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'Skilled2Succeed' honors grads

UVSC jobs program marks its first graduating class

By Jeremy Twitchell

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OREM – Six months ago, Candice Tice was working as a clerk at Salt Lake Regional Hospital. She didn't mind the job, but long shifts and the commute from Utah County prevented her from spending time with her 3-year-old son, Colton.

Now, Tice, a single mother, is working at a small printing shop, in what she describes as her "dream job."

"When you were a kid, you went to places and thought 'Oh, it sure would be fun to work here,' " Tice said. "I always used to do that, say 'I want to work (at a print shop),' and now I do."

Tice, along with nine other women from similar backgrounds, was given an opportunity to learn business skills and is one of the first graduates of Utah Valley State College's "Skilled2Succeed" program, which held a ceremony Wednesday to honor its first graduating class.

At the ceremony, graduates heard brief remarks from Utah Lt. Gov. Gary Herbert, UVSC President Bill Sederburg and representatives from the various companies that sponsored the program. They then planted a tree to commemorate the occasion.

"This program, I think, is emblematic of helping people help themselves to become self-sufficient, to be able to go out and make a living and support their families," Herbert said.

Skilled2Succeed was conceived and is supported by local businesses.

The program came out of a year and a half of planning and involves three local businesses: Certiport, an international computer certification company based in American Fork; DirectPointe, a technological supplier based in Lindon; and Adecco, an international staffing agency with local offices.

Using the infrastructure already laid by Turning Point, an adult education program at UVSC, Certiport provides students with training and certifications using computers from



Skilled2Succeed graduates Candice Tice, left, Carol Worthington and Roxie Fonohema plant a tree at UVSC with teacher Toni Harris, in pink dress. The planting was in honor of the first graduates of the Skilled2Succeed program, which teaches business skills to Utahns to help them obtain the jobs they want.

Stuart Johnson, Deseret Morning News

DirectPointe, and then Adecco provides interview training and job-placement assistance.

Upon graduating, students receive Certiport's IC3 certification, an internationally recognized proof of proficiency in searching the Internet and using basic applications of Microsoft Windows, such as Excel and PowerPoint.

And, as the graduates are already learning, their new skills have created opportunities.

"It has brought more confidence to me and to the other single moms, too," Tice said. "We can do it. We're not in this alone, there's people to help us."

David Saedi, CEO of Certiport, is confident the program will continue to grow.

"This will serve as an international blueprint to help those people who are underserved and open doors to new opportunities," he said.

Herbert said he hopes the Utah State Board of Regents, which oversees Utah's public colleges and universities, will look at the Skilled2Succeed program and consider how it could be implemented at other state institutions.

"It significantly improves the economy in the state of Utah," Herbert said. "The fact that these people . . . now are employable because of the skill set they received."

Plans to offer the program to the some 1,000 adults involved in Turning Point are already underway.

"They so surpassed our expectations. We're still in awe," said Michelle Scott, vice president of people development and human resources for Certiport. "It just tells you what people are capable of when it's lined up correctly. The companies that get them will be very lucky. It's not the other way around."

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