

CCAP Partners Award Nomination

The Chester County Youth Center (CCYC) proudly nominates Mrs. Brenda J. Brown Williams for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania Partners Award (CCAP). Brenda is a member of Penn State Extension's Economic and Community Development team and workforce development educator for Vibrant Economies. Brenda Williams, affectionately *referred to by our youth as "Ms. Brenda"*, works within Chester County, targeting populations entering and returning to the workforce, as well as with those in entry level job placements. Mrs. Williams is responsible for the implementation of "*Skills for Taking Control of Your Future*", Penn State University/Extension's – research based life skills, job readiness and job search curriculum. The research based curriculum, "*Skills for Taking Control of Your Future*" teaches job readiness and is enhanced with supporting workshops: Basic Customer Service, Diversity in the Workplace, Social/Business Etiquette, Post-Secondary Education and the "*Pennsylvania Career Guide Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* Department of Labor & Industry.

Brenda Williams holds a Master of Science Degree in Educational Administration from Youngstown State University and post-graduate studies from McGaw Graduate School/ National College of Education in Chicago, Illinois. Brenda successfully completed the Penn State Management Institute and holds a Leadership Certificate from Penn State/Great Valley and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Speech Pathology from Ohio University. Brenda is certified to train and to proctor the evaluations for Customer Service by the National Retail Federation Foundation.

A large part of Ms. Brenda's work during the past 14 years has been the implementation and execution of the *Community Bridge Project*, designed to teach life skills and employment readiness to diverse populations of low-income people; as well as building partnerships and collaborations between community agencies, organizations and the business community. Ms. Brenda was subcontracted in 2009/2010 by an agency called PathStone as a team member for their After School Program; this is where the relationship began with The Chester County Youth Center.

In 2014, Brenda served both our Shelter and Detention residents as well as our Evening Reporting Center (ERC) students. Brenda works every Thursday afternoon from 3-4pm, rotating months, between the Detention and Shelter programs. Additionally, she works in the ERC program 4 times a month as well, which total 8 programs a month at our center. Ms. Brenda is such an energetic speaker that even though the residents have been in school all day, they are still eager to join her class. We are fortunate to have Ms. Brenda as a member of The Chester County Youth Center team!

Brenda is very passionate about what she does. She uses real life examples, role-plays, and activities to demonstrate what it is to be a good employee but most importantly, how to be a good person and productive citizen.. From hygiene and tattoos, to how to formally shake a hand, Brenda's sessions with our youth are dynamic and leave their mark. One of Brenda's self-affirmations is that she is doing her part in plotting the path away from Detention and towards academic and career success for youth. During the education year, October 2013 until September 2014, Ms. Brenda reached 92 of our youth with 370 face to face educational contacts. Our youth also receive a certificate of participation, achievement, and develop a resume by the end of their sessions with Ms. Brenda. With the success at our center, we were able to connect Ms. Brenda to the Montgomery County Youth Center where she is also currently doing workforce development programs as of 2013. We are very happy to nominate Ms. Brenda Williams as the CCAP Partner of the year for the invaluable service that she provides to the youth of The Chester County Youth Center.

Submitted by Carrie Handy Avery, B.A., M.S.

Chester County Youth Center Program Coordinator

cavery@chesco.org

610-793-5910 ext. 5014

Attachments included: Community Bridge Project information sheet, Customer Service Certification, and Ms. Williams information overview

Collaborator

New Manger

at the

**Chester County Youth
Center**

Evening Reporting Center

Community Bridge Project

Workforce Development, Reaches 14th Year
Brenda Williams, Workforce Educator



In 2000, Penn State Extension was the recipient of a \$1million dollar gift from the Mellon Financial Corporation Foundation. Mellon and Penn State formed a partnership to develop an innovative program to help state welfare recipients bridge the gap between public assistance and successful, lasting employment. Extension and the state Department of Public Welfare created this program to unite the state's employers, residents and community agencies to address an important and pressing community need. The ultimate goal of the project is to mobilize the community's assets (collaboration with businesses and community agencies) to develop a reliable workforce that fulfills employment needs within the community context.

The initial 10 year project was piloted in Chester and Delaware counties. During this time Extension conducted research, tracked, trained and mentored the career development of participants to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Having exceeded the original 10 years, The Community Bridge Project, a workforce development and career awareness venture, now is further enriched with an added youth focus that supports Extension's outreach for under-represented, underserved and other youth served outside of the traditional 4-H clubs. The project is a part of Extension's State-wide Economic and Community Development team and supports the **21st Century Workforce.**

From 2010 the project is sustained through contractual work with community and county agencies, and supplemented by the Penn State Extension College of Agricultural Sciences. For the past 14 years this unique program continues to deliver and support participants to gain or improve life skills, understand diversity, develop job readiness, customer service skills and social/business etiquette to reach successful understanding and abilities for the world of work.

