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EDUCATION
& TRAINING
RESOURCES

INSIGHT



Excelsior Springs Job Corps
and TCU/IAM graduate
Scottie Montero is a Railcar
Mechanic for Canadian Pacific.



DR. BENJAMIN L. HOOKS

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

IROQUOIS

MONTGOMERY

NORTHLANDS

ONEONTA

TREASURE ISLAND

WESTOVER

WILMINGTON

ETR Receives Award to Operate Finch-Henry Job Corps Center

On January 30th, ETR President and CEO Brian Fox received official word congratulating Education and Training Resources on being awarded the Finch-Henry Job Corps Center contract.

ETR will operate the 226-student center located on 28 acres in Batesville, Mississippi, in partnership with the Serrato Corporation (ETR's partner at the Westover Job Corps). Finch-Henry JCC currently offers career technical trades in Bricklaying, Carpentry, Certified Nursing Assistant, Culinary Arts, Material Handling and Distribution Operations, Office Administration, Painting, and Welding. Transition will happen this month with ETR assuming operations as the prime contractor on March 1st.

In addition, ETR has been awarded second option years to both the Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center in St., Paul, Minnesota, and the non-residential Wilmington Job Corps Center in Wilmington, Delaware.



Job Corps was created in 1964 by United States President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his War on Poverty and Great Society domestic reforms. Happy 60th Anniversary!

The Finch-Henry Job Corps Center is named after Mississippi's 57th Governor Charles "Cliff" Finch (1927-1986) and Mississippi State Representative and Civil Rights Leader Aaron Henry (1922-1997). Formerly the Batesville Job Corps Center, it was renamed in 2009.





“Believe in yourself.
When you know
something's right,
keep going for it.
Don't let anybody
underestimate you.
Only you know your
own value.”

– Scottei Montero

Excelsior Springs Job Corps Graduate is on the Fast Track to Success

Let's get this out of the way first: Scottei Montero, a 2022 graduate of the Transportation Communications Union/IAM advanced Railcar Mechanics program at the Excelsior Springs Job Corps, earned over \$150,000 in his first year on the job. His second-to-last pay stub in 2023 from the Canadian Pacific Railway, where he was placed at the completion of training, lists his year-to-date total at \$149,478.87. Let that sink in.

In Job Corps, as in our own lives, we prefer to focus on skills attainment in a career that is a good fit for each student and provides meaning. Money, although the reason we all work, isn't what we talk about. But Scottei wants to talk about it. “I grew up in the South Bronx, one of the poorest and most dangerous districts—we looked that up in middle school,” he remembers. “That's a big part of the story because that is →

Photo: Born and raised in South Bronx, NY, 25-year-old Scottei Montero currently maintains railcars for Canadian Pacific Railway in Minnesota from Duluth to Enderlin, ND, and from St. Cloud to the Canadian border.

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Photos on the cover, above, and on the left sidebar of page 4 were taken at the Northtown Railyard Viewpoint, a historical landmark in Minneapolis, Minnesota.





“What it is in Job Corps is that instructors love to teach. When they see that you are hungry for it, they will give it as much as you want. I asked my instructor if I could come in early and he told me he came in at 7:15 am, and I was there at 7:15 am.”

– Scottie Montero



how people can relate to it. . . I know what it’s like to be 17 and lost, and you don’t know what’s going on because all you know is ‘the block’.” To understand Scottei’s unabashed drive to succeed, one needs to know his background.

“I grew up rough—poor and on EBT and Section 8 (food stamps and rental housing assistance).”

Yet, as Scottei met individuals less fortunate than himself, he felt humbled, grateful, and more determined than ever to be successful.

“I have the personality to motivate others to a higher standing. For me to do that, I need to be in a different standing myself.”

From the US Marines to Manhattan

With not a lot of options, Scottei enlisted in the US Marine Corps fresh out of high school. He learned much during his military service and had the opportunity to travel to Japan and Okinawa. But when Scottei returned home, he found himself back in familiar territory. “I was doing Uber Eats Walking in Manhattan,” he said, explaining: “Delivering food orders on foot.” He knew he needed a skill, and even with the G.I. Bill, he saw Job Corps as his path to it.

To Vermont and then Missouri

Scottei arrived at the Northlands Job Corps in Vergennes, VT, in October of 2021. Despite COVID, or maybe because of it, Scottei was able to put his head down and focus 100% on his chosen trade—Welding. “I wanted to weld all day,” he recalled of his time at Northlands. “So, as much as I could, I just kept welding. The instructors took an interest in me because I took an interest in the craft. It was very productive.”

