



We're Here to Help our New Graduates

By Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC, Communications Manager



My niece Taylor is brilliant. I can say that with absolutely no bias because it happens to be true.

And when she earned her degree last month from the University of Florida's College of Design, Construction and Planning, you can believe she had an enthusiastic crowd of family and friends - who traveled from as far as Houston and Rapid City, SD - cheering when she walked across the stage to accept her diploma.

Except, of course, she did not make that journey across the stage

- COVID-19 and the need for social distancing saw to that.

But Taylor is an adult. This is her second degree for her second career, and she's already lined up a dream job with a firm in Orlando.

So while graduation day came and went with resignation for the "new normal," our disappointment pales to what the high school graduates for the Class of 2020 must've felt this year, along with their proud families and friends.

No prom or grad bash or distribution of yearbooks, at least



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COUNTRY CLUB NEIGHBORS

not yet, for classmates and teachers to sign, no traditional Pomp and Circumstance for Citrus High School Hurricanes, Crystal River Pirates, or Lecanto Panthers.

As I write this, plans were for "drive-through" recognition on scheduled graduation days with the more traditional ceremonies put off for later in the summer.

As fate would have it, at the same time our best and brightest are meant to go forth and take command of their future, our future, we are plunged right back into serious economic woes.

Yes, it feels criminally unfair.

But as Superintendent Sandra "Sam" Himmel told graduating seniors earlier this spring, "this pandemic does not define the Class of 2020. The impact, experiences, and memories of the past 13 years cannot be erased. So please keep your head up."

She concluded by saying, "You have so much to look forward to, and I wish you nothing but success in your future."

We at CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion feel the same way. We share in celebrating and honoring the Class of 2020 and its accomplishments, and we congratulate the educators, staff, and families that helped get you here.

While there are no guarantees in life, we can promise that we'll work hard to meet the needs of our graduates, whether they are looking for employment, post-secondary training/education, or both.

Our career centers recently began controlled re-openings to provide limited direct services - that is, those services not available virtually or by other means such as by phone, email, or Live Chat.

Throughout May, services were by appointment only for those seeking help with Job Searches, Welfare Transition and/or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is commonly known as Food Stamps.

Check with us by calling 352-249-3278 or 800-434-JOBS (5627) or visiting our website at careersourceclm.com to get the latest updates on our Citrus County Career Center at 613 S. Adolph Point in Lecanto.

Most other services can be provided online or, as mentioned, by phone or email. You can also "meet" face-to-face with



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career counselors via whichever virtual means is most appropriate for you and staff, such as Skype, FaceTime, and Google Hangouts.

Candidate services we offer recent grads, at no charge, include career counseling, job search assistance and referral, skills and interest assessments, resume assistance, practice interview sessions, a variety of on-demand employability webinars and self-paced eLearning programs, as well as support services and tuition assistance for eligible candidates.

Pending availability of funding, which is expected to reload beginning July 1, there are scores of targeted and in-demand occupations that qualify for tuition assistance for eligible candidates, with certificate and degree programs offered by 20 post-secondary institutions, including Withlacoochee Technical College and the College of Central Florida.

WTC offers training in Automotive Service Technology, Construction, Corrections, Electricity, HVAC Technician, Law Enforcement Officer, Patient Care Assistant, Practical Nursing, and Welding Technologies.

CF offers myriad programs, including Correctional Officer, Engineering Technology-Support Specialist, Law Enforcement Officer, Mechanical Designer and Programmer, Radiology Technologist, Registered Nursing and Simulation and Automation, among others.

The point is, there is training for plenty of high-demand, targeted occupations, right here at home.

Speaking of which, check out our Hiring Now and Daily Jobs Reports on our website for the latest new job opportunities and a list of all local businesses with jobs to fill right now. It may help you feel a little more optimistic moving forward.

And that's just for starters. Visit our website at careersourceclm.com to learn more, or give us a call. Whatever your future brings, just know that CareerSource CLM is here to help.

Laura Byrnes, APR, CPRC, communications manager at CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion, is accredited in Public Relations, a Certified Public Relations Counselor, and a Florida Certified Workforce Professional. She would love to hear from you and learn what kind of information you'd like to see each month. Please contact her at (352) 291-9559, (800) 434-5627, ext. 1234 or lbyrnes@careersourceclm.com.



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