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Communities of Healing Employers and Workers Find Common Ground

Deadline for More Employers to Join Third Training Cohort is Feb. 14

Beckley, W.Va. (Feb. 2, 2022) – Two employers participating in the Communities of Healing (COH) recovery to work program – Appalachian Furnishings in Rock View and Pinheads in Oak Hill – have found a rich pool of hard-working, passionate employees who are creating a win-win scenario for their growing enterprises.

Alison Ibarra, owner of Pinheads Fun Center in Oak Hill, said two employees she has recruited in recovery “are hungry to work, passionate about doing a good job, and are a valuable part of our team. This is a talent pool not every business person is aware of or even prepared to tap.”

Ibarra, who returned to Fayette County to renovate an old bowling alley she enjoyed while a youth, said the Communities of Healing program has given her the skills to work with this new, rich labor pool and better her business. “Having a good heart and wanting to contribute back to the community is not going to make this program magically work,” she added. “One must develop a solid business plan and the tools to add workers of all backgrounds to function as a true team.”

Chris Adams, proprietor of Appalachian Furnishings in Wyoming County since 2019, was in the initial cohort of Communities of Healing. He has worked with five employees in recovery through WorkForce West Virginia, the state’s employment service agency.

“Before starting my own business, I was a manager hiring employees and a red flag was always a major gap in employment on their resumes,” said Adams. “Working with the WV Hive

provided the necessary foundation to get our business up and running. Because of our business mission, the WV Hive introduced the Communities of Healing program to us. It was a great fit for us to learn how to make our business recovery friendly.

Adams said the Communities of Healing program offers countless opportunities for employers, employees, and the community. “Ignoring a problem in society or in business always makes it worse,” he said. “Since enlisting in Communities of Healing, I have met so many people who have helped my small business grow and made me think differently about where I am headed.”

Judy Moore, executive director of the West Virginia Hive, said, “We are extremely proud of the commitment local businesses are making to the Communities of Healing recovery to work program. Likewise, we commend the employees being hired for their determination to turn things around and taking advantage of this second chance opportunity.”

February 14 is the deadline for the third cohort of businesses to enter a four-month training program to learn how to mold their current businesses into social enterprises supporting local citizens recovering from addictions. To learn more about the COH program and register: www.communitiesofhealing.com

The Communities of Healing program was funded in 2020 by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The innovative program is designed on the success of Fruits of Labor, a culinary program that has worked for nine years with those in recovery and 20 years in business. The successful Communities of Healing program includes a partnership group consisting of Fruits of Labor, Region 4 Planning and Development Council, Seed Sower, Inc., Wright Venture Services, Region 1 Workforce Development Board, and WV Hive.

The WV Hive is the entrepreneurship program of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority and the administrator of the Country Roads Angel Network. More information about the WV Hive can be found at <https://wvhive.com/>.

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