The research based curriculum, **"Skills for Taking Control of Your Future"** – Life Skills and Job Readiness is enhanced with supporting workshops: Basic Customer Service, Diversity in the Workplace, Social/Business Etiquette, Post-secondary Education and the **"Pennsylvania Career Guide Commonwealth of Pennsylvania** Department of Labor & Industry.

Through the years the project has collaborated with a host of governmental and community organizations and trained thousands of citizens. The Community Bridge Project continues to support the various populations in building competencies through training to improve their chances of being economically self-reliant and educated for the **21st Century Workforce.** The goal for this project is self-sufficiency and advancement.

2013—2014 Educational Year (Oct. 2013—Sept. 2014)



Administrative Assistant
Chester County Legal Aid

Youth Participants
Chester County Youth Center: 92
Montgomery County Youth Center: 329

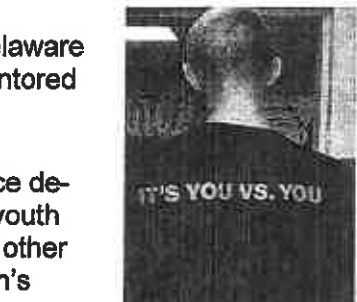
Youth Face to Face Educational Contacts
Chester County Youth Center: 370
Montgomery County Youth Center: 1302

Adult Participants
EARN Center: 174
***Employed: 106**

Adult Face to Face Educational Contacts
EARN Center: 421



Customer Service
CHAMPS



**"If YOU want more, you have to
require more of YOURSELF ..**

- **Customer Service**

Customer service is essential in each and every job and career. It is the practice of providing customers with a positive, helpful experience when they enter a business, throughout the time they stay at the business, and even after the customer leaves. Many retail and service industries spend a great deal of time training their employees to provide great customer service, because it makes a customer more likely to become a returning , loyal customer. There are a number of different ways that employees can provide great service to a customer, and most do not take much extra effort at all.

Treat the customer the way you want to be treated; Taking time to listen to the customers; Customer Satisfaction, timeliness of service, exceeding customer's expectation and making the customer happy without putting your job in jeopardy.

Students are taught the characteristics, process, communication and other fundamentals of Customer Service. At the culmination of the classes, students are given an assessment and must pass the course with 80% to achieve the certificate.

- **“Skills for Taking Control of Your Future”**

Knowing one's self, Life Skills, Image, Decision-making, Goal setting, Communicating, Resume writing and interviewing

- **21st Century Careers – Pennsylvania Department of Labor**

- **Social and Business Etiquette for the 21st Century**

October 2013 – September 2014 (8 classes/month)

Chester County Youth Center: 92 - individuals

Chester County Youth Center: 370 - face to face contacts

Certificates Achieved

“Skills for Taking Control of Your Future”	81
Basic Customer Service	77

Brenda J. Brown Williams

As a member of Penn State Extension's Economic and Community Development team workforce development educator for Vibrant Economies; Brenda Williams, *affectionately referred to as Ms. Brenda*, works within Chester County, targeting populations entering and returning to the workforce, as well as with those in entry level job placements. Mrs. Williams is responsible for the implementation of "*Skills for Taking Control of Your Future*", Penn State University/Extension's – research based life skills, job readiness and job search curriculum.

A large part of her work during the past 14 years has been the implementation and execution of the *Community Bridge Project*, designed to teach life skills and employment readiness to diverse populations of low-income people; as well as building partnerships and collaborations between community agencies, organizations and the business community.

2001 – 2010, Brenda's *gratis* contributions financed by Mellon Foundation, focused on narrowing the employment divide and in supporting participants in the transitions to self-sufficiency. Brenda fulfilled the goals of the Mellon Project in teaching Life Skills and Job Readiness, Evaluations, Mentor Training, Pairing mentors and mentees, Job Search and Attainment, Follow-up and Tracking. Her professional experience includes training, recruitment, development/fund-raising, marketing, administration and management of non-profit organizations.

The Mellon grant ended in 2010 and Williams has been contracted by various organizations to continue education in the Workforce subjects. Her current focus population is Youth and in addition to the Penn State Extension research based curriculum "*Skills for Taking Control of Your Future*", she supplements the educational classes with Basic Customer Service, Business and Social Etiquette for the New Millennium, Post-secondary education and Careers for the 21st Century.