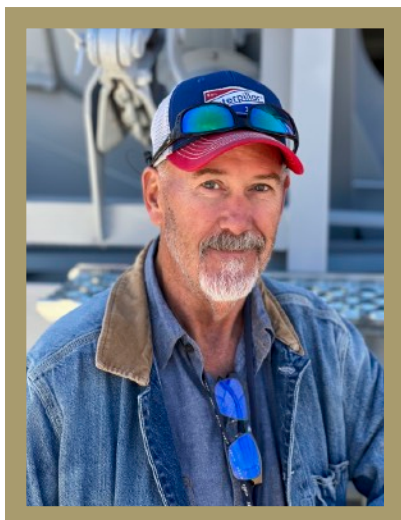
When it came time to decide on his advanced training options, Scottei picked Transportation Communications Union/IAM Railcar Mechanics program. He wasn’t shy about his reasons. “I wanted to work with trains because they provided the most bang for your buck.” →



Photo above: Scottie Montero in the welding shop at Northlands JC in 2022. Printed on his face mask is a tombstone with the inscription: “In Memory of My Social Life.” Humor for the hard-working student.



Photo above: Patrick Clear, TCU/IAM Railcar Mechanics Instructor at Excelsior Springs Job Corps welds on a coupler mechanism as a student and staff member look on. Below: TCU/IAM Lead Educational Instructor Norman “Lane” Shelton. These men and their dedicated team are placing students in high-paying jobs.



The Excelsior Springs Job Corps, which is operated by ETR and MINACT, is one of only two Job Corps centers with a boxcar on campus. Donated by Canadian Pacific Railway and used for training, students in the advanced Railcar Mechanics program learn everything there is to know about railcars—from air brakes to couplers and wheels. When he arrived at the Missouri JC center in May of 2022, Scottei hit the ground running, getting checked off on skills faster than instructors had seen before. “I’m very competitive,” he says, noting that his drive to excel also motivated other students. Scottei even tutored a classmate who was ahead of him when he started. “I surprised all of them. None of them knew that someone like me existed, and I love doing that.” →

“Scottei was a fantastic student. He led by example, which students followed. Always a positive attitude, moving forward, and never stepping backwards. We knew he would do great things and be a great asset to an employer.”

– Norman Lane Shelton
TCU/IAM Lead Educational Instructor



Repairing train cars from his wheel truck often involves fixing or changing couplers (photo at right). Scottei logs many hours of overtime, which is just fine by him.

Scottei kept up the pace and completed the TCU/IAM Railcar Mechanics program by August 2022. "When Canadian Pacific Railway had a carman position open we made a call to Shane Thompson, Director Mechanical Maintenance, in Minneapolis," recalled TCU Lead Instructor Lane Shelton. "They interviewed Scottei and offered him a position in Thief River Falls."

Working on the Railroad in Minnesota

Scottei started working almost immediately after graduation, and within three months he was checked off as a Qualified Mechanical Inspector—meaning he could work independently. As Lead Carman, he operates out of a wheel truck (top and bottom photos at left) repairing rail cars all over northern Minnesota. His favorite part of the job is traveling and meeting new people, who are much friendlier than what he was used to growing up. "People here care about each other," he says. "I was stuck in the snow once and people stopped and asked me if I was okay."



"One night, I was driving into Noyes, MN, right before the Canadian border. It was 40 below without the windchill, with a 25-mph wind blowing and 5 feet of visibility, and I'm thinking *Who does this?! It was very interesting.*"

– Scottei Montero

Scottei is quick to point out that as cordial as small-town folks are, there aren't a lot of them this far north. "I won't lie, it can get lonely," he admits. "Once you pass St. Cloud, you can drive a half hour without seeing another human being. When you do, people wave and it's like 'Oh Hi'."

Then there's the cold. Minnesota winter cold. Scottei has more than a few stories about working in subzero conditions. "I'm jacking up cars and it was like a 30-mile per hour wind," he recounts. "You have to be very careful when it gets that cold. You work for 10 minutes and then take a 15-minute break to warm up." But for Scottei, it's all an opportunity to see and experience different things, which he appreciates. It's also part of his plan. "I relocated way out here and →



Changing out wheels on a train is a bit more complicated than fixing a flat tire on a car, and requires two people to do it, but it's all in a day's work for Scottei, who says that it's the most common repair he does. As for his own set of wheels, a new Dodge Challenger, Scottei paid cash. After modest living expenses, he saves and invests the rest. He's going places.

took a position because I knew I was going to work a lot," he explains. "A lot of people aren't willing to say 'yes' to relocate or go certain places. You've got to be willing to push yourself to do what's best for you."

Embracing Life as an Adventure

Working on the railroad is hard work and relocating made it even harder, but Scottei's taking the long view on his career. "I'm not just thinking 2-3 years down the line; I'm thinking 30-40," he says, noting a lot is happening in the world today with technology, transportation, Artificial Intelligence, etc., and he wants a front seat for it. Helping others factors big in his vision for the future. "I have a new little sister, Mila, and I want her to have everything," he shares. "I fully intend to change my life and the lives of those around me." Dreams of a young person? Maybe, but don't underestimate this man. Look at what he's accomplished so far.

