

## Make 2011 Your Year!

Nelson Diaz  
Employment Marketing Specialist

As we start a new year, our thoughts turn to resolutions about how we can get a better job and what we can do to prepare a better future. But one thing you should know is that success will depend on the amount of career planning and preparation you make. This year, you can do things differently by setting time aside and preparing for your new goals. Set your long goals first; this will give you focus for your life and be a constant reminder as to why you are doing this. Then, begin to make your short goals that support your long goals and help you stay motivated. Then prepare for action. Keep in mind that the better you prepare, the more chances you will have to succeed. Here we offer you basic guidelines to push forward.

- **Evaluate yourself and plan for your new career:** Before you make any career decision, think about subjects or topics that interest you and things you do well such as hobbies and activities you have enjoyed in the past. Then start your self-inventory by listing all the jobs you had, including volunteer work, educational history including courses you attended, and any special honors or awards. Then list all your skills. If you ever instructed someone to operate a lawn mower, repaired something, re-searched a topic, kept records or transactions, etc., you will find that most of your skill are transferable and you will start to see a career pattern emerging or perhaps your evaluation already suggesting a direction for your career search. If the picture still lacks detail or focus, try to take advantage of online resources and visit <http://www.careeronestop.org> and <http://www.acinet.org/explore/view.aspx> for your free career evaluation. If you aren't familiar with a computer, ask a Telamon employee to assist you and also direct you to free computer classes in your area.
- **Identifying career and employment trends:** Check out and explore the

labor market at <http://online.onetcenter.org>. The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA), which is the nation's primary source of occupational information. The site has detailed descriptions of jobs including career exploration tools, job analyses, and requirements such as skills, work activities, job zone, knowledge, interests, education, related occupations, wages, projected growth, and videos. You also can use this information to prepare your resume and job interview.

- **Jobs for the future/thinking green?** There are a lot of opportunities in welding, plumbing, mechanics, heating and air conditioning and health care. Now, more than ever, is the best time to make a career in health care. Obama signed into law health care reform and starting January 2011, every day more than 10,000 Americans will turn 65.
- **Professional development:** Explore some training and enhance a skill you want to use more. Today, the labor market is more competitive and demands a different mix of knowledge, skills, qualifications, and abilities. This requires that you maintain, upgrade, and update your skills to obtain and retain a job. Now is the time to put it all in writing and begin selling yourself.
- **Learn more about cover letter and resumes:** Resumes and cover letters are documents used by employers to make an initial assessment about you; they help them to see whether you will fit the position they are trying to fill; in other words, these are the employers' first impression of you and these show your skills and provide an indication of your suitability for the job.
- **Learn more about interviews:** The interview gives you and the potential

employer a chance to learn more about each other and the chance to prove yourself and demonstrate the competencies needed to obtain a certain job. Learn how to prepare for an interview. Libraries, employment commissions, and many community organizations in your area have books that can help you better prepare.

- **Join a job club:** Use social networking sites like Myspace, Facebook, and LinkedIn to expand your networking. Get involved in job clubs and actively network. These contacts become very valuable to you while you are looking for a job. The more you network and put yourself out there, the more likely someone within that club or group will remember you when a position becomes available. Remember, computers are good but developing relationships with people can make your job search easier and put you more quickly in touch with prospective employers.
- **Follow the employers' job instructions.** Pay attention to the details and specifics of what the employer wants. Eighty per cent of applicants fail to describe their skills that match the duties of the position when filling out applications, submitting resumes, and being interviewed.
- **Stay active and positive:** There is no shame in being unemployed. Share your situation with family or friends, exercise (your body will thank you!), and reduce expenses. Remember, we all have challenges throughout our entire life that we learn how to overcome. Above all, continue to enjoy life; stop by the park and take in the fresh air. Do not underestimate the small joys in life, which are often free. No one can take these away from you.

If you incorporate these ideas and easy steps, 2011 can be a year of ACHIEVEMENT for you!

