

# CORD

---Collaborative Organizations Responding to Dislocation

March 1, 2010

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***“Richell is extremely motivated....she’s opened my eyes to the training as well.”***

Lisa Matijevich,  
Case Manager

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## FOR McWILLIAMS, PERSISTENCE IS PAYING OFF

Richell McWilliams saw the handwriting on the wall when she was laid off from GM for a few months in July, 2008. It was then she started the process of working through the services at the Rock County Job Center to plan for her future.

Even though she was fairly certain GM would close when she was called back after a few months to her journeyman electrician position, it was still a shock when the closing announcement came. She had been at GM for over 14 years, one of the few that had been selected for the Journeyman Electrician apprenticeship program. She scored within the top three in three different skill trades, and the electrical field is where she was placed. She wanted to ensure that her GM and other training and educational investments were not wasted.

“I had always been intrigued with wind power and renewable energy, but didn’t know a lot about it,” she said. But the GM closing created the opportunity, and she has since taken numerous classes, earning a number of certifications.

Richell attended the meetings and took the assessments at the Job Center while working through Lisa Matijevich, her Case Manager. Lisa also assisted Richell when it came time for taking classes to further her vocational interest. “Richell is extremely motivated. She’s spoken passionately about renewable energies and has opened my eyes to the training as well,” Lisa said. She said they both learned a lot about the subject together. “Richell paved the way for this training for other clients and will achieve greatness with whatever her future holds,” Matijevich added.

“What I found out when I started investigating in the fall of 2008 is that many locations and businesses ‘talk the talk’ about renewable energy, but they don’t ‘walk the walk,’” Richell explained. She said Texas and South Dakota seemed to be ahead of the curve, but there wasn’t a lot of opportunity in the area—at least not yet.

If Richell could re-locate it would help, but she has five teen children, and “I can’t just uproot them,” she said. But she’s still positioning herself for the future. She’s heard the rumors about the former GM plant being used for producing wind turbines, and she’s spoken with Alliant Energy, where there are currently few possibilities but much potential. But she’s not waiting—she’s moving forward.

She has taught part-time at MATC-Madison (now Madison College), and recently had an interview for a full-time position there. But that just didn’t

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## RICHELL McWILLIAMS

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*"You can't just sit on your hands and wait—go for it."*

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*Richell McWilliams*

happen—Richell's initiative created the opportunity. "I spoke with someone at MATC who gave me the name of an instructor there. I called and made an appointment to meet with him, indicating I was looking at possible classes to improve my skills. He offered me a part-time teaching job and I was working a week later," she said.

She has since taught spring, summer, and fall classes in Programmable Logic Controllers (PLC) and DC/AC classes. Richell has also taught part-time at Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) since 1992. "Right now my available certification classes are mainly limited to Madison," she explained. There are others throughout the Midwest, but most are not on the 'approved list' for funding. Of the two certification classes she's completed, one was paid for by TAP funds while she paid for the other herself. "There's no other way to get certified," she said.

Further complicating matters is that Richell is not receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits since she's working part-time at MATC. Due to the way GM filed her paperwork she is not available for UI until October, 2010. "I didn't even know that was a part of the package until I tried to file for UI," she said.

One advantage for Richell is that she's had an extensive educational and work background, including working for Beloit Corporation, Gilman Engineering and GE Medical Systems. Her education includes Green instructor and CERET Renewable Energy certification from MATC, Energy Management and Renewable Energy certification from Oakland Community College, and Midwest Renewable Energy Association specializing in wind, all achieved within the last year. She also has associate degrees from BTC and a BS in Business Management from Cardinal Stritch.

She encourages those who are unemployed to take advantage of the services offered at the Job Center. "The people are very nice, very supportive," she said. "You can't just sit on your hands and wait—go for it," she added. In fact, mainly through her efforts, MATC is starting an Introduction to Wind Energy Technology 15-credit certificate program starting this summer. It is designed to serve as an entry level career pathway for persons interested in acquiring maintenance skills used by wind energy technicians. Knowing Richell's energy and persistence, she may be the one teaching many of those classes!

