The simplest measure of impact is the parent who leaves with a job, able to support and inspire her child. You’ll find such stories inside these pages. Watch that happen, over and over, and you understand why service clubs like the Soroptimists and Rotarians joined in this fiscal year to raise funds for our programs; why so many volunteers pitched in to teach or tutor or set up for graduation; why local governments support the work; and why philanthropists are investing in this success. Together, we experienced the impact on the lives of working families.

FY2007-08 included our 25th Job Training and Placement Class, more than 500 participants served in our evening Technology Center, and the pilot of our Do-It-Yourself Tax Assistance. These are not easy times here in Eastern Contra Costa County, and the demand for our services rose steadily through the year, up to a high of 108 individuals who submitted applications for the 20 open positions in our May class. We are committed to meeting that need. This year, we created a CD Toolkit of Job Training and Placement Program documentation, setting the stage for our own expansion or the replication of our program by others, like the LIFT3 Support Group in Solano County. With the help of the Stanford Alumni Consulting Team and the Antioch Chamber of Commerce, we surveyed local employers to determine their hiring needs. Together, we are planning for the future, inspired by those who have such a commitment to improving their lives and grateful to be a part of their path.

Alissa Friedman
Executive Director
We offer our gratitude to the donors, funders, and contracting agencies who financially support our mission of fighting poverty by helping low-income adults gain the skills and confidence to support themselves and their families.

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What I’ve enjoyed the most about my experience is the dedication of staff and the commitment of the clients to gaining the skills to improve their lives and support their families.

-- Keith Archuleta, Board Chair

“A NEW CHANCE”

Johnnetta Gay, above, has been in her dream job working with pregnant teens and women in the Black Infant Health Program with Brighter Beginnings for almost two years. But her journey to self-sufficiency was not easy.

A teen mother at 17, Johnnetta struggled to stay in school while raising her son and taking care of her ill mother. Eventually, she dropped out of school and supported her family through welfare.

When she stumbled across Opportunity Junction, Johnnetta immediately loved the personal feel and attention of the small classes and quickly blossomed. “I was able to take on a leadership role in her class,” Johnnetta remembers, “and Life Skills gave me a chance to open up and get my confidence back. Opportunity Junction gave me the confidence to know I could get my dream job — to pick a goal and go for it,” Johnnetta says. “I love my position, but what I really love is being able to refer new people to Opportunity Junction to share in a wonderful experience.”

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Xochil Rodriguez, above, knew she wanted something better for herself and her family. But having spent the previous five years in retail, she didn’t know what else to do. The all-night retail hours were bad and the close to minimum wage pay was worse, but Xochil lacked the skills and confidence she needed to start heading down a career path.

She heard about Opportunity Junction through CalWORKs. Once she was accepted, Xochil was overwhelmed by the support and assistance of everyone who worked there. Not long after she started, her family had a housing crisis when the house she was renting went into foreclosure. “Natalie [Georgia, Manager of Personal Development] was incredible while helping me find a place to live. She helped me find lists of homes to rent while also connecting me to other resources,” Xochil remembers.

Xochil used her new poise to earn a position as an Administrative Assistant with Jim Lanter State Farm Insurance. Although she began with administrative duties, Xochil has since learned more about the field and passed her insurance exams to expand her new career.

Our Programs

**Job Training and Placement**: Combining computer training, life skills, case management, counseling, paid experience, career counseling, placement assistance, and alumni services including one-to-one mentoring, this program prepares participants for administrative careers leading to self-sufficiency. 83% of those who complete the internship leave with jobs averaging more than $13 an hour, and 80% of them are still employed 18 months later.

**DataWorks**: DataWorks is the business that provides work experience to Job Training and Placement Participants. Clients contract with us for high-quality, low-cost services such as temporary staffing and data entry.

**Technology Center**: The Technology Center helps to bridge the digital divide as well as the language divide by providing free computer access and help, classes in English as a Second Language and Computer Basics. Volunteer trainers and a credentialed Pittsburg Adult Education teacher provide classes and assist learners Monday-Thursday evenings.

**Do-It-Yourself Tax Assistance**: Job Training and Placement alumni help low-income workers file their own income taxes and receive the Earned Income Tax Credit and other credits, using the I-CAN eFile web interface developed by Legal Aid of Orange County and championed by Maria Shriver.

Opportunity Junction

fights poverty by helping low-income adults gain the skills and confidence to support themselves and their families. We are a 501(c)(3) organization with Tax ID 68-0459131. Copies of our IRS Form 990s are available at guidestar.org, at our website at opportunityjunction.org, and at our offices.

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