



Our Families Our Future

Johanna Hackett is one of nine single mothers who recently completed the Advanced Manufacturing/Integrated Systems Technology (AM/IST) program in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The training was part of the CLIMB Wyoming program which trains and places low-income single mothers in careers that successfully support their families. Our Families Our Future, a Wyoming non-profit organization, administers the CLIMB program and worked with Laramie County Community College (LCCC) to train the group of single mothers in AM/IST. Our Families Our Future is funded by public and private sources and this particular CLIMB program was made possible through a Wyoming Department of Workforce Services Employment and Training for Self-Sufficiency grant.

Hackett, like the other women in the CLIMB program, historically worked in low-wage jobs and struggled to earn enough to support her children. She learned about the training opportunity from a flyer she picked up at the Wyoming Department of Employment while searching for work. "I knew I needed to do something that would help me qualify for higher paying jobs," said Hackett. "The CLIMB AM/IST training program was just what I needed."

Our Families Our Future worked with LCCC to develop a training schedule that would accommodate the busy lives of single mothers. Training was structured for four hours a day for a ten week period to allow the participants to maintain part-time employment. As part of the CLIMB program, participants also attended individual and group counseling sessions and life skills workshops geared to help them reach their goals.

At the end of the job training phase of the program, the CLIMB program staff coordinated job interviews for the participants with local employers. "Job placement is a critical part of the CLIMB program as it helps our single mothers get started in their new careers," said Dr. Ray Fleming Dinneen, Founder and Executive Director of Our Families Our Future. "We advocate on behalf of our CLIMB participants and help them find jobs that fit their needs and goals."

Hackett was placed with APW Wyatt, a manufacturer of kitchen equipment, as a Machine Operator. "The AM/IST training I received helped me feel very comfortable in my new job," said Hackett. "I now have an understanding of tools and the mathematical formulas I need to do my work."

"With the lack of technical schools in Wyoming, LCCC's AM/IST program provided the higher level of training needed for Johanna to enter into our skilled position. The CLIMB Wyoming program and LCCC AM/IST provide a great opportunity for women to enter into non-traditional fields," said Sue Hickman, Human Resources Manager for APW Wyatt.

All nine of the women who completed the CLIMB Wyoming AM/IST training program are now employed in full-time jobs that range from Machine Operators to Technicians. Our Families Our Future and LCCC are planning to offer another CLIMB Wyoming AM/IST training program in 2007. For more information about Our Families Our Future and the CLIMB Wyoming programs, visit www.ourfamiliesourfuture.org

