

Hotel and tourism jobs fair is set for Overtown

Contributed by RONNIE FIGUEROA

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Jobs may be scarce in the recession but South Florida's hospitality industry is recruiting as hotel occupancy rates slowly rise.

That makes the Hospitality Institute's four-day job training and job fair an opportunity.

The free event at Greater Bethel AME Church, 245 NW Eighth St. in Overtown, Miami, Sept. 27-30, aims to link residents of Liberty City, Overtown, Little Haiti and Wynwood with jobs in the hotel and tourism industry.

Pre-registration is required and seating is limited.

The Institute is a program Miami Dade College launched two years ago as a way to keep hospitality jobs in the community.

Its goal is simple.

"The bottom line is to help people find jobs," said Jeanne Westphal, the program's director. "The economy continues to be a challenge. It's very tough out there but our people are working to find jobs and train people with valuable skills."

The Institute has held 14 similar events offering computer-training, resume critiques and mock interviews to 800 participants and connecting 250 of them with jobs.

Training is done by MDC instructors, local business leaders and volunteers.

The organization partners with agencies such as Camillus House, South Florida Workforce, and Liberty City Community Revitalization Trust to reach residents. Westphal expects as many as 15 employers to recruit workers at the fair.

Past participants have included the Doubletree Grand Hotel, the Doubletree Coconut Grove, the Doubletree Surfcomber, the Hilton Airport, the Conrad Hilton, the Hilton Bentley, the Hyatt Miami, Embassy Suites Miami Airport, Loews Hotel Miami Beach, Marriott Biscayne Bay, the Continental Group, Jungle Island, Tecton Hospitality, Holiday Inn, Goldman Properties, the Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne, Starbucks, and the Miami Heat.

Registration is open Sept. 7-21. Only those who register in advance and attend all four days can attend the job fair.

Westphal also encourages employers to notify the Institute of job openings.

To register or submit job openings, call 305-329-2845 or e-mail vetshospitality@bellsouth.net.

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Photo: Greater Bethel AME Church

IF YOU GO

What: The Hospitality Institute Training and Job Fair

When: Sept. 27-30

Where: Bethel AME Church, 245 NW Eighth St. in Overtown

Cost: No charge but pre-registration is required.

For More Information: Call 305-329-2845 or e-mail vetshospitality@bellsouth.net.