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MONDAY JULY 19, 2010 Last modified: Saturday, July 17, 2010 10:47 PM EDT

GICV receives \$288K grant award

Goodwill Industries of the Conemaugh Valley Inc. (GICV) has received a second year grant award in the amount of \$288,154 from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) for the continued and expanded operation of its YouthBuild Johnstown Program. YouthBuild Johnstown is a member of YouthBuild USA, a national program administered by the USDOL's Employment and Training Administration's Office of Workforce Investment, Division of Youth Services, which provides construction education and leadership training to at-risk youth. The grant will fund YouthBuild Johnstown operations through June 2012.

GICV is among 183 groups that received \$66.7 million in new YouthBuild awards. YouthBuild aims to help youth 16-24 earn a high school diploma or GED, learn job skills, and develop leadership qualities — all while assisting the program's building partners to build or rehabilitate affordable housing for low-income families.

GICV began operating YouthBuild Johnstown under its first competitively bid USDOL grant award in October 2007. GICV received its second competitively bid grant award in June 2009. Through this new grant, GICV will be able to expand its recruitment of youth from Windber and Conemaugh Township in Somerset County, in addition to its existing base in Johnstown and Cambria County.

The YouthBuild formula for success fits with GICV's long history of "teaching by doing" and for helping youth to transition to adult workers.

In addition, YouthBuild Johnstown teaches leadership skills and assists participants in exercising that leadership as they engage in a community development project and run their own Participant Council. It also prepares participants for the real world of work by providing specific instruction and connecting them with the public workforce investment system (PA CareerLink, Cambria County) and with employers in construction and other regional high-growth industries.

"GICV is pleased to continue leading the YouthBuild Johnstown initiative, coordinating the activities of 13 community organizations to provide our youth with education and employment skills for entrance into careers in construction or any industry, said Phyllis J. Bandstra, president and CEO. "The overall goal of this 6-11-month program is for youth to achieve economic self-sufficiency through an opportunity that they otherwise may not have had."

YouthBuild Johnstown graduated its first cohort in February 2009 and its second cohort in December 2009.

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