



**THE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
for the National Capital Region

Spirit of Giving Guide 2005-06
FEATURED ORGANIZATION



Enterprising Staffing Solutions

The people who pass through the doors of Enterprising Staffing Solutions (ESS) are often in the middle of a job hunt. They get help finding employment and much more when they meet with ESS general manager, Joseph Jackson.

According to his clients, Jackson has strong connections with area businesses, is good at providing his employees with the support they need and, perhaps most importantly, listens to them without passing judgment.

Founded in 1998, ESS is a full-service staffing firm that provides temporary, temporary-to-permanent and permanent employment opportunities. The community-based firm is the brainchild of Shaw-based Manna Community Development Corporation and the Boston-based ICA Group, a national nonprofit organization that supports local efforts to create and save jobs by developing and strengthening employee-owned cooperatives and community-based projects. While some employment services organizations combine job training with employment search services, for now, ESS steers clear of training. "ESS very consciously does not do job training," said Jackson. "Our aim has been to work with various job training programs in the area, in order to create a pipeline to more jobs and employers than any one program could provide alone."

ESS' unique model is based on placing unemployed or underemployed adults—residents of Washington, D.C.'s Shaw neighborhood and other low-income communities—in temporary entry-level jobs, then providing them the support they need to excel in those jobs, develop marketable skills and, eventually, move into secure, higher paying positions. ESS employees who take temporary jobs with the agency for a year can purchase shares in the company. When they become employee-owners, they are eligible to receive worker bonuses on a quarterly basis. "Many of our workers have families to support; they might be juggling multiple jobs in order to make ends meet," said Jackson. "The supplemental income from their worker-owner bonuses helps them substantially."

Tandie Shears met Jackson during the summer of 2004. A native of Shaw, Shears had her first child at 19. By 23, she had three children and was on welfare.

"I walked away from a lot of good jobs," said Shears, who has worked for ESS in both housekeeping and food services. "In the past, no one ever said to me, 'you have to take the good with the bad, the bitter with the sweet.' There's so much about the work world I didn't know."

"The people at ESS are real," she added. "They had confidence in me when I didn't have confidence in myself. Over and over, they said, 'hang in there. Don't give up.' And I didn't."

giving opportunities

FUNDS: TO HIRE A SALES MANAGER AND AN EMPLOYMENT COACH FOR WORKERS.

GOODS: NONE AT THIS TIME.

TIME: VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST WITH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE, MARKETING RESEARCH, AND TO COMPILE A TRAINING PROGRAM LIST.

contact

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