

Career/Life Skills: Change for the Better

The majority of NRC's programs serve small, isolated communities in rugged terrain. Often the most basic healthcare, stores, and schools are an hour or more away. In these reservation communities, few opportunities for employment exist, and unemployment can range from 35% to 85%. The employment challenge is exacerbated when members of the workforce need career or life skills to help them be more effective on the job. Ammie is a great example of this.



Married at 19 and divorced at 24, Ammie was a single mom and eligible for TANF assistance. Along with TANF aid, however, came a requirement to participate in career and life skills classes and to volunteer for 32 hours a week.

The combination of classes and volunteer-based training actually leads TANF moms into the workforce. Ammie's volunteer hours gave her a safe way to practice new skills "on the job," without running the risk of getting fired.

A Healthy Living success

Ammie's career and life skills coach at her Career Development Program in Montana is a long-time Program Partner of NRC. The coach uses our incentive products to help her promote regular attendance at classes. In the beginning, when Ammie missed classes, the Partner showed up on Ammie's doorstep and used NRC incentives to entice Ammie back to class.

Ammie admits it was hard to change, but she realizes that the Partner was really doing her a favor. Ammie says the NRC incentives really helped her get through a tough time, and by attending the classes, she felt that she earned the incentives. She received shampoo, conditioner, lotion, toothpaste, toilet paper, and laundry detergent – all provided under our Healthy Living service and all out of Ammie's reach on her TANF budget.

Today, Ammie shares her success to motivate new members of the Career Development Program. She credits the Partner and the classes with teaching her to show up for work 15 minutes early, to do more than what was expected of her, and to dress for success. With little work experience, Ammie never knew these attitudes mattered. Another new attitude that Ammie took into the workplace was, "Today I am a volunteer, but one day this may be my job." This helped Ammie land the first job she has ever held for more than 2 months. Now, two years later, she has earned a salary increase and a promotion.

Ammie is a living example of how NRC partnerships with reservation programs help create change for the better, one person at a time.

