



M.O.S.T.[®]

Mobile Outreach Skills Training

Profiles



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M.O.S.T.® Stories - James

"I feel especially blessed to spend my days building them (planes), because for thirty-seven years I was the one tearing them apart."

James had always considered himself a lucky man. For thirty-seven years, he had worked as a crop dusting pilot flying from Maine blueberry fields to Florida orange groves. Walking away from a crash landing after his engine failed just after takeoff, Jim happened across the next best thing to flying, working for a local aviation company. Jim describes it as the nearly ideal glide into retirement. Unfortunately after a few solid years, Jim was laid off and struggled to find work for nearly one year doing odd jobs. He needed to get back to steady work.

All his funds were depleted and he began to borrow money from family members to get by. It was, as he described "a terrible indignity when you have been married for 50 years and you have always supported your family and now nobody wanted [to hire] you." James said his luck turned when he heard about the M.O.S.T.® program and was asked by the manufacturer who laid him off to apply for entry into the training. In order to be rehired he was "told that [he] had to go through the M.O.S.T.® training program." James enjoyed the training, learned a great deal and was surprised that "they taught this old dog a few new tricks. At 68 years old finding work is tough; especially when you add the unemployment rate to it you are sunk." James attributes the training to being rehired by the aircraft company. He feels more secure at work now and every day is a blessing. "To be working around the airplanes I love so much, it's a perfect landing!"

Britney

... competent enough to be a crew chief on one of America's flying fortresses, but unlucky enough to be living in a shelter with her two children.

At 26 years old and honorably discharged from the Air Force, Britney certainly was entitled to better. However, after looking fruitlessly for meaningful work for more than a year, she lost her home and was forced to find refuge in a homeless shelter with her two children. When the M.O.S.T.® program came to her community, Britney stood in line two hours before the doors opened, hoping to get selected for the program.

She was so excited at the opportunity to get back into manufacturing as she felt it was her element. However, when the class began Britney realized that being a student after so many years is not that simple; and she wasn't alone. Determined to get her life back on track and with the promise of a life-changing career just 80 hours away, Britney teamed with another classmate and the two of them cajoled the instructors for additional tutoring and mentoring.

Following graduation, Britney had two companies vying for her talents, each offering her \$15 per hour wages and medical benefits to start. Shortly after beginning a new career that wasn't even on her radar screen three weeks before, Britney and her children left the shelter and moved into their own apartment. The best part, says Britney, is that "for the first time in my young children's lives, each child has a bed of their own!"



Krista

"I never even dared to dream that this is how things would turn out."

With two years of college majoring in art and design and gainfully employed as an in-store decorator, 22-year-old Krista made a snap decision that would change the path of her life in ways she never imagined. Krista was arrested, convicted of a felony, and lost her job and her freedom. Once she had completed her time, she was released and placed on probation.

Her criminal record narrowed the career options precipitously, but she finally landed a job at a local Dairy Queen. Adding insult to injury, Krista found herself pregnant and alone. Unable to support herself and her child, she moved in with her sister. When she heard about the M.O.S.T.® program she was hopeful that this would give her the training necessary to embark on a real career. Because the training was going to take place in another county, Krista needed to get permission from her probation officer to participate in the program. Once she was given permission, Krista demonstrated a deep desire to change the direction of her life. Every day, Krista would travel the 40 miles to bring her baby to day care and attend the training classes.



At the beginning of the training, Krista was anxious that she would not be able to keep up with the others in the class and concerned that the felony record would keep her from getting hired. Her persistence and dedication paid off; her confidence grew every day and she graduated at the top of her class.

Upon completion of the training, Krista went to work as a CNC machine operator with a fast growing company of 100 employees that manufactures medical testing equipment. Within weeks her life was transformed and she and her child moved into a new apartment. She says now, "I never even dared to dream that this is how things could turn out."

M.O.S.T.® Stories - Barbara

"The best prepared newcomer to this company in its history."

For several years, Barbara had worked in Florida's booming construction industry. However, with the economic downturn, the end came with stunning quickness. "It was as though someone simply turned off the light, it was that quick. No one was hiring, no one." Her situation, though, was unique in that her husband's machine shop began to prosper. Barbara's husband asked her to come work for him, but she lacked the necessary skills to perform the job. She set out to participate in the M.O.S.T.® training. Throughout the training Barbara learned critical skills that would help her succeed in any machine shop, even her husband's.



She learned to read blueprints to identify the type of material and finishing processes needed, as well as determine how many operations are needed to machine a part. This knowledge has also helped her in facilitating sales calls and quoting processes. Barbara was then promoted to oversee the "final" part inspection – a skill that she learned during the M.O.S.T.® Quality Control sessions. Because of the training she received she is able to spot any product discrepancies before it is sent to the customer. She also has the responsibility for scheduling plating services and coordinating part deliveries.

"Of course I'm biased," says her husband Tim, "but I've got to tell you she's the best prepared newcomer to join this company... ever." For her part, Barbara is convinced that the training she received from the M.O.S.T.® program has helped the family business weather the tough economic climate of the past couple of years.

Richard

There are some obstacles that even a Green Beret can't surmount.

