



# TRANSITION POINTS

DECEMBER 2007

*A monthly newsletter of Broward County Refugee Services*

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
FAMILY SUCCESS ADMINISTRATION

## Are You Ready For the Job Market in 2008?

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Broward County Refugee Services provides employment assistance, professional development and agency referrals to:

- Refugees
- Asylees
- Cuban/Haitian entrants
  - Parolees
  - Asylum applicants
  - Persons in removal proceedings
- Amerasians
- Certain victims of trafficking
- Permanent Residents who held one of these statuses in the past

The latest statistics show us that the job market will become more and more competitive in 2008. In Broward County, the unemployment rate increased from 3.3% in July 2006 to 4% in September 2007.<sup>1</sup> The national unemployment rate for October 2007 was even higher at 4.7%.<sup>2</sup>

❄️  
**60—65%**  
*of all new jobs*  
**... are never advertised**

Economic circumstances will give employers reasons to be highly selective during the hiring process. Are you prepared for the challenge?

Determining your **job search strategy** is the first step toward accomplishing your employment goal.

A “smart job hunter” is an “active job hunter.” You have to create employment opportunities for yourself, as opposed to just applying for openings listed on the Internet or in newspapers. The majority of job seekers are unaware that 60-65% of all new jobs created every day are never advertised; therefore, a traditional job hunter will never have access to those openings.

### The “Active” Job Search Approach:

- Networking & using a skills card (33% rate of success)
- Cold calls & cold visits to employers (47% rate of success)

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Transcending Barriers: Maylin Exposito

Maylin Exposito has been working at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Hollywood as a Prep Cook for the past eight months. This confident, young *Cubana* came to America late last year on a family reunification visa. The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) referred her and her husband to Refugee Services for employment assistance, and Case Worker Rossana Diaz opened a case for her.



Maylin about to prepare something tasty!  
Contributed Photo

Maylin was a nurse in Cuba, but here in America she was unable to start working immediately as she did not have employment authorization. We referred her to the legal services assistance provider, and by late February 2007 she received her employment authorization

“Transcending” continues on page 4

**Join our mailing list!**  
**Call 954-537-2929 or**  
**E-mail [refugee@broward.org](mailto:refugee@broward.org)**



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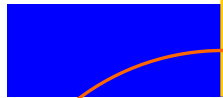
- Meetings with the decision-makers (General Managers, HR Managers, company owners)
- Persistent follow-up and sending Thank You notes/e-mails/letters

Job search can be less time consuming (under two months) when you adopt creativity, leadership, research and confidence in your strategy.

Article by Mihaela Plugarasu, BA  
Career Ladder Vocational Counselor

<sup>1</sup> [www.employflorida.com](http://www.employflorida.com)

<sup>2</sup> [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov) (Department of Labor)



**Get ready for the job market!**

All clients are invited to

**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TRAINING**

Thursday, December 13, 2007  
9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.  
at Broward County  
Refugee Services



**For services or more information:**

Broward County Refugee Services  
2995 N. Dixie Highway  
Oakland Park, FL 33334  
Tel: 954-537-2929  
Fax: 954-537-2833  
refugee@broward.org  
[www.broward.org/family/refugee.htm](http://www.broward.org/family/refugee.htm)  
Business hours: Monday to Friday  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.



Office Closures

- Christmas Day** Tuesday, December 25, 2007
- New Year's Day** Tuesday, January 1, 2008
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** Monday, January 21, 2008

*Transformers...* **Employers who work with Refugee Services**

**A**lliance Entertainment Corporation, located in Pompano Beach, manufactures compact discs. They have been hiring Refugees, Asylees and Cuban/Haitian parolees and asylum applicants for the past seven years. We asked Hiring Manager, Albert Johnson to share some of his experiences hiring from this specific population.

in this country. They are eager to find a job that provides them with a sense of economic stability that would allow them to enjoy consistency and quality of life. They are inclined to trust the first job opportunity given in the country and by doing so they tend to build their immediate expectations for life improvement.

**TP:** Does this group have any characteristics that make them suitable for immediate employment?

**TP:** Have you seen a tendency among Refugee, Asylee and Parolee employees toward career improvement?

**Johnson:** They have shown that they are willing to accept the changes and challenges that this great country offers to them. They want to make their life better by having an opportunity to work

**Johnson:** They work very hard and do overtime. About 95% of this employee population go to school to learn English. They want to be enrolled in higher education and pursue a career to take them to the next level in the job market.

**Career Ladder Steps** 1 **Translation & Evaluation of Documents**

Career Ladder clients include professionals from Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba and Belarus, with certifications and degrees from their countries of origin in fields that include:

- |                 |                    |                           |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| • Engineering   | • Medicine         | • Architecture            |
| • Communication | • Teaching         | • Social Work             |
| • Marketing     | • Accounting       | • Business Administration |
| • Law           | • Computer Science |                           |

A first step toward recertification as a professional in America is to have academic diplomas and transcripts translated and evaluated for U.S. equivalency. **The Career Ladder program covers the cost of this service for all eligible clients.**

Translations: Vendors such as **Total Translations, Inc.** translate our clients' documents in an average time frame of 14 business days, and mail the original translations to our office.