## ROCK COUNTY/WISCONSIN INTERNET RESOURCES

### Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB) Websites:

- [www.jobcenter.org](http://www.jobcenter.org) Virtual Job Center for Businesses & Job Seekers
- [www.workers4u.org](http://www.workers4u.org) Businesses can use to match with openings
- [www.jobfit.com/swwdb](http://www.jobfit.com/swwdb) Helps you match up to a career
- [www.swwdb.org](http://www.swwdb.org) Includes a variety of job search info/tips

### State of Wisconsin Websites:

- [www.wisconsinjobcenter.org](http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org) General site for employers & job seekers
- [www.jobcenterofwisconsin.com](http://www.jobcenterofwisconsin.com) State's virtual job center
- <http://worknet.wi.gov/> Local market info & econ. development tools
- [www.dwd.state.wi.us](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us) Department of Workforce Development info

## HOW DO HUSBANDS/WIVES HANDLE UNEMPLOYMENT?

Sometimes when men lose their jobs, they become jealous of their working wives. They no longer see themselves as breadwinners. So they belittle their spouses and minimize the importance of their jobs.

Then too, some wives become resentful of their unemployed husbands. They see themselves single-handedly supporting the family and it can seem overwhelming.

If that is your situation, when you feel an argument about to ensue, leave the house and go for a brisk walk. The walk can help to calm the frustration, both physically and emotionally. You may also want to contact a friend in your situation—being unemployed—and tell them how you feel. They understand what you're going through and they're usually willing to listen.

Women who lose their jobs generally cope better than men. They are less likely to resent their working husbands. Jealousy almost always stems from a lowered self-esteem. That is, not thinking you're very important.

The best way to handle jealousy is to talk about it. Find out what's expected of you, what's expected of them, and create some 'temporary roles.' Then, make an effort to show respect for the other person and how they might feel.



*Husbands and wives need to work together to overcome feelings of jealousy or inadequacy.*

## UNEMPLOYMENT AFFECTS CHILDREN TOO!

We know how unemployment can adversely affect adults, but let's not forget the children. Children have often become hidden casualties, with parents unaware of their stress. Several academic studies have linked parental job loss, especially the father's, with adverse impacts in areas like academics and self-esteem.

A study recently conducted at the University of California-Davis found that children in families where the head of the household had lost their job were 15% more likely to have to repeat a grade. Another study revealed that adolescent children of low-income single mothers who endured unemployment showed declines in emotional well-being and an increased chance of dropping out of school.

A positive can be the parent being around more to become more involved in their children's lives. A negative can be that with the parent around the house more, squabbles and arguments can occur more frequently, especially if the parent of the child is feeling the stress of the jobless situation.

While it may seem you'd be sparing your children the pain of the unemployment news if you keep it from them, they will most likely sense something is wrong. The best course of action is to sit the family down together and tell them—and then work together to manage the now-limited resources. Everyone can play a role, even the youngest (turn out the lights, recycle, etc.). Look for ways to save money as a family unit, and it will go a long way in helping the children to feel they can contribute to making the situation tolerable.



*Giving children responsibilities such as recycling provides them a feeling that they're contributing to the family's well-being.*

## CHECK OUT THESE OPPORTUNITIES

There are several **Dislocated Worker** sessions that may be of interest to you. Call the Rock County Job Center for information or to schedule a session—Julie Funk at (608) 741-3462 or Carol Kohl at (608) 741-3418. Also, for a variety of outstanding computer classes check out the Hedberg Library at [www.hedbergpubliclibrary.org](http://www.hedbergpubliclibrary.org) and on the left is the icon for computer classes. There are also a large number of BTC classes being offered—contact them for info at [www.blackhawk.edu](http://www.blackhawk.edu), or Anita Wilcox at [awilcox@blackhawk.edu](mailto:awilcox@blackhawk.edu), phone (608) 741-3566. (Calendar subject to change).

