

Site Name: The Salt Lake Tribune

URL: [http://www.sltrib.com/business/cj\\_2772695](http://www.sltrib.com/business/cj_2772695)

Date: 06.01.05

## Partnership helps single parents escape dead-end jobs

By Bob Mims

The Salt Lake Tribune

Hemmed in by the bittersweet vagaries of life, Adele Satterfield desperately needed a miracle.

She made one - with her own hard work, and "Skilled2Succeed," a new private-public partnership aimed at helping single parents escape dead-end, low paying jobs by giving them the life and computer skills needed to find work in the technology sector.



(Ryan Galbraith/The Salt Lake Tribune)

Until entering the pilot program in March, Satterfield's prospects were dim. Her husband had terminal cancer. She had to care for a 20-year-old, mentally retarded, epileptic daughter. On top of that, she was a 57-year-old woman more than a decade removed from the working world, and by her own admission, completely inept with PCs.

"I was scared to death, knowing that what the future held for me was to support myself and my handicapped daughter, on my own," Satterfield said. "Then this opportunity came up. It was the answer I needed so badly."

Satterfield was one of 10 women in the inaugural nine-week Skilled2Succeed class, which incorporates counseling and training from Utah Valley State College's Turning Point program and a Lindon-based company, DirectPointe. The crash course culminated with examination and certification by Certiport, a globally recognized tech-testing company in American Fork.

From there, Satterfield and her classmates received interviewing and placement assistance from the local offices of another Skilled2Succeed partner, the Adecco Group, the world's largest staffing agency.

"I had a job one week after graduating from the program," Satterfield said, boasting through tears that she now works for Coldwell Banker's residential brokerage in Orem. "Skilled2Succeed made the difference of night and day in my life.

"None of us had the confidence to do this," she added. "[But] they encouraged us, praised us and then provided the means and training to accomplish this."

That is what Certiport chief executive David Saedi had in mind when he and Michelle Scott, his human resources vice president, learned 1 1/2 years ago that an estimated 14,000 single Utah parents live in poverty, with 26 percent of the state's children coming from working-poor families.

They decided to find others interested in doing something about it.

"About 85 percent of all jobs now require the ability to work with computers," Saedi said. "[For single parents], the missing link often is to show everybody a proof of accomplishment . . . and to then place them in the job of their dreams within a reasonable time frame."

Nine of the pilot program's 10 participants secured Certiport certificates. Four quickly found jobs. Sue McLachlan, Adecco's local staff manager, is optimistic the rest will find improved working conditions.

"Skilled2Succeed offers what otherwise would not have been a qualified recruiting force," she said. "UVSC's Turning Point program gave them the contact and comfort level they needed to interview."

Mary - who asked her last name be withheld for privacy reasons - just needed a chance to learn and some encouragement along the way.

Now a Novell employee in Provo, the 39-year-old single mother of two previously scratched out a living in a sewing factory. Her new job, and the higher pay her computer skills made possible, has filled her with pride and gratitude.

"No one can really know what this means to me," she said. "To not know how to feed your children, or where you can live. Can you begin to understand what an opportunity this is for me and my family? The change has been tremendous. My children are excited, I am excited. We have hope again, and I see that in my children's faces."

Both women say they plan to repay Skilled2Succeed by being mentors to the next group being assembled by Michelle Scott at [msscott@certiport.com](mailto:msscott@certiport.com), or 801-492-1551.