Evaluations: **Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.** evaluates our clients' academic degrees by comparing the originals (in the original language) with certified translations. The company needs an average of 14 business days to complete the process. **World Education Services, Inc.** evaluates all medical degrees.

After the translations and evaluations are received by our office, each client discusses career and certification opportunities with the Vocational Counselor.

References: [www.totaltranslation.com](http://www.totaltranslation.com); [www.jsilny.com](http://www.jsilny.com); [www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org)



Empowering professionals to return to their fields of employment.



**EMPLOYERS, Note:**

**Deadline To Start Using New I-9!**

Employers have until Monday, December 26, 2007 to start using the revised Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9).

The revised version, identifiable by the code (Rev.06/05/07)N in the lower right corner of the form, is now the only valid version. After December 26, 2007 employers who fail to use it will be subject to penalties.

A new form is NOT needed for existing employees, unless they require re-verification. The revised Form I-9 must be completed for all new employees.

For more information, the New Handbook for Employers and/or new forms, call toll-free 1-800-375-5283 or visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

**Immigration Checkpoint: Cuban Family Reunification Parole**

The Cuban Family Reunification Parole (CFRP) Program began on November 21, 2007. Under this program, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may allow certain Cuban nationals with approved family-based immigrant visa petitions to come to the United States rather than remain in Cuba to apply for lawful permanent resident status.

There is no additional form or fee. Persons who have filed Form I-130, *Petition for Alien Relative* for a family member and have received an approval notice, will be contacted by USCIS or the Department of State's National Visa Center (NVC) with a written notice explaining the beneficiary's eligibility to participate in the CFRP Program and the procedures for requesting parole.

In order to be granted parole, the beneficiary must reside in Cuba. Immediate relatives (for whom visa numbers are usually available quickly) are excluded from this program.

If the beneficiary is granted parole, USCIS will issue the necessary U.S. travel documents in Cuba, allowing the beneficiary to travel to the United States in a safe, legal and orderly manner.

The CFRP program will not increase the number of Cubans who are allowed to migrate to the U.S. under the Migration Accords, but USCIS expects it to expedite family reunification without "dangerous and irregular maritime migration."

For more information, visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

**What Are Employers Looking For?**

Johns Hopkins University and other market researchers interviewed thousands of managers and human resources representatives to determine the most valued **personal qualities** or "**soft skills**" in a job candidate. They found that employers want people who are:

- creative and can solve problems
- leaders & negotiators
- responsible & decision-makers
- team players
- energetic & enthusiastic
- trainable (have an "I can learn" attitude)
- flexible (about schedule, tasks & projects)
- good communicators
- respectful of cultural diversity



Refugee Services Case Worker Tamara Rueda (r) in a discussion with clients about what employers look for.

**Transition Focus - Refugee Services participates in Thanksgiving Holiday Meal**

Refugees, Asylees, orphans, the homeless, and other Broward County residents sat down together on Thursday, November 22, 2007 to a Thanksgiving meal made possible by Broward County Board of County Commissioners, Parenthood Coalition, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), REACH, the Lauderhill Chamber of Commerce, the Law Offices of Eric Yankwitt, PL, and over 150 volunteers.

Approximately 500 people shared in the event, and the meals were served at two locations: the Smart School in Lauderdale Lakes, and the Living Word Church in Lauderhill.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT COULD LEAD TO A BETTER JOB**

Studies show that a person performs better at the workplace if the job is a "personality match." Find the best careers for your personality type at [personalitytype.com](http://personalitytype.com) or [careeradvice.monster.com](http://careeradvice.monster.com)

- Mihaela Plugarasu, BA  
Career Ladder  
Vocational Counselor

**Transition REFERRAL CORNER**

ESOL Classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages) are available for Refugees, Asylees and Cuban/Haitian entrants through:

**PROJECT RENEW**

BCC South Campus, 88-102  
7200 Pines Boulevard,  
Pembroke Pines, FL, 33024  
Call (954) 201-8705



## FLORIDA'S MINIMUM WAGE TO INCREASE EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2008

On January 1, 2008 Florida's minimum wage becomes \$6.79 per hour. This applies to all employees in the state who are covered by the federal minimum wage. Florida's minimum wage is \$0.94 higher than the current federal minimum wage of \$5.85.

Federal law requires businesses to use the State minimum wage because it is higher than the current federal minimum wage. Civil action may be brought against an employer or any person in violation of Florida's minimum wage law.

The federal minimum wage will be increased to \$6.55 on July 24, 2008.

Adapted from:  
[www.floridajobs.org/resources/fl\\_min\\_wage.html](http://www.floridajobs.org/resources/fl_min_wage.html)

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card. Her husband received his card two weeks later.

Within one month of receiving authorization, Maylin was hired by the Seminole Hard Rock Café. Two weeks later her husband was hired by the Seminole Hotel. Their schedules don't always correspond, and they rarely see each other during the work day, but the couple look forward to time together during the commute to and from work.

Maylin enjoys her job, and is happy to see her family moving toward their goals. Recently, the couple and their young son were able to move into their own apartment. She is now attending ESOL classes (English as a Second Language) with Hispanic Unity, with plans to go back to school for licensing in the future.

Refugee Services falls under the Broward County Human Services Department, Family Success Administration. The program and this publication are made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement and administered by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are by Broward County Refugee Services.

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