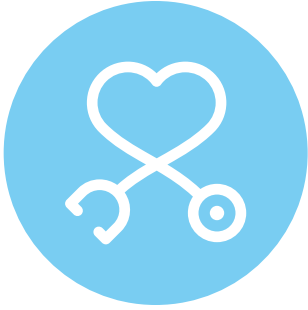


PROMISING PRACTICE

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES | EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys –
GoodCare Career Pathways Program



New online courses plus enhanced learning opportunities equals increased participant enthusiasm and training completion.

By making strategic changes and additions to its healthcare training program, GoodCare is paving the way to greater student satisfaction and employment.

Online learning is an effective way to increase student participation, but even technology isn't fool-proof in the digital age. Some online learning methods and tools work better than others. So, when the GoodCare Career Pathways Program (GoodCare) identified serious gaps tied to its existing training methods and tools, they made some smart changes.

GoodCare is operated by Goodwill Industries of the Valleys in Virginia, funded by Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG). GoodCare integrates education and training with workplace and supportive services. It focuses on occupations in three tracks: nursing, health information and healthcare support. To prepare participants for vocational training, GoodCare hosts a mandatory six-week Foundation Training course. Foundation Training offers students access to the essential skills needed to succeed in the realm of healthcare education and employment such as: adult education instruction, academic tutoring, soft skills, workplace readiness, computer and financial literacy, and online introduction to healthcare modules.

In the first two years of GoodCare, participants reported difficulty accessing and navigating the existing McGraw-Hill course material, consisting of a text book and accompanying online training modules. These problems eroded student satisfaction and effected course completion.

In response to participant feedback, GoodCare contracted with Ed2Go, an online program provider with a new healthcare curriculum. Updated textbooks and reference materials are provided to students to support

their occupational training with relevant and necessary tools. For example, students now receive a medical terminology resource, which helps them build a skill that is required for all GoodCare training tracks.

Additionally, students tour medical facilities. The tours provide a rich context for their occupational training and deepen students' understanding of the healthcare settings in which they hope to work. Tours also let students build relationships with employers. One student was hired at a toured facility before finishing training based on behavior noticed by an employer.

A new volunteer component is another avenue to broaden educational experience. This provides on-site opportunities for students to gain practical workplace knowledge through unpaid positions at food banks, nursing homes, and adult day-care facilities.

Students were so receptive to GoodCare's updated curriculum offerings, they requested more. Program feedback highlights a keen interest in specific training that could improve a student's marketability to employers. Thanks to resources provided by local community colleges, additional modules were added to address marketability and increase workplace relevance for existing employees who want to advance. These courses include introduction to American Sign Language, Spanish, aging and health, end-of-life care, and legal and ethical issues in healthcare.

The exciting additions and changes in the GoodCare occupational training program prepare students who want to enroll in college-level coursework for the future and improve participant success.

This Promising Practice was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.