

2002 Information Technology Scholarship Winners

Jessica Laro

Boston Region
Shriver Job Corps Center

Where there is a will there is a way. “My experiences in Job Corps have reaffirmed this maxim for me. I had the will to improve my technical proficiency with computers, and Job Corps has been an effective way towards fulfilling that goal.”

Jessica Laro indicated that learning aspects of IT, such as application and web development, is similar to when she immigrated to this country and had to learn a new language. “I experienced first-hand how learning new languages opens the doors to a foreign and exciting new world of experiences. I am sure the same sentiments can be expressed of learning the advanced languages for computers. I would be able to use my new skills to challenge myself to design and develop more effective, interactive, and dynamic applications.”

Jessica completed the Business Technology and Transportation Communications Union (TCU) Program at the Shriver Job Corps Center that provided her with the opportunities to build a solid foundation in the fundamentals of IT. Currently, Jessica is representing TCU by working at the Department of Labor, Region I offices in Boston as a student intern.

Steven Borne

New York Region
Oneonta Job Corps Center

Being from Rochester, New York, Steven Borne grew up in a small city that has always been at the forefront of technological advancement. He has always been fascinated with information technology and the benefits that coexist with it. “Becoming a student at Rochester Institute of Technology has always been one of my main goals in my life and I have guided my career in an attempt to achieve it.”

Steven sought out many different options and was impressed with what the Job Corps program offered. Not only did he obtain his GED, but he also completed the Business Technology and Computer Programming trade under the direction of the Oneonta Job Corps Center LAN Administrator. Steven is now the “Head Computer Technician” at the center’s computer lab. He mentors other students interested in IT and is responsible for troubleshooting all 300+ workstations at the center.

Steven says, “The opportunity I have experienced at the Oneonta Job Corps Center has been rewarding and has helped turn my life around. My college dreams still call for me and I once again will do what it takes to accomplish it.”

James Elkins
Philadelphia Region
Pittsburgh Job Corps Center

James Elkins' goals and aspirations in the IT field are to become a computer engineer. "I am a hard working and determined young man who believes that I can accomplish my goals successfully. I have always enjoyed working in the field of computers ever since I can remember."

James is currently in the process of working toward his A+ Certification and is completing his studies to become a Cisco Certified Network Associate. James is not simply proficient in numerous types of computers and operating systems, his love of the IT world also goes beyond the classroom. He volunteers at the Red Cross to help set up computers for a disaster relief plan and teaches computer repair at his church on the weekends. James has personally built, cloned, repaired and troubleshot over 1,000 computers. "Through my A+ classes, I have learned that fixing computers is easy, fun and fulfilling."

"When it comes right down to it I love working with computers because I am challenged to resolve the ongoing problems."

Yohani Gonzalez
Atlanta Region
Homestead Job Corps Center

Yohani indicates that education is very important to him and is the key to improving his life and his skills. Even though he migrated from Cuba only 7 months ago, Yohani has excelled at the Homestead Job Corps center in his TABE scores in both math and reading. He also volunteers his time to tutor other Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students and math students after school. Yohani plans to attend ITT Technical Institute to enhance his knowledge of computers in order to reach his ultimate goal of developing educational software.

As a matter of fact, Yohani has already developed a software tool, "Math2Learn," a product he hopes will help the math and GED students at the center. He would like to change traditional teaching methods by providing exciting software in the classroom. "I plan on incorporating music with my software in order to allow students to learn in a relaxed, interactive atmosphere. I think this will also allow students to use their imagination, and help them with the abstract elements of math."

Yohani is also planning on making other products to assist students who are learning English as a Second Language. "Given that I have also learned English as a Second Language, I think that I can teach English in a way that students will understand. I hope that one day my software will be used by all Job Corps Centers in the United States and in Puerto Rico. This will assist those who don't speak English and let them work individually."

Bobbie Robinson

Chicago Region
Cleveland Job Corps Center

When Bobbie was first introduced to the IT field, the weight of merging the multimedia and the software-based knowledge fields of interest was lifted, making her goal to succeed a new and exciting process of its own.

“My first goal and accomplishment was to learn more about the IT field and get a real good grasp of the hands-on technology as well as a good understanding of the exciting field that I was about to enter.” Upon entering the Cleveland Job Corps Center, Bobbie enrolled in the Business Technology trade and completed the advanced level, moving toward her goal of obtaining a successful job placement. She then was introduced to the Computer Repair Technology trade and is currently working toward her A+ Certification.

“I feel as though I am in a happy marriage with computers and the technological advances that come with it. I am an IT student for life because I plan to keep learning and changing just as technology adapts, changes, and advances.”

Deborah Morales

Dallas Region
Gary Job Corps Center

Deborah completed both the Data Entry and Residential Advisor trades that taught her the essential skills needed in the demanding IT field. She currently attends Austin Community College, majoring in publishing and graphics technology.

