

Detroit Auto Scene

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JIM VELLA, president of Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services spoke at the recent "Take Charge."

Job Seekers Are Part of Solution

By Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter

Walsh College, with the support of the Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services, is helping southeast Michigan's unemployed.

The "Take Charge" program, hosted at Walsh College, is offering a series of free workshops from now through August.

Jim Vella, president of the Ford Fund, said southeast Michigan needs job seekers to help turn its companies around and to support Michigan companies.

"You're not part of the problem, you're part of the solution, and we feel very strongly about that," Vella

Ford Fund's Vella Says Michigan's Job Seekers Are Not Part of the Problem, They're Part of Solution

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said.

He said the Ford Fund's support has allowed Walsh to provide 2,000 seats in more than 20 workshops for Take Charge.

Michael Schmidt, director of education and community development for the Ford Fund, said the company has observed a dramatic, overall change in the global economy.

"We work in markets all over the globe and one of the things we're seeing, especially in our industry right now, is there's a fundamental shift that's taken place in our economy and that's what's happening right now in this community. We're all living through that shift," said Schmidt.

"One of the things I like about Take Charge is that Walsh took the right approach, which is thinking about those skills that are critical for success and emerging economies and they are things like leadership, problem solving and communication."

Schmidt said the public doesn't know what industries are going to emerge in five years, but what is known is the skills needed to succeed.

Oakland University CEO Stephanie Bergeron said Take Charge helps job seekers learn how to tell their story and tell them where to tell their story. They learn what social networks are and how to find someone to help you get your foot in the door.

She said sending in blind resumes isn't going to work, but finding someone that can get you there will.

"We know we won't be the Detroit or the southeast Michigan of yesterday, but know that we're going to be something much stronger in the future," Bergeron said.

The kickoff included a panel discussion of success stories from past participants of the program, a networking workshop and a networking practice session.

The workshops cover topics such as networking, project management, social networking and others. Workshops will take place at both the Troy and Novi campus.

"When we first looked at 'Take Charge,' we thought about where do we know there are careers in this marketplace today. We know from our own career services activity there are careers in accounting, there are careers in project management, there's careers and job openings in information assurance," Bergeron said. "So that was the nucleus of how we created the first Take Charge."

Bergeron said the purpose of the event was to lead people in the right direction for a future career, to examine new career fields to determine if it's a match.

She said the program has helped job seekers save time and investment in discovering a career that suits them best.

More than 1,500 people attended the Take Charge kickoff.

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