PROGRAM: JEVS Career Strategies

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Catherine Blum, 62, moved to Northeast Philadelphia just before COVID-19 shutdown and couldn’t find a new job. She used JEVS Career Strategies to translate her restaurant service skills into becoming a COVID contact tracer.

At age 62, Catherine Blum moved to Northeast Philadelphia for the first time, settling down in Bustleton to be closer to her family. Before moving from Scranton last December she worked 50-hour weeks in restaurant management, but her job search here yielded no results.

Just a few months later COVID-19 caused a shutdown and temporarily closed many restaurants, leaving her feeling like she was stuck in a fruitless job search and without any close friends in the area. Then she picked up a paper and came across something that sent her down a different path.

“I picked up a copy of the Northeast Timesto figure out ways to get involved in the area, and I saw an ad for JEVS,” she said.

She learned about JEVS Career Strategies, which provides professional help to anyone above the age of 18 for all occupations and industries. The program, based out of Orleans Technical College at 2770 Red Lion Road, helps improve professional skills from the job search to the interview.

Blum started out by participating in a few webinars hosted by JEVS, connecting with Jackie Savoy, a senior career counselor. She began working with Savoy, who helped her expand her job search beyond just food service.

“I started digging around and searching for things I really wanted to do, which I never thought to look for before,” Blum said.

After widening her search and sharpening her resume and cover letter, Blum landed a job as a contact tracer, where she calls people who were recently around someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and urges them to quarantine. It was a job she never considered her skills could translate to.

“It’s perfect for me,” she said.

During shutdown, JEVS has been working with people who have never needed help with their career before. Some people who are unexpectedly out of work just don’t know where to look for help, Savoy said, and others are too ashamed to ask.

“It’s happening to so many people. Help is available if you’re willing to make a phone call,” she said.

In the last two months, JEVS has helped place 17 candidates at new jobs ranging from $25 to $60 an hour. While certain industries such as the restaurant industry may not be hiring as much as before, skills can adapted to cross over into new industries, Savoy said.

Interest in webinars and various career services has picked up during shutdown, including popular topics such as staying motivated during a job search, ways to network and how you can make yourself a more hireable candidate from home.

For those not currently searching for positions, Savoy recommends staying active by updating your resume and LinkedIn profiles or practicing interview skills.

Fees are available on a sliding scale if applicable. To learn more, contact 215-832-0878 or CS@jevs.org or visit [www.jevshumanservices/careerstrategies](http://www.jevshumanservices/careerstrategies). ••