



CUTLINE: Local women were invited to participate in a Dress for Success event coordinated by Ohio Means Jobs Highland County, Southern State Community College, and the Highland County Chamber of Commerce. (Photo provided by Highland County Chamber of Commerce)

Local women invited to Dress for Success

“Ask for what you need.” This is the advice that Kelly Collison, Associate Director of Programming for Dress for Success Cincinnati, repeated to guests at Highland County’s first ever Dress for Success event held Thursday at the Highland County Training and Employment Center (Hi-TEC) in Hillsboro. “There are people who are deeply committed to your success and they want to help you reach your goals.”

Coordinated by Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ) Highland County in partnership with Southern State Community College and the Highland County Chamber of Commerce, Dress for Success events are designed to provide professional attire, a network of support, and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

“We are glad to have had the support of sponsors to pull off Dress for Success and we hope to make it a semi-annual event,” said Rick Thompson, Director of OMJ Highland County. “It was truly a transformative experience for the clients and the volunteers.”

The Dress for Success event was an extension of the services local clients already receive from Thompson and his team. This event, coupled with the Job Fair scheduled for 1-4 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 8 at Hi-TEC, 1575 N. High St. in Hillsboro, helps promote employability for these clients and others.

Collison and associate Ashley Hunter brought Dress for Success to Highland County at the urging of Thompson with the coordination efforts of OMJ Highland County Case Manager,

Danielle Luman. Community volunteers were recruited to assist the women in selecting clothing while industry volunteers assisted in preparing participants for the reality of the job search.

“The participants felt great and left with a self-confidence that they did not have when they first walked in the door,” said Amanda Thompson, Assistant Registrar at Southern State, who was among the volunteers assisting in apparel selection. “I’m not sure who was more excited when we left, the participants or those of us who volunteered. Either way, it was a great experience that will truly continue to make a positive impact on our local communities.”

Recognizing the unique needs of the clients served through the OMJ Highland County office, Thompson and Luman began planning the event months ago in hopes of more fully serving not only their clients but also those from neighboring agencies.

In addition to recruiting women who would be best served by these services, Thompson and Luman were secured financial sponsorships and in-kind support from Southern State Community College, the Highland County Chamber of Commerce, Merchants National Bank, and Ponderosa, which provided lunch for the clients and guests.

Other sponsors--including Weastec, Candle-Lite, Dealertrack, Johnson Controls, and The Laurels of Hillsboro--stepped in to complete the program by facilitating mock interviews designed to better prepare clients for real-world job search situations. Blossoms N’ Buds and Kroger provided fall centerpieces to top off the event.

To learn more about Dress for Success Cincinnati, visit their website at www.dressforsuccess.org. For more information about Ohio Means Jobs Highland County or to inquire about the Oct. 8 Job Fair, visit Ohio Means Jobs at www.ohiomeansjobs.com or call 937-393-1933.

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