Williams served as the statewide Leadership Administrative Fellow for Penn State Cooperative Extension for the 2007-08 program year focused on development, ranging from identifying faculty and staff interested in workforce development to determining funding possibilities and strategies.

Brenda Williams holds a Master of Science Degree in Educational Administration from Youngstown State University and post-graduate studies from McGaw Graduate School/ National College of Education in Chicago, Illinois. Brenda successfully completed the Penn State Management Institute and holds a Leadership Certificate from Penn State/Great Valley and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Speech Pathology from Ohio University. Brenda is certified to train and to proctor the evaluations for Customer Service by the National Retail Federation Foundation.

Williams knows well the real-life issues of employment and career awareness/development, particularly when it comes to low-income, at risk and underserved populations. Examples of her participation as a team member and/or training subcontractor are as follows:

- EARN, Work Ready, Supported Work and SPOC – Chester County Community Development
- Opportunities Industrialization Center – Chester County
- West Chester Community Center/Gaudenzia – Chester County
- Cat Brandywine – Chester County
- Sankofa Charter School – Chester County
- Training contractor for PathStone Corporation/After School Program – Chester County which served the Chester County Youth Center – Chester County, and the Garage – Chester County
- PathStone Corporation/House of Original Dreams – Chester County
- LaComunidad Hispana – Chester County

- Past Member/Chester County Women's Commission Projects – Chester County
- Penn State University – Centre County
- SPOC and EARN – Delaware County
- Baby SPOC/Pregnant and Parenting Youth – Delaware County
- Delaware County Community Action Center – Delaware County
- Montgomery County Youth Center
- Young Parent's Program – Coatesville Area High School
- Chester County Youth Center

During the 2013 – 2014 academic year, Brenda engaged male youth at the Chester County Youth Center's Evening Reporting Program. She has worked as a member of the team at the Chester County Youth Center since 2009.

October 2013 – September 2014

Chester County Youth Center: 92 - individuals

Chester County Youth Center: 370 - face to face contacts

*Students can accomplish: certificates of participation, achievement and develop a resume

July 2012 – September 2013

Chester County Youth Center: 67 individuals

Chester County Youth Center: 637 face to face contacts

*Students can accomplish: certificates of participation, achievement and develop a resume

July 2011 – September 2011

Chester County Youth Center: 17 individuals

Chester County Youth Center: 136 face to face contact

*Students can accomplish: certificates of participation, achievement and develop a resume

2009 – 2010

Subcontracted by PathStone Corporation as a team member of their After School Program; included youth at the Chester County Youth Center

This year, 2014 – 2015, Brenda Williams is actively engaged with additional populations at the Chester County Youth Center which include Detention and Shelter.

“As per one of her colleagues for the past 13 years”:

“Brenda is a professional in a diversity of disciplines within her teaching field. Brenda's volumes of life experiences are reference in her strong teaching competencies, her adept program planning skills, her innate sense in project development and in building relationships with individuals and community groups. Brenda does what she does because she is genuine in her beliefs and in serving young people and adult learners. Brenda lends a helping hand, a kind word, a listening ear and a ray of hope and encouragement at each turn and with each individual. Brenda reflects well personally and professionally. Brenda has a vested commitment to educating diverse audiences, as well as, a passion for assisting and supporting young people in their educational, employment and career goals. Brenda has passion for “bringing others along” and works to educate and enhance the knowledge and skills of youth and adults that they will come to be productive and viable citizens. She is highly valued and respected by co-workers and students of all ages.”

Brenda's self-affirmations are:

She has not forgotten when she was their age (her students)

She enjoys being in the company of young people, students and staff

She is witty, funny, no nonsense, maternal and passes along the past and appreciates the new

She is respectful to the young people and expects the same in return

She is wise but not a "know it all" and shares her experiences and shortcomings

She brings in real life situations and tells stories

She is doing her part in plotting the Path Away from Detention and Toward Academic and Career Success for Youth

She loves what she does.....

Ms. Williams has served as an adjunct professor of Oral Communications and/or Reading and Study Skills at Lincoln University; Marketing Director of a culturally diverse Theatre Company, Philadelphia; Director of a diverse non-profit arts organization in Phoenix; Director of a private educational institution; Assistant Superintendent/Director of Special Education for Cook County, Educational Specialist, Chicago; Speech Pathologist in the Youngstown, Ohio public school system.