did not know they possessed.

Dean Franklin  
Haywood CC



## MANUFACTURERS' TRAINING FORUM

Manufacturers' training forum was initiated and facilitated by Durham Tech at the request of IBM/RTP. The forum is comprised of HRD and training personnel from large manufacturing firms in Research Triangle Park. It meets monthly to consider presentation on major developments impacting American industry. Members of the Adult and Continuing Education staff participate as equal partners with the corporate in the forum. The relationships created by this interaction has proven productive for all parties concerned in terms of further information exchange, resource sharing, and training activities. For further information contact Sue Jackson at (919) 598-9204.

Gloria Horne  
Durham Technical CC