# Telamon—Virginia

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Empowering Individuals, Improving Communities

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## Message from the State Director Sharon Saldarriaga

What a winter! Snow, ice, and extremely cold temperatures have managed to make getting to work, school, or just attending to normal business a real challenge. Even more challenging is confronting the ongoing anti-immigrant sentiment in Virginia. Once again, an astonishing number of bills have been introduced that would not only hurt immigrants, but also would prove burdensome for taxpayers and detrimental to Virginia's economic future. One of the worst is a bill designed to prevent undocumented students from attending Virginia colleges, even if they pay out-of-state tuition. Many of these students had no say in coming here, have gone through twelve years of schooling in Virginia, and graduated with honors. To deny them the opportunity to benefit from higher education means Virginians, whose taxes have

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## Telamon Helps One Man Find His VISION

Jessica Garcia  
Case Manager

Ismael Ontiveros came to our office last year with many barriers. He was a farmworker with a local tomato farm for sixteen years until he had an accident in 2008, damaged his leg, and lost his eyesight all in one year. Legally blind and living on a small check from disability, he was having a lot of trouble adjusting to his new circumstances. Always having to depend on someone else did not help matters. Through our food pantry, he learned of Telamon's other programs available to farmworkers. Ismael came to our office looking for assistance with a utility bill. He received much more.

Once we found him eligible for the program, we investigated where he had already been for services and what other resources were available for someone in his situation. Dianne Arenas, Regional Manager for the Exmore office, had recently spoken with Althea Pittman, Executive Director of the Eastern Shore Center for Independent Living Inc.(ESCIL). After discussing what their program could offer, I made an appointment for Ismael to meet with them. Althea, who is also legally blind, was delighted that she and her organization could help.

After meeting with Ms. Hall, one of the counselors from the organiza-

tion, we waited as the eligibility process would take a little time. In the meantime, the ESCIL ordered him a cane to help him get around better. Ismael would be provided with training on using the cane once he was accepted into the program.

On January 12, 2011, I met him at the ESCIL for support as he began his first training session. Ismael walked into Independent Living's office holding the arm of his sister-in-law, Angela, who then had to help Ismael sit in his chair. Ms. Pittman, his counselor at the organization, came in and did a presentation of all the gadgets that were available to him as a person without eyesight. She encouraged him to see that although he is blind, he can do all the things he did before, except drive.

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Finally, it was time for the training. Angela instinctively got up to try to help her brother-in-law out of the chair but he was so anxious for the training, he had already gotten up and was ready to go. Ms. Pittman had Ismael follow her throughout the office arching his cane back and forth. She talked to him about the different sounds that textures make and taught him how to use his ears for sound and his cane for sight. He did very well throughout the office. He then was asked to find his way back to the conference room we were sitting in at the beginning of the appointment and he did! Angela was ready to help him sit down, but he sat down all by himself. She was so surprised; she didn't know what else to do but cry. She said this was the first time he had ever done that by himself since 2008.

We all sat down and commended Ismael on a great first session. Upon adjourning the meeting, Ismael stood up with his cane, found the door, and opened it. He walked out gracefully and proudly with his head held high as he opened the door for Angela. Ms. Garcia could see as they walked to the car side by side, Angela, using both of her hands freely to express what she was talking about. It was an emotionally glorious day, and this was only the beginning of his new life with a different kind of VISION!

### Promotion

Sara Lopez has been promoted to Case Manager for the Montross Office. Everyone in the Northern Neck farmworker community knows Sara! Since Sara joined Telamon as a Program Office Assistant in January 2010, her proactive efforts to serve clients have made her a trusted friend of many of the families in the area.



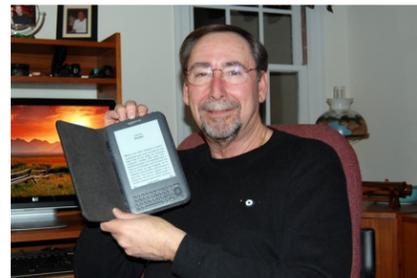
Sara has also done a great job mastering the administrative skills required for her job. She earned her certification for administering TABE within two months of joining Telamon and re-

mains one of the top users of Spanish Tab in the organization. Vouchers, case notes, and income verification are all tasks that Sara addresses with total confidence and expertise.

Sara stepped up again when the opportunity for the Case Manager position opened up in the Montross office. A prerequisite to be considered for the position was to successfully complete the Workforce Development Professional Tier 1. Sara completed the Dynamicworks in **six weeks** and blew the final out of the water with a score of 97 out of 100.