"I'm a V-24 engine in a human body. I keep going. I don't need anyone to motivate me. I just push myself harder. I don't really care about stopping. I just go."

– Scottei Montero



FOLLOWING ETR

Congressman Steve Cohen (9th District Memphis) took time recently to meet with leadership from the Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks Job Corps. Pictured l-r are Donald Turner Jr., Center Director Tracy Ingram, Congressman Cohen, Student Government President Kevin Taylor, and Business Engagement Specialist Brooke Ford. Thank you, Congressman!

"I've never seen this many females in a union pre-apprentice trade at one time before," says Oneonta Job Corps Business Engagement Specialist Jocelyn Plows. But that is what has happened in the IMI Tile-Setting class. Instructor Mike Beamer (middle) is enthusiastic about his profession, which he sees as an excellent way to make a living. Finishing work is not as hard on the body as some of the other constructor trades, and good tile-setters are always in high demand.

Dr. Bajwa (third from left) from the Springfield Islamic Social Society visited the Westover Job Corps last month. He met with students, talked to them about how he could support them, answered questions, and did some translating. He even helped students with how to pray while in Job Corps. Thank you, Dr. Bajwa!

Photos provided by Brooke Ford, Jocelyn Plows, and Cinnamon Smith.



FOLLOWING ETR

Photo below: Monday business meetings are fun events at Treasure Island Job Corps. As an incentive for students, a raffle was held and a lucky student got a chance to catch money in the windy money machine. TIJCC student Fabiano Gallassy walked away from the assembly \$130 richer.

Center: Humphrey Job Corps Center Director Katie Kapaun was in Chicago last month for the Region 5 Mobility Summit. With her for the two-day event were Zina Watkins, Chicago Regional Director, and Sylvia Swan, Milwaukee JCC.

Bottom: Congratulations to Montgomery JC Operations Director Dorothea Turman on her retirement! Her compassion, commitment, and genuine smile will be dearly missed. Good luck and thank you!



Above: Jamie Simmons, UBC (United Brotherhood of Carpenters) Instructor at the Excelsior Spring Job Corps, created a motivational art sign with his students. "My goal in teaching young minds the craft of carpentry is to have

them understand they need more than just tools and bags to be successful," said Simmons.

Right: Congratulations to Humphrey Job Corps graduates Jocellyn Oulare & Cyprien Oulare who are in the US Navy now! Jocellyn, who completed boot camp earlier than Cyprien, was able to see her brother graduate as she was wrapping up A-School (her job training in the Navy) at Great Lakes, IL.



Photos provided by Angela Reschke, Lisa B. Xiong NC1 (SW/AW), Jerry Morris, Susan Ber, and Katie Kapuan.

Join Our Team!

Click on each center name listed below to see current employment opportunities:

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We Are ETR

My name is Keith White and I'm a member of ETR's corporate support team. I grew up in the Bronx and am the only child of a young mom who went on to serve more than 20 years in the U.S. Air Force. Mom's military service gave me chances to visit Korea, Italy, and parts of the country I would never expect to see. She's retired now and lives in Vegas. (Time for a visit!)

College brought me to upstate NY, where I graduated from the University at Albany with a degree in Communication and Psychology. After spending about a year working for Easter Seals, a friend told me I'd be great at Job Corps. "What's Job Corps?" I asked. He filled me in, and I was hooked. I took the plunge and applied for a counseling position at the Glenmont JCC. Twice. When that didn't work, I threw my hat in the ring for a position in OA/CTS and struck out again. I was ready to give up when I got the call. A counseling position opened, and they were willing to give me a shot. I spent the next 10 years at Glenmont in Counseling, Behavior Management, Safety/Security, and Social Development. Full disclosure—I remember getting corporate support in those days and thinking, "Can you please finish helping me so I can get back to work?" My, how the tables have turned.

A fellow counselor got me to join a softball team, and that's where I met my wife. She and I have been married since 2001. A corporate position moved us to Rochester, NY, where we still live with our two awesome kids. Our oldest just finished her 2nd year at the University at Buffalo and her "little" brother just became an Eagle Scout. ETR rescued me in 2009 when my kids were 5 and 3 years old. It was a point in my life when I had to figure out a better way to balance work and family. I couldn't have hoped for a better fit. We've certainly gone through our fair share of ups and downs, but when it comes to having the right values and making a genuine effort to live up to them, ETR has my vote.

And look at me now—a kid from the Bronx, with a wife and two kids in Rochester, working for a top-notch company from Kentucky. I've played in Yankee Stadium, been in the Coliseum in Rome, and driven across the Golden Gate Bridge. Oh, and I get to help young people take a shot at making a better life for themselves. Major Mom couldn't be prouder. I sometimes wonder "How the heck did I end up here?" and just decided to accept that you just never know where life will bring you.





Proud partner of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Job Corps