

Press Release

**For Immediate Release
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**Contact: Jackie Skryd
Phone: (727) 507-4300**

WorkNet Awarded \$1.1 Million Grant for YouthBuild Program

CLEARWATER (June 16, 2009) – WorkNet Pinellas has been awarded with a \$1.1 Million grant by the Federal Department of Labor for a three year YouthBuild program. The grant is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and will be used to provide disadvantaged youth with educational and employment skills necessary to achieve self-sufficiency in construction related fields while participating in meaningful service to the community.

The key partners for the YouthBuild program include: Pinellas Technical Education Centers (pTEC), Habitat, the Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children & Families, Junior Achievement, Pinellas County Schools, Pinellas Education Foundation, Eckerd Alternatives, Catalina Marketing Charitable Foundation, as well as trade organizations and apprenticeship programs that can reach employer contacts, including the Plumbers & Pipefitters Union Local 123 and Florida Masonry Apprentice & Educational Foundation.

The program will provide job training and educational opportunities for 62 at-risk youth ages 16-24 while constructing or rehabilitating affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their own neighborhoods. Youth split their time between the construction site and the classroom, where they earn their GED or high school diploma, learn to be community leaders, and prepare for college and other postsecondary training opportunities. YouthBuild includes significant support systems, such as a mentoring, follow-up education, employment, and personal counseling services; and participation in community service and civic engagement.

Additional information about the YouthBuild program is available by contacting Jackie Skryd at jskryd@worknetpinellas.org or 727-507-4300 x3033.