Currently, Sara is working on a personal challenge of completing her AA degree and going on for her BA. Sara and her children, Robert and Anela, live Hague, Virginia.

Congratulations to **Dennis Harris**, the Housing Director in our Raleigh office, who won the Kindle we raffled off in December. The funds will be used to help us continue to support our work with farmworkers.



### Let's Go to Camp!

Frank Sanchez  
Regional Manager

Our daily fare is determining eligibility, gathering paperwork, insuring documents are right, and making our common measures objectives. Ready to have some fun? At least vicariously?

Virginia Cooperative Extension offers a summer camp for children ages 9-13 at their site on the James River. This 4H program sends approximately 40 children each from Westmoreland and Richmond counties. Beyond discovering nature and themselves, the camp provides kids an opportunity to interact and engage with different peer groups to start breaking down cultural barriers.

Extension agents can consider waiving fees if necessary; they are particularly interested in recruiting Hispanic children which typically are very under represented at camp.

Why get involved? Because the recruiting process provides a great opportunity to identify and sign up farmworkers eligible for the National Farmworker Jobs Program. Also, by getting farm and nursery owners, to participate in the nominating process, it creates an opportunity for communication and cooperation that strengthens our relationship with these business owners, which is key in implementing our programs.



### English as a Second Language

For many, the first hurdle on their way to a better career!

Frank Sanchez  
Regional Manager

Although only 50 miles from Fredericksburg and 80 miles from Richmond, the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, the primary areas served by Telamon's Montross, Virginia office, represent some of the most geographically and service-isolated areas of the state. This has created a particularly challenging situation for Telamon's existing and potential clients.

While over 90% of the current and potential client base in the area is Spanish-speaking, there have been no ESL classes in the area for over a year. This has created an ongoing dilemma for many clients. They are seeking better employment opportunities, but require a GED to take the next step. They are willing to put forth the time and effort to get the GED, but this requires better English skills and there is no ESL program to make this happen.

Over the last few months, however, Telamon Corporation and Rappahannock Community College (RCC) have worked together to break this cycle. Starting in October, Telamon communicated to Tonia Varner, RCC's Regional Program Manager, the critical need for ESL classes for clients and non-clients alike. RCC responded quickly and started an immediate search for a qualified instructor. Simultaneously, RCC and Telamon personnel initiated a brain-

storming session on how to best structure a new ESL program. These ideas have been incorporated in a MOU and include: classes at Telamon's Montross office to facilitate student access; Telamon clients and non-clients alike can take classes at Telamon's office; RCC provides faculty, materials, and advertising; Telamon provides a classroom location and provides support services for those enrolled in the National Farmworker Jobs Program.

After a long search effort, RCC selected David Boyd to be an instructor for the classes. With a M.A. in English from Auburn University and significant experience in teaching non-English speakers, David is especially well-prepared for the task. In addition, he had that other key qualification; he's local!

Classes are scheduled to start the week of January 17<sup>th</sup>. Initially a two-night-a-week class will be offered at both the Montross office and RCC. Depending on the level of registrations, additional classes and different competency levels will be considered. On the first day of registration, six clients enrolled. Montross Case Manager, Sara Lopez, projects that we will have 12-15 clients enrolled by February 1.



In addition to providing a resource that helps clients improve their language and ultimately their employment prospects, the ESL partnership helps in the recruitment of clients who may not have considered working with Telamon in the past.

### State Director's Message

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contributed to their education, also reap no benefits. Who can guess how many teachers, doctors, scientists, or engineers we stand to lose?

Studies have shown that immigrant populations, both documented and undocumented, provide significant economic and other contributions to the nation. Contrary to what some believe, they provide more benefit than drain on our country's resources. According to research compiled by the Immigration Policy Center, Virginia's undocumented population earned between \$2.6 and \$3.1 billion in 2007, and paid between \$260 and \$311 million in state income, excise, property, Social Security, and Medicare taxes. In Virginia, immigrant contribution is very evident in agriculture, still the Commonwealth's largest industry. Heavily dependent on immigrant labor, agriculture in Virginia would suffer without these workers whose labor, under generally harsh conditions that most of us would find intolerable, results in the products we so easily consume. Surely a better approach can be developed that is not so punitive but rather, one that helps Virginia move forward.