

ROSS Program December 2006 Report Mark Killen, Coordinator

December has been a very busy month for the ROSS Students filled with opportunities to learn and grow. First on the agenda for the month was a tour of National Wood Products located on Hal Greer Blvd. At National Wood Products the ROSS Students learned the production process of making fine furniture. From receiving the rough cut lumber to final finishing of the furniture, the students were taken step by step through the facility by Steve Arnold.



During the month the students also learned basic machining techniques. Mark Killen, ROSS Coordinator, brought in his Unimat Lathe and provided a demonstration of its use. He gave the students an opportunity to run the lathe and machine down a piece of brass. The students were amazed at the versatility of the machine and at how quickly and easily they got a feel for its operation.

In preparation for their future the students had an opportunity to visit Unlimited Futures, Inc. At Unlimited Futures the students met with John Delawder, the Bizassist Director, who told them about the services available to them including a new program called, Opening Soon, Inc. It is a program similar in scope to the ROSS program except where the ROSS Program is focused on Building and Maintenance, the Opening Soon program is geared towards building basic skills necessary to start a small business with a goal of helping its students make an extra \$200-\$700 a month. In that program the students will receive help with a mentoring program which will match them with an business person who will serve as a supportive mentor while they are in the program. Several students expressed interest in this program.

During the month of December the students also began a new phase of their training as well. They moved into the phase of On the Job Training where they joined the HHA maintenance crews at various sites. You might have seen them cleaning apartments, picking up trash, visiting with residents or learning a new task. But the most important thing is they are out of the classroom and out in the field putting their new skills to work and earning an income.



The highlight of the month had to be attending the movie, “The Pursuit of Happiness” starring Will Smith. It is the inspiring true story of Chris Gardner, a struggling, homeless salesman who, through his own hard work, dedication and undeniable spirit, overcame his situation and found financial success. His is the ultimate self sufficient story. The ROSS students really connected with his story, finding many parallels in their own lives and even finding hope that they too can overcome the obstacles that are in their journey of achieving financial independence and personal success.

The students also had the opportunity to attend the smoking cessation class offered by the Resident Services Department of HHA. Four students completed the program and as an incentive, they received \$50.00 just in time for Christmas.



And on a final note, as busy as the month has been, the students even found time to learn a little about automotive maintenance. Mr. Killen, the ROSS Coordinator, an ex-mechanic showed the students the different parts of an automobile, the various functions of the differing parts of a car, and even had the opportunity to discuss with the students the computer systems that help maintain proper emissions standards. The students had the opportunity to discuss the various maintenance needs of the modern car as well as having conversations concerning how to tell the difference between automotive service needs and automotive scams.