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Hawthorne's Guidi Honored with Esther Williams Award of Excellence



Mayor Guidi and Jan Vogel.

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SOUTH BAY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD 12TH ANNUAL BREAKFAST

By Nancy Peters

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), headquartered in Hawthorne, California since February 2000, celebrates the employers and employees each year who have greatly contributed or achieved outstanding success. On Friday, November 9, 2007, the SBWIB held the 12th Annual Alumni & Awards Breakfast at the Ayres Hotel in Hawthorne.

The event was attended by more than 200, including alumni of the program; employers and their representatives; and various community sponsors who have contributed on various levels to the SBWIB. Hosted by Wayne Spencer, the current president of the Board of Directors of the South Bay Workforce Investment Board, awards were given out to alumni who have achieved career successes after being placed by SBWIB on a new career path after layoffs, homelessness, and other misfortunes.

Many of the recipients shared their stories of coming to a One-Stop Business & Career Center when they no longer believed in themselves as employable; when they were homeless and had no idea from where the next meal would come; or when they lost a job to downsizing, following 25-30 years of employment. Success stories included a man who was hired for more money than he had been making when he lost his job; the mother who found a job and was able to afford a new place to live; or the woman who no longer needed to collect welfare after One-Stop trained her and placed her in a job at City Hall.

In addition, Albertson's, Target, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Superior Super Warehouse, and Baneker Industries were the recipients of the Employer Awards,

with Outstanding Business of the Year being awarded to Albertson's for the hiring of more than 600 candidates since partnering with SBWIB. FAA adopted a shadowing the worker program wherein high school and college students could learn from current employees and prepare for proper schooling to someday work with the FAA. Superior Super Warehouse has hired more than 250 SBWIB candidates to work in their establishments.

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board grew out of the Comprehensive Educational & Training Association and the Joint Powers Job Training Partnership Coalition mandated in 1982 by the federal and state governments. In 2000, the new Workforce Investment Act was adopted and the city of Hawthorne became the new home of the South Bay Workforce Investment Board, after being located for 20 years in Inglewood.

The One-Stop Placement Centers are located in different cities around the South Bay: Inglewood, Gardena, Redondo Beach (Beach Cities), Youth Services in Hawthorne, and the newly added location in Carson, which became part of the SBWIB in July 2007. The One-Stop Center assists potential employees with job training, resume writing, access to interview practice, and does job placement for employers seeking to hire new employees.

Jan Vogel, the Executive Director of the SBWIB, is a native of Brooklyn, New York. He moved to southern California with his family at the age of 11 and attended the Harvard School, California State University at Dominguez Hills, and Long Beach State University. Vogel taught in the inner city and was involved with the Graduate Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.) program, teaching basic skills to at-risk youth.

"It was an easy transition for me to become part of and form the Consortium because I

already had a stake in at-risk people," said Vogel. "I saw how this type of program could benefit everyone, from the youth who are searching for their first job to the management type of employee who has been laid off due to downsizing. Many people have been employed for years by the same company and have no interview skills or even how to compose a resume that will get them hired. That's what One-Stop can help with, right down the line."

By 2006, the One-Stop Business & Career Centers have served more than 56,000 people in being placed in a job. With innovative programs in the private sector in aerospace to summer job placement for high school and college students in Recreation and Park programs, One-Stop Centers place experienced and non-experienced people in industries all around southern California.

The Fit for Gold scholarship program, established by Larry Guidi, mayor of Hawthorne, partnered with Gold's Gym and UCLA, was established for economically disadvantaged high school students to tutor younger students in nutrition and physical fitness, getting high school credits for their participation. The Bridge to Work program was established for at-risk youth in the 17-24 year old range, with 70% job placement of case-managed referrals.

"Working with the Chambers of Commerce, a Business Resource Network has been established with local businesses and national businesses with locations in the South Bay coming to rely on SBWIB to help them hire large numbers from our placement pool," continued Vogel.

"With the support of Hawthorne and Mayor Larry Guidi, the SBWIB has been able to continue the good work we started more than 20 years ago as our city of sponsorship. With the Welfare to Work program, the county

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of Los Angeles has utilized the One-Stop Career Centers for training those eligible for the program. The South Bay Workforce Investment Board is the most successful of the 49 WIBs in the state of California.

"We get support from the county, from grants, from the private sector, and from people such as Larry Guidi and the Larry Guidi Fit For Gold Scholarship Fund, which has given 25 scholarships over the last seven years," Jan Vogel said.

On Friday, November 9, Vogel presented Guidi with the Esther Williams Award of Excellence for his untiring devotion to youth, his hands-on leadership and his vision, which has created hundreds of new jobs by the expansive construction projects brought to Hawthorne by new housing developments, new retail centers, and new industrial complexes. The SBWIB and One-Stop Business & Career Centers have been utilized by new companies moving to Hawthorne, on the

recommendation of Guidi.

"Esther Williams was one of the pioneer members of the Private Industry Council (PIC) Board of Directors (precursor to the WIBs) and always expected only the best results from job training and job placement when the PIC was established.

This award is given to Larry Guidi for his record of service and commitment to the high ideals and goals of the SBWIB. Larry has improved the city of Hawthorne and the quality of life for all its residents," concluded Jan Vogel.

On accepting the Esther Williams Award of Excellence, Larry Guidi thanked all the people in Hawthorne for allowing him to serve them. Guidi congratulated all the award recipients as well, and pledged that South Bay Workforce Investment Board shall be the One-Stop and Only Stop he recommends to new and established employers in Hawthorne. •