



## Job fair introduces new nurse's-aide graduates to potential employers

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— ASHTABULA — One year ago, Deirdra Myers, of Conneaut, was facing divorce with bleak prospects for supporting herself and her two young children.

Today, Myers is a successful state-tested nursing assistant (STNA), employed at Inn-Conneaut Health Center. Her success is in part the result of her participation in the Northeast Ohio Nurse Assistant Training (NAT) Program, a collaboration of the American Red Cross-Cleveland and Berea Children's Home and Family Services.

"I love my job. I will have been at Inn-Conneaut for a year in April," Myers said. "I love working with my residents and seeing them smile."

Myers was a guest at the NAT/ STNA graduation and job fair held Friday at the Ashtabula chapter of the American Red Cross, 433 Center St. The job fair was held to support and encourage 13 new graduates of the program.

The NAT program provides life skills and nursing-assistant training to northeast Ohio residents who qualify for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, (TANF), said Kiersten Martens, program manager.

"The (criterion) for TANF is applicants must be have an income level at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, and they must have minor children," Martens said. "This is a wonderful opportunity for them to start a career."

Joanne Sherwood, STNA instructor for the Red Cross' Greater Cleveland chapter, said: "We do our classes in different counties around northeast Ohio. The classes last for four weeks, and 10 days to two weeks after graduation, the students take their state tests."

The STNAs receive a gamut of instruction, including on personal care, maintaining nutrition and fluid intake, infection control, recording vital signs, communication skills and recognizing emergencies.

"This class tried so hard. They tested so well that, collectively, they have the highest test scores and best attendance records of any class I have taught," Sherwood said.

Michelle Thompson, a Jefferson Healthcare Center administrator, was at the job fair to interview the graduates for potential STNA positions.

"We have hired graduates from this program before, and we have been very pleased with them and their professionalism," Thompson said.

Davita Adams, 22, of Ashtabula, who was one of the 13 graduates. She said she joined the program in order to provide a better life for herself and her children.

"I see this as a start for me in the medical field," Adams said. "I loved the program and can't thank my instructor or classmates enough for helping me to succeed."

For more information on the Northeast Ohio Nurse Assistant Training Program, check the Greater Cleveland Red Cross' Web site ([www.redcross-cleveland.org](http://www.redcross-cleveland.org)).

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Photos



WARREN DILLAWAY / Star Beacon EMILY LAING (facing) of Ashtabula talks with Michelle Thompson of the Jefferson Health Care Center during a Northeast Ohio Nursing Assistants Training Job Fair at the Ashtabula Red Cross Friday morning.