

**TO: Workforce Investment Board**

**DATE: 7/14/11**

**FROM: Youth Council**

**For Discussion**

**For Action**

**For Information**

**SUBJECT: Bridges to Success (BTS) Success Story**

**PROPOSED MOTION(S): For Information Only**

**DISCUSSION:**

On April 29, 2010 Merced County was awarded \$499,855 for the Bridges to Success (BTS) Program. Merced was one of seven counties awarded this grant to assist high school students in obtaining job-specific skills in the fields of Allied Health and Automotive Services. The Merced County Workforce Investment Board (MCWIB), in partnership with the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE), Regional Occupation program (ROP) administered this program that served 106 at-risk youth, 16 to 18 years of age. BTS provided assistance to at-risk high school students working toward securing long-term productive careers by improving their academic skills to graduate from secondary school and to achieve recognized certificates, diplomas, or degrees that help place them in jobs, and/or educational/training programs.

On June 14<sup>th</sup> the Department of Workforce Investment staff were informed that the Merced County Bridges to Success (BTS) Success Story submitted May 10<sup>th</sup> was chosen for inclusion in the State of California Employment Development Department's (EDD) summer 2011 edition of Workforce 411 newsletter.

**The following press release was chosen:**

Five Merced County Office of Education, Career & Alternative Education Program Bridges to Success (BTS) participants (Miguel Lua, Jessica Rios-Pizano, Gabby Pena, Tania Macias, and Crystal Del Toro) were selected to attend the College of Medical Arts - Certified Nursing Association (CNA) Program at the Atwater Campus (Anberry Rehabilitation Hospital). This five week program began March 15th and ended April 17th requiring students to attend evening classes Tuesday through Thursday from 4-8 PM along with Saturday and Sunday classes from 6:30 AM – 3:00 PM. All participants did an excellent job passing their exit exam, becoming certified, and graduating on April 23rd!

Gabby Pena shares her success story by stating: "I feel blessed for all of the doors you have opened for me and for all the opportunities you have given me. I honestly have no idea how I got here from there. A couple of months ago, before your help and before Mrs. Johnston's medical occupation class, I felt like there was no future for me. I had absolutely no hope within myself, but now I have complete faith that I am truly capable of doing and becoming anything I want to! Giving me a work site, even if it was for a

couple of months, has helped my family and I tremendously. I was able to get my license and was able to save enough up for a car! Simple things like this one changed my life drastically, giving me a bit of extra money and work experience! Another thing that I'd like to thank you for, is for the chance you have given me to become a CNA, my first stepping stone for achieving my ultimate goal, a Registered Nurse. I promise to give it my all and to not disappoint you or my family. I still can't believe I was chosen for the CNA program out of all the other students for this wonderful opportunity! I am going to grab it with both hands and not let go of it!!! These open doors have made me a completely different and better person".

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A