



The Southwest Ohio Region  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

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The Southwest Ohio Region  
Workforce Investment Board

  

# NEWSWIB

June 2013

## 2 JCG students win \$20,000 Munoz scholarships

Best friends Brandon Prayer and Shannon Chamber support each other

One thing is for sure: **Shannon Chambers** and **Brandon Prayer** are there for each other. You can see it in their smiles when they greet each other, the way they finish each other's sentences, the way they stand up for each other. These young men, who met at [Aiken College and Career High School](#) in their sophomore year, have kept each other focused on the prize: Academic success, college, and career.

And, in what may be the capstone of their academic and personal lives - so far - both were awarded \$20,000 scholarships June 9 at the [Anthony Munoz Foundation's](#) Hall of Fame dinner.

Shannon, 17, just graduated from Aiken as third in his class with a 4.017 GPA. His list of accomplishments is impressive: a GE Scholar; a member of the [National Honor Society](#), [National Society for Black Engineers](#), Science Club, [MORE](#) (Men Organized, Respectful and Educated); and captain of the wrestling team, football team and track. Oh, he also won a \$5,000 Straight A Scholarship from the Anthony Munoz Foundation.

Brandon, 18, graduated 10th in his class with a 3.36 GPA. Brandon was president of Student Council, an officer of MORE, member of the National Honor Society, a GE Scholar, and captain of the baseball team. And he's also an Omega scholar, selected for a \$10,000 scholarship from [Omega Psi Phi](#) fraternity.

Both young men joined [Cincinnati Youth Collaborative/Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates](#) their senior year, and both won citywide offices as well as several awards from JCG. JCG is one of the organizations contracted with the [Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board](#) to provide youth services funded through the Workforce Investment Act.



*Brandon Prayer, left, and Shannon Chambers on the Aiken campus.*

Their paths to these successes were not a given. "I moved around a lot," said Shannon. "And I was homeless at one point." After Shannon's parents split up, his home life became more chaotic and he went to several schools before landing at Aiken. In his sophomore year he met Brandon in an advanced math class. "But we clicked in our junior year," Shannon said. "When I met Brandon, I told him that to be successful, you have to surround yourself with people who have the same ambitions and dreams that you do."

"When I met Shannon," said Brandon, "I was hanging out with guys I thought were cool. But I started to see that they were not going anywhere. Then I thought, 'He's cool too. But he's not on the wrong path.'"

Brandon, too, had a difficult childhood. The son of a teen-age mom, he lived with his grandparents until the age of 10, and attended seven schools in seven years. Over time, his mother worked her way up to better jobs. He saw first-hand how hard she worked to make a living for her children.

When Shannon had no place to live, Brandon's family took him in, and Shannon lives there now.

Meanwhile, both boys enrolled in JCG. **LaStarr Rivers**, the JCG specialist at Aiken, encouraged them to think even more about their careers. "JCG has introduced us to many more people - a whole new environment," said Shannon. A public speaking competition at JCG (Shannon came in first, Brandon second) led both boys to meet **Anthony Munoz** at CYC's FORE Youth Golf Classic.

After their summer internships at General Electric, Shannon and Brandon will be attending the [University of Cincinnati](#) where they will share a room in the [Gen-1 House](#) - the off-campus housing where first-generation college students live. Brandon plans to study biology in a pre-med program. Shannon is planning to major in architectural engineering. "I feel like we write the books we use as we go through life," Shannon said. "For me, 0 to 17 was the first chapter, and now I'm ready to start Chapter 2."

Added Brandon: "Everyone is not given equal opportunities. For me, the most successful are those who take advantages of the opportunities that come, and then open the doors."



*The Next Level graduates from Literacy Center West.*

## *Literacy Center West celebrates its GED graduates*

Inspiration is never in short supply at [Literacy Center West](#)'s annual graduation ceremony for its adult and youth GED students.

At the ceremony held June 6 at Elder High School, keynote speaker **Sherry Kelley Marshall**, President/CEO of the SWORWIB, urged the graduates to take to heart "Carpe Diem" or "Seize the Day!"

"Take charge of your future," she told the graduates. "This credential demonstrates your resiliency. You've worked hard to earn it. You have taken a step into your future." At the ceremony, 51 received the credential, including adults and youth. The youth were part of Literacy's The Next Level program, which is funded through the SWORWIB. **Lakesha Peyton** and **Thomas Sims** were recognized as The Next Level Female and Male Students of the Year.

Congratulations to other WIA-funded students who graduated this spring. Fifty young people in [Easter Seals TriState's](#) program received their high school diploma and one earned a GED credential.

## *President Marshall attends Clinton Global Initiative America meeting*

**Sherry Kelley Marshall**, President/CEO, joined the Workforce Development Working Group at the [Clinton Global Initiative America](#) meeting in Chicago June 13-14.

The Working Group focused on advancing public-private partnerships that connect unemployed workers to education, training, and jobs. Marshall participated in workshops that explored the future of the leisure and hospitality industry as well as collaboration across the service sector.

"Cincinnati's leisure and hospitality industry is growing, with the opening of Horseshoe Casino Cincinnati, the completion of the Banks and the Washington Park renovation. It's important to see if skills from one sector can be applied to this expanding sector, and if our employers and workforce stakeholders can figure out what works in terms of cross-sector competencies and industry workforce collaboration," she said.



