

*A recent story on WBUR highlights the journey of Toddye Anderson, a graduate of one of Project Hope's workforce development initiatives, Partners in Career and Workforce Development (PCWD). Her story was also shared at the recent Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce forum with the Candidates for Governor. In collaboration with Partners HealthCare, PCWD supports the career development of employees interested in the medical field and responds to the workforce needs of employers.*



June 2006



A Forum on Jobs and Opportunity  
with the Candidates for Governor



When Toddye Anderson found Partners in Career and Workforce Development (PCWD) in November 2004, she had been homeless for nearly a year. Medical issues, both her own and her families', had caused her to lose her apartment, and she was living in a shelter in Boston with her nephew and niece, for whom she had legal custody.

Toddye wasn't about to give up, though, despite the odds stacked against her. She knew she wanted to go back to school. She knew that she needed to find a good job. And while she knew she had to rely on herself, she also knew she would need help. So she started looking. A referral led her to PCWD, a program to promote and increase hiring from Boston neighborhoods and invest in low-wage workers, and she hasn't looked back ever since.

The PCWD program was able to give Toddye what she hadn't been able to get for herself- an open door to training, job placement, and access to a health care career path. PCWD provided an internship at the hospital and a career coaching to help Toddye define and stick to her goals.

Before Toddye lost her job and her apartment, she had been in medical billing and worked in administrative positions in health care. She was barely making ends meet at \$12-13/hour. Today, she has a full-time permanent position in the pediatric neurology department at Massachusetts General Hospital and is earning nearly \$17/hour plus benefits. Her supervisor supports her ambitions, and Toddye has a flexible schedule that allows her to attend college. She recently finished her first semester at Bunker Hill Community College, where she is taking nursing pre-requisites. Toddye has also moved into her own apartment in Dorchester.

"Through PCWD, I was able to get the support I needed to succeed. Everywhere I went, there were people who were willing to take the time to help me provide information and resources that I might not have seen and didn't have time to look for."

"There were five people at my homeless shelter who also tried to pursue education and training, but all of them have dropped out except for me. I worked hard, of course, but the support and resources I received also helped me overcome the many obstacles in my way. Today, I am a board member for Homes and Families, and I encourage others not to give up on their dreams and tell them to pursue education and training. I think I am an example that it can be done."

"If I could say anything to the next Governor, I would ask them to help people understand that education really is the only road out of poverty and then provide people with assistance and support they need to access this road."