



MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Karen Bryant, Conference Coordinator, 412.952.9704
Pittsburgh, Pa. – Monday, April 6, 2009

[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

Solutions to Youth Unemployment Highlighted at Upcoming Pathfinders Conference and Career Fair.

(Please consider doing a story.)

Youth are the hope for our region's future, but they are being hit hardest today in terms of unemployment. All indicators tell us there will be jobs in the future. But will our youth be prepared to fill them?

The upcoming Pathfinders: 2009 Youth Workforce Development Conference (April 24th at the Omni William Penn Hotel) provides important solutions to this challenge. The theme of the conference – Bridging the Gap: Pathways to 21st Century Jobs – structures the conversation as stakeholders grapple with how to prepare young people for their future and how to help schools, employers and the broader community engage in the process.

Unique issues around youth unemployment

If you are young, you are finding it harder than ever to get a job. Add being male and black and you are being hit the hardest in today's marketplace.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- In July 2008, the youth unemployment rate was 14.0 percent, the highest July rate since 1992.
- This increase only partly reflects the weaker job market.
- The July 2008 unemployment rates for young men (15.0 percent), women (12.8 percent), whites (12.3 percent), blacks (24.8 percent), and Hispanics (16.0 percent) increased from a year earlier.

According to the Rand Corporation, in Pittsburgh, the dropout rate is 40% among African-American students and 29% among white students

According to the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB), these are trying times for youth attempting to enter the workforce. In Allegheny County:

- There are 65,481 students enrolled in high school
- 18,780 14-18 year olds are employed
- 9,806 20-24 year olds are unemployed

Looming gap between future jobs and a prepared workforce

Not only is there individual risk for young people who don't prepare properly for the future; at stake is the very health of our region. According to the TRWIB: In the Pittsburgh Metropolitan region, we face a declining and aging population with low immigration rates. Compared to seven (7) competitive peer regions, Pittsburgh has 50,000 more workers over 45 years old, and 50,000 less workers under 45 years old. That could spell disaster. It could also provide great opportunity – if our youth begin to prepare now.

For more information: Karen Bryant, Conference Coordinator, 412.952.9704, quill747@earthlink.net



Strategies to create pathways to 21st Century jobs

In the face of our history-making economic challenge, we need history-making solutions. And in Western Pennsylvania, we're taking steps in the right direction:

- **Infrastructure:** The Pennsylvania Career Standards provide educators and community-based organizations like Urban Youth Action and YouthWorks with benchmarks to develop programs to help young people prepare for the world of work, conduct a successful job search and understand how to prepare for the emerging careers of the future.
- **Job readiness training:** Every youth needs guidance in developing the skills to be work-ready and career-driven. Youth from disadvantaged communities need this to have a level playing field. Youth-serving professionals must make a commitment to connect youth with existing programs.
- **Employer partners:** Employers can play a pivotal role in creating pathways for the future workforce by connecting with local organizations and programs that serve youth and communicating what they expect from a workforce to meet the needs of tomorrow's jobs.
- **Professional development:** Youth-serving professionals need to become aware of best practices and the most current resources for preparing youth for jobs and careers. Pathfinders: 2009 Youth Workforce Development Conference was designed to fill that need!

Pathfinders: 2009 Youth Workforce Development Conference

Urban Youth Action and YouthWorks, Inc. join forces for the fourth year to bring together employers, educators, youth workforce development professionals and community based organizations to address how best to prepare today's youth for tomorrow's jobs. At stake are individual lives and the entire welfare of the Western Pennsylvania region.

Friday, April 24, 2009

Omni William Penn Hotel in Downtown Pittsburgh

Printer-friendly conference brochure available at www.regonline.com/pathfinders2009

Pathfinders:

2009 Youth Workforce Development Conference

Presented jointly by Urban Youth Action and YouthWorks, Inc.

Conference hours - 7:30 am - 3:30 pm

Adult fee: \$95 / Youth **FREE (sorry – filled)**

Register at: www.regonline.com/pathfinders2009.

For more information: Karen Bryant, 412.952.9704 or

Youth Career Fair

Coordinated by YouthLINK and Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center.

FREE to all area youth 16-25.

Hours are 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

For more information: Tiffanee Heywood, 412.390.2256.

Sponsors

The youth track portion of the conference is funded by a generous grant from Allegheny County Department of Human Services, making it possible for 150 youth to attend the all-day conference.

Other conference sponsors include: UPMC, Jewish Healthcare Foundation, The Bank of New York Mellon, The Pennsylvania CareerLink Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, Family Resources, Hill House Association, NEED, Life's Work, Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management, Wireless Neighborhoods and Kaplan Career Institute. The Career Fair is funded by a generous donation from The Pennsylvania CareerLink Pittsburgh/Allegheny County.

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Imagine Career Week

Pathfinders Conference and Career Fair are part of [Imagine Career Week](#), a coordinated series of events focusing on preparing our region's young people for 21st century careers. The week brings together young people, parents, educators, employers, and youth serving agencies who are focused on career education.

Learn more about:

- Urban Youth Action: www.urbanyouthaction.org
- YouthWorks: www.youthworksinc.org
- YouthLINK: www.youthlinkpittsburgh.com
- Imagine Career Week: www.imaginecareerweek.org

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