*Susan Lund, left, Principal, McKinsey Global Institute; Sherry Kelley Marshall; and Parminder Vassal, Executive Director, ACT Foundation.*

More than 1,000 leaders from government, business, education and non-profit organizations attended CGI 2013. Speakers included former U.S. Secretary of State **Hillary Rodham Clinton**. **Chelsea Clinton** participated, emphasizing her strong interest in youth development. **President Clinton** and **Gov. Chris Christie** of New Jersey concluded the conference with a discussion on leadership.

"While at CGI, I had the opportunity to meet many people who are national leaders in workforce development," said Marshall. "Innovations are shared and celebrated at CGI, including those that began in Cincinnati, such as the [Health Careers Collaborative](#), which was recognized at CGI America as a stellar workforce development industry approach."

## *Students in .NET class focus on future*

One month into the Developer Apprentice .NET training class at [MAX Technical Training](#), the 12 students in the class - all displaced workers - are motivated and energized about the new career opportunities that lie ahead. "They are really invested in this class," said their instructor, **Patrick Tucker**. "They came in that way. They have the drive and desire to learn and are doing well."

The students are from different backgrounds - **Beth Egbers** did paralegal work for [Becker Gallagher](#); **Ron Schuermann** was a network specialist at [Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board](#); **Brian Davis** managed distribution for [H.H. Gregg](#) - but they are pegging their future on mastering .NET, Microsoft's software framework used to build applications. The students have several things in common:



*Geoff Smith, third from left, speaks to some class members.*

They were laid off from their previous job, and found themselves searching for a new opportunity. And they have analytical minds and like to solve puzzles.

They are guinea pigs too, said **Geoff Smith** of the Greater Cincinnati CIO Roundtable. The class is the first that is being funded through a joint partnership of the [SWORWIB](#), [Partners for a Competitive Workforce](#), the CIO Roundtable, and IT employers. The partnership selected MAX Technical Training to teach the class. IT is the newest career pathway embraced by Partners, the SWORWIB, and the [Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber](#) as essential to the health of the region's economy.

Smith, a former IT executive at [Procter & Gamble](#), visited the class on June 13 to talk about the partnership and the commitment of the CIO Roundtable to making it work. "Three years from now, we want IT to be a bigger slice of the local economy - and to do that, we need the talent," he said. He pledged to open what doors he could for those students who had not been offered a job with a partnership employer. For more on the program, read [here](#).

## *Spirit Construction Campers build garden shed*

The Spirit Construction Camp, held at [Roberts Academy](#) in Price Hill, is wrapping up its summer session as it puts the finishing touches on a garden shed. The shed will be kept at Roberts to support its community garden program.

Coordinated and led by Middle School Construction Industry Advocate **Anne Mitchell**, the summer camp is in its third year, and is supported by a grant from the [Spirit of Construction](#) and the [Greater Cincinnati Foundation](#). Kids who attend learn how to measure, weld, saw, paint, and even install the wiring. This year, 18 middle school students from six neighborhood schools are attending.



*Kids at Construction Camp work on the garden shed's roof.*

The SWORWIB began the Middle School Outreach Program in 2009 as part of the Construction Career Pathways Collaborative and in response to construction leadership's concerns about the future workforce. Kids build under the instruction of construction volunteers, and simultaneously use math and reading skills, both in the after-school program and this intensive summer camp.

The camp would not be possible without the help of volunteers from [Elite Welding Academy](#), [CBC Specialties](#), [Ohio Valley Electric](#), Ben Parks Electric, and [GC Contracting](#). Supplies were donated by [Partners for a Competitive Workforce](#), [Mueller Roofing](#), [Denier Electric](#), [Messer](#), [Forge Lumber](#), [Allied Construction Industries](#), [Doppes Lumber](#), [James Hunt Construction](#) and [Gallagher SKS](#).

To find out more about this fun learning experience, go to Anne Mitchell's [blog](#).

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## *Short takes*

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters seeks mentors for foster care youth**

An integral component of Hamilton County's Connecting the Dots initiative -- connecting approximately 100 foster care youth to WIA youth services over the next two years -- is also connecting those youth to mentors.

[Big Brothers Big Sisters](#) (BBBS) of Greater Cincinnati is currently recruiting adult volunteer mentors. Mentors must commit to the young person for 2 years, and meet with their "little" three to four times a month. Such a relationship can encourage the young person to make healthy choices, and encourage optimism and resiliency, said **Sean Crotty**, who is coordinating the program for BBBS. Anyone interested in finding out more can contact Crotty at [crotty@bigsforkids.org](mailto:crotty@bigsforkids.org), or call him at 513-421-4121 X826. This [FAQ](#) has more information as well.

### **Regional job fair set for Aug. 1**

The Southwest Ohio Regional Job Fair will be held 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Aug. 1 at the Scarlet Oaks campus of [Great Oaks](#), 3254 E. Kemper Road, in the Adult Education Building. Companies that have signed up include Total Quality Logistics, Alliance Data, Procter & Gamble, Vinylmax and U.S. Foods. Job seekers are urged to visit their local One Stop (for Hamilton County, the [SuperJobs Center](#)) to spruce up their resume before the big day.

## In the news

Playhouse built by Construction Campers [moves](#) to Head Start location

The Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati is [selected](#) by the National Journal as grassroots innovator

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