“Being a young Hispanic female in a highly competitive technical field is very challenging, especially in the battle for employment. Most of my competition has been economically and emotionally supported through their entire existence. This is a key reason why education is necessary in a fast-paced world.”

Deborah indicates that Job Corps has molded her into a different person from who she was before. “Job Corps has helped me ease through my disadvantages, which are common to many minority families who experience family dysfunction, domestic violence, abuse, and poverty. I feel very blessed because of my decision to come to Job Corps. I also feel very fortunate simply because not many teenagers and young adults are familiar with what Job Corps is and what it stands for.”

Epril Peron
Kansas City Region
Denison Job Corps Center

Aspiration, “a strong desire for high achievement...meeting whatever goals necessary to fulfill my obligation to my daughter, and being successful.” This is what motivates Epril Peron to pursue her dreams and educational goals in life and the IT field.

Epril’s aspiration to eventually earn her college degree and become successful in the IT field is certainly centered on her being a positive role model for her daughter. While at the Denison Job Corps Center, she completed Data Entry and Receptionist trades and is now studying the A+ Certification program and working on a Microsoft Office User Support (MOUS) Certification. Her computer skills have helped Epril create a recruiting brochure for the Solo Parent Program and a brochure designed for an outside corporation, which she co-created.

“My aspiration is to be successful in my job and for my child. If I can be successful in my life, my daughter will know how to be successful in hers. If I teach her to strive to be her best, then she will overcome obstacles with joy, and ease...my daughter motives me to accomplish something in my life, not only for her, but also for me.”

Eric Osiecki
Denver Region
Collbran Civilian Conservation Job Corps Center

“February 27, 2001 was the day I entered the Collbran Job Corps Center. Upon arrival I knew that I was going to succeed, but what I did not expect was an opportunity as great as this one.”

Since Eric has been a student at Collbran, he has accomplished many goals to include holding numerous leadership positions on center, completing the computer operator trade, Cisco Networking and 120 hours of work-based learning! Eric is also looking forward to starting his own threaded case study and learning the totem pole of network troubleshooting. In addition, Eric has earned his A+ and MOUS Certification. According to his instructor, Eric has demonstrated integrity, forthrightness, enthusiasm and unshakable character.

Eric plans to attend Mesa State College for 2 years to further his education in the telecommunication field. “When I have earned 24 semester credits, I am going to attend Colorado State University. My goal is to become a CCNP (CISCO Certified Network Professional).”

Vinsu Kuttappan

San Francisco Region
San Jose Job Corps Center

Vinsu's first experience with a computer was in his homeland of India. Upon graduating from high school, he heeded the advice of a high school instructor and enrolled in a computer class in his local community. One year later, Vinsu flew to Silicon Valley extremely excited about being at the heart of IT innovation. His love for computers led him to enroll at the San Jose Job Corps Center, where he decided to focus on the Information Technology curriculum. Working with computer programs and networks was always Vinsu's dream. "My IT dreams were enhanced by the computer courses I took in Job Corps."

Vinsu received his GED and certificates in Computer Aided Drafting, Administrative Clerical, and TCU at the San Jose Job Corps Center. Shortly after graduating from Job Corps, he received a fulltime job offer as an Accounting Clerk with the center. His duties in Job Corps included working on the center's purchasing, payroll, and SPAMIS systems. Within a short period of time, Vinsu was offered a secretarial position in the Administration Department, where he assisted center staff in resolving network problems. He eventually became the center's alternate point of contact with the Job Corps Data Center.

In April 2002, the San Jose Job Corps Center promoted Vinsu to the position of Information Systems Administrator, where he is now responsible for the center's network, CIS, OASIS, CDSS and all other center information systems. As Vinsu puts it, "To me, Information Technology is a "big tree." I started climbing the tree from the root. I am now negotiating the branches and learning the "Tree of Life." I have much more to climb to reach the top and the quest is ongoing."

Jacob Carpenter

Seattle Region
Tongue Point Job Corps Center

Jacob Carpenter has been a student at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center since April 2001. He has proven to be an outstanding student, actively involved in the center's leadership program. Completing both the Office Technology and the Computer Services Technician program, Jacob received praises from his "work-based learning" director at the center's Systems Administration Department. While working there it helped confirm what he had known for most of his life, "...computers are my future. The mixture of physical and mental labor is what grabs me the most. One day you could work on software, the next you can be moving a new computer to an office."

Jacob plans to attend Clover Park Technical College in Tacoma, Washington, where he hopes to receive his MCSE training. He plans to return to college and receive his Bachelor's degree in the IT field to fulfill his dream to become a teacher. "I have this goal because I want to share my knowledge with others, and make it so that the IT industry stays alive so that others that come after me will be able to learn and get jobs."