<b>Resume 201</b>	Mon., March 1, 9-11 a.m., Rm. C
<b>Choice, Change &amp; Adjustment 101</b>	Mon., March 1, 10 am-12:30 p.m., Rm B
<b>Interviewing 101</b>	Mon., March 1, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
<b>Resume 101</b>	Tues., March 2, 3-5 p.m.-Annex
<b>WIA Pre-Assessment</b>	Tues., March 2, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Rm. C
<b>Choice, Change &amp; Adjustment 101</b>	Wed., March 3, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Rm. B
<b>Pre-Assessment Workshop</b>	Wed., March 3, 1-3 p.m., Rm. D/E
<b>Work Search using Jobcenter Wi.com</b>	Wed., March 3, 2-4 p.m., Annex
<b>Resume 101 &amp; Developing a Basic Resume</b>	Thu., March 4, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. A
<b>WIA Pre-Assessment</b>	Thu., March 4, 1-3 p.m., Rm. J
<b>Success Skills Training II</b>	Fri., March 5, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. B
<b>Career Assessment &amp; Planning 201</b>	Fri., March 5, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. B
<b>Java &amp; Jobs</b>	Fri., March 5, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Annex
<b>Interviewing 201</b>	Mon., March 8, 9-11 a.m., Rm. C
<b>Choice, Change &amp; Adjustment 101</b>	Mon., March 8, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. B
<b>Interviewing 101</b>	Mon., March 8, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
<b>Interviewing 101</b>	Mon., March 8, 10 a.m.-noon, Annex
<b>Good Eating on a Budget</b>	Tues., Mar. 9, 10:30-11:30 am, Rm. B
<b>Dislocated Worker Orientation</b>	Tues., March 9, 2-4 p.m., Rm. K
<b>Using Monster.com</b>	Wed., March 10, 9-11 a.m., Annex
<b>Ability Profiler Test</b>	Wed., March 10, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. J
<b>Resume 201</b>	Wed., March 10, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Annex
<b>Resume 101 &amp; Develop Basic Resume</b>	Thu., March 11, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. A
<b>Java &amp; Jobs</b>	Fri., March 12, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Annex
<b>Success Skills Training III</b>	Fri., March 12, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. B
<b>Career Assessment &amp; Planning 201</b>	Fri., March 12, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. B
<b>Resume 201</b>	Mon., March 15, 9-11 a.m., Rm. C
<b>Choice, Change &amp; Adjustment 101</b>	Mon., March 15, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., B
<b>Interviewing 101</b>	Mon., March 15, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
<b>WIA Pre-Assessment</b>	Mon., March 15, 2-4 p.m., Rm. J
<b>Pre-Assessment Workshop</b>	Mon., March 15, 2-4 p.m., Rm. J
<b>Career Assessment &amp; Planning 201</b>	Tue., March 16, 9-11:30 a.m., Rm. B
<b>Getting Through the Tough Times</b>	Tue., March 16, 10 a.m.-noon, Rm. J
<b>Resume 101</b>	Wed., March 17, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Annex
<b>Ability Profiler Interpretation</b>	Wed., March 17, 9-11 a.m., Rm. B
<b>Educational Options</b>	Thu., March 18, 2-3 p.m., Rm. B
<b>Dislocated Worker Orientation</b>	Thu., March 18, 4-6 p.m., Rm. K
<b>Success Skills Training I</b>	Fri., March 19, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. B
<b>Java &amp; Jobs</b>	Fri., March 19, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Annex
<b>Interviewing 201</b>	Mon., March 22, 9-11 a.m., Rm. C
<b>Interviewing 101</b>	Mon., March 22, 1-3 p.m., Rm. C
<b>Choice, Change &amp; Adjustment 101</b>	Mon., March 22, 1-3:30 p.m., Rm. B
<b>Work Search using Jobcenter Wi.com</b>	Mon., March 22, 10 a.m.-noon, Annex
<b>Career Assessment &amp; Planning 201</b>	Tue., March 23, 9-11:30 a.m., Rm. B
<b>Dislocated Worker Orientation</b>	Tue., March 23, 9-11 a.m., Rm. K
<b>Interviewing 201</b>	Tue., March 23, 2-4 p.m., Annex
<b>Choice, Change &amp; Adjustment 101</b>	Wed., March 24, 2-4:30 p.m., Rm. B
<b>Resume 101 &amp; Developing a Basic Resume</b>	Thu., Mar. 25, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. C/A
<b>Success Skills Training II</b>	Fri., March 26, 8:30 a.m.-noon, Rm. B
<b>Java &amp; Jobs</b>	Fri., March 26, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Annex
<b>Things to Do When the Paycheck Stops</b>	Mon., March 29, 1-3 p.m., Rm. I
<b>WIA Pre-Assessment</b>	Tue., March 30, 10 a.m.-noon, Rm. J
<b>Using Monster.com</b>	Tue., March 30, 2-4 p.m., Annex
<b>Pre-Assessment Workshop</b>	Tue., March 30, 10 a.m.-noon, Rm. J

### MARCH 2010

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"A dream doesn't become a reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination, and hard work."

---Colin Powell

The CORD Newsletter is designed to provide helpful tips and information to area dislocated workers. Have comments or ideas for stories?

Contact the editor:

Gregg Bosak, SWWDB, Rock County Job Center, [g.bosak@swwdb.org](mailto:g.bosak@swwdb.org) or call (608) 741-3463