



JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

**NEWS RELEASE
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**3-YEAR GRANT HELPS AREA ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES
TACKLE HEALTH CARE LABOR SHORTAGE**

PORTLAND, OR (March 10, 2010) — Eighty-six Portland-area health care workers have received formal training to meet Oregon's increasing demand for assisted living care. The training is through Portland Community College (PCC) and a grant from *Jobs to Careers*, a national initiative that helps frontline health care workers access the skills and credential opportunities they need to advance their careers.

These workers are frontline staff at five assisted living facilities: Rose Schnitzer Manor, Portland; Taft Home, Portland; Farmington Square, Tualatin; Marquis Vintage Suites at Wilsonville; and Orchard House, Mt. Angel. They are all Resident Assistants both levels 1 & 2 having received credentials recognized industry-wide in Oregon.

"Having this field embrace these credentials is one of *Jobs to Careers'* greatest victories here in the Portland area," says PCC project coordinator Suanne Jackson. "Other health care employers here are now considering this training program as an affordable way to retain talented, dedicated workers."

The training workers receive is based on a curriculum PCC started developing for them in 2003 through the Assisted Living Facility Training Consortium. *Jobs to Careers* has helped refine this curriculum and make it a widely used path toward existing RA I and RA II credentials.

The credentials are now recognized by the Oregon Health Care Association, the Oregon Alliance of Senior and Health Services, and the Oregon State Department of Seniors and People with Disabilities.

"Since starting *Jobs to Careers*, our direct care turnover has been reduced from 113 percent to 27 percent," says Jennifer Hoffer, administrator at Marquis. "Most turnover happens in a worker's first six months. *Jobs to Careers* has helped us keep staff engaged with constant learning and the incentive of earning free college credits. It's great to see them grow, learn, and stay with us."

"There are 5 million frontline workers in the U.S., many of whom earn less than \$40,000 a year," says Maria Flynn, director of *Jobs to Careers*. "When we invest in their training, they strengthen

our workforce, contribute more to local and state tax bases rather than drawing from them, and provide much needed care for our aging generations.”

While Portland’s *Jobs to Careers* grant expired this past fall, its program continues to grow. Sites continue to train new hires using this curriculum, and other assisted living facilities have begun to implement the program.

“We are putting all new hires into work-based learning,” says Hoffer at Marquis. “Though PCC faculty no longer teach the courses, the workers can still earn free college credit. We still offer paid work hours to study and train. This has reshaped how we grow and retain our talent.”

“*Jobs to Careers* taught me everything I needed to know about how to do my job better,” says Emily Skipper, a medication aid at Marquis and mother of two. “I’ve been doing the same job for five years with a high school diploma in my pocket. Now, I have two resident assistant certificates and am continuing my education. Eventually, I want to be a nurse or a pharmacist, a long-term care administrator—I’m not sure what. But I know I have the tools to do it.”

About Jobs to Careers

Jobs to Careers helps frontline health care workers access the skills and credentials they need to advance their careers through work-based learning—at little to no cost to the workers. This \$15.8 million initiative operates in 17 communities nationwide. It is sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in collaboration with The Hitachi Foundation and the U.S. Department of Labor.

www.jobs2careers.org

About Portland Community College

Portland Community College is the largest institution of higher learning in the state, serving more than 1,373,758 college-age residents in a five-county, 1,500-squaremile area in northwest Oregon. Three comprehensive campuses offer university transfer courses, professional-technical career training, libraries, bookstores, and student services. There are also five centers and many other locations throughout the community. Together, these constitute the Extended Learning Campus. Distance Education offers classes online, on television, and other distance learning methods.

<http://www.pcc.edu/>