

Success Stories: Maturity Works

Carmen Labrador, Head Start Teacher's Aide

When Carmen Labrador retired early, at 62, she thought she'd relax and take it easy.

"I was at home for a few months, staring at the walls," Ms Labrador said. "Then it was time to get back out there."

She saw a flyer for Career Resources' MaturityWorks, came in for an interview, and was hooked. She's now a teacher's aide at the Head Start program at the Hall Neighborhood House, where teachers and students are all grateful for her warm and steady presence.

"Oh, we are so happy she is here," said Head Teacher Donna Brockenberry. "Sometimes you can tell when people have troubles because they bring them to work. With Carmen, she is calm, settled, dependable. She is completely here with the children."

Her students in Room 318 seem to agree. Some look worriedly in her direction when "Miss



Carmen" goes into the hallway for a few minutes. Others clamor to be on her lap or have her help them with any task.

MaturityWorks helps older people re-enter the workforce by matching them with jobs and providing a period of subsidized employment. Ms. Labrador worked at another day care, and for about six months at part-time at Head Start before coming on board full-time.



She retired four years ago from her job as an assembler at Merry Mirror, around the time her husband passed away. She likes her job now, and plans to stay for a long time.

"I'm a grandma, but I like to be in the workforce," she said. "It's good to get out, be with a younger crowd, go places, and the money doesn't hurt!"

Her job now entails helping with all the daily tasks at Head Start, where children play, eat meals family-style, and learn to get along. "It's a whole new world," she said. "Really nice."

Career Resources is a non-profit helping workers to succeed in life.

Our programs include STRIVE attitudinal job readiness training, Fathers for Life, Alternative Incarceration Centers for women and ex-offenders, and operation of the One Stop, offering job placement and training in 20 southwestern Connecticut towns. For information, please call 203 334 5627 or visit www.careerresources.org.