Richard is a deeply religious man who knew that somehow he and his family would make it. However that doesn't mean that this fifty-year-old married father of two was not at his wits end trying to survive on unemployment compensation. After all, he had lived on less, much less. Richard was a Green Beret. However, there are some obstacles even a Green Beret can't overcome. Richard was laid off from a manufacturing firm in Central Florida, and the economic landscape was bleak. Bills piled on top of bills, and he fell behind on his mortgage payments. Richard turned to two local charities for job search assistance and financial aid so he would not lose his home. Richard was told about the M.O.S.T.® program and he jumped at the chance. "I was so beat up, but I could still recognize an opportunity when it came knocking." Richard excelled in the training, and he became an asset to the class as he gave support to other students who were dealing with their own issues.

Before the final interviews with prospective employers, the students were given vouchers for clothing for the important day. Richard was depressed as he had fallen badly out of shape while unemployed and had nothing to wear or the money to buy presentable clothing that fit. Fortunately, a local Big and Tall Men's shop found out about Richard's predicament and offered to supply him with an outfit. The elated, grateful proud former Green Beret did well on his interview. Richard was hired by a small company that makes energy efficient lighting and used some of his first paycheck to repay the clothier.

Derrick

When his story was told to supervisors at a manufacturing facility, they recognized someone with this dedication to get to class, for which he was not being paid, was someone they wanted to hire.

Hard times had come to Derrick, his wife and two children. Derrick and his wife lived on the west coast of the US when he was laid off from his position in the retail industry. As a result, he faced eviction and loss of all personal property.

Living in shelters and seeking employment, the family traveled to Florida to be closer to family members. Almost immediately after they arrived, Derrick's mother passed away. A week later, he entered the M.O.S.T.® program. However, Derrick had no way to get to class. With no car for transportation, Derrick rode his bicycle 27 miles each way leaving at dawn and often returning after dark. Once he met others in the class and befriended them, someone would pick him and his bike up and give him a ride just in case he needed to stay after class to work on his assignments.

Derrick rode in the rain one day just to get to class early. When his story was told to supervisors at a manufacturing facility, they recognized someone with this dedication to get to class was someone they wanted to hire. They could not wait to interview Derrick and offer him a job. They felt sure that his dedication and commitment to the training would be reflected in his job ethic. And it was. Although he struggled with some of the less familiar technical portions of the class, Derrick persisted, staying late for extra help even when it meant a long ride home in the dark.

Today, Derrick proudly produces parts for space satellites and he laughs when he thinks that some of his "work" is floating through space.





M.O.S.T.® Stories - Antoine

Every mile laid and every spike driven was done by hand.

When Antoine graduated from high school in rural Mississippi, the only local jobs available to him were fast food or back-breaking labor. He felt fortunate to get a job working for the local railroad company, installing ties and track. However, it was a small railroad and unlike its bigger brethren, this railroad couldn't afford the expensive track laying equipment. Every mile laid and every spike driven was done by hand. Working in blistering hot summers and cold winters, the job was back-breaking. When introduced to the M.O.S.T.® program, the only skills the 33-year-old had was his experience with the railroad company. Antoine applied for entry into the program and was accepted, along with 23 other trainees.

At the onset of the training, the hulking Antoine was extremely shy, keeping to himself for fear that he would give an incorrect answer and be ridiculed by the others. After successfully completing several tests and averaging a 93, Antoine came out of his shell. Antoine became a frequent participant as the training progressed and the go-to-guy when others needed extra help. Graduating in the top percentile of the class (94%), Antoine was hired by an aerospace company. Today, Antoine is able to help keep his mother and siblings in their ancestral home while setting aside savings for his own home.

Darlene

"This year, Grandma D, that's what they call me, was Santa Claus, in my very own house . . . for my grandbabies. "

A 52-year-old divorced grandmother, Darlene worked in a warehouse driving forklifts and stacking boxes all day long for a very modest pay. She could not afford a place of her own, so she often rented a room at several friends' houses. Darlene just made enough money to pay her bills each week. After a series of surgeries left her unable to keep up with her bills, Darlene knew that she needed to do something different.

When the M.O.S.T.® program came into town, she was one of 23 people selected to go through the training program. However just hours into the program she was sure she wouldn't make it. Tears and frustration flowed and she was convinced that she could never understand what the M.O.S.T.® program was trying to teach her. The instructors came in early, stayed late, and worked diligently with Darlene to provide additional tutoring. "They were like the Marines in there, they just would not leave anyone behind. They changed my life."

Darlene's difficulty stemmed from the fact that she had been out of school for many years and did not have any self-confidence. The one-on-one training worked! Darlene became a sponge, quickly absorbing the training. Following graduation, Darlene was hired by an aerospace company. Today she makes fan blades and assemblies for jet engines. As a result of the program, Darlene has also been able to purchase her first house and a new vehicle, and she is making enough money to assist her daughter and son-in-law who have fallen on difficult times.



Flossie

"When I went home at night, I would just look at my kids and pray...that someone would help me."

"When you are in your mid-thirties, unemployed and a divorced mother of two living in a small southern town where there are few well-paying jobs, prayer is one of the few things you can call your own." Having left an abusive marriage, Flossie was worried and depressed as she was on her own with no practical way to support two children. "It's lucky that this came along when it did. I was definitely considering things that would have been no good."

Flossie learned about the M.O.S.T.® training and was anxious to get into the program, but her first step was to qualify for the class. What was ahead of her was a lot of hard work, but she was ready for the challenge and very scared. Once the classes started, the instructors provided her with additional tutoring before and after class so she could build confidence and keep up with the training.



One would not be able to find a more appreciative student. Flossie now has a career path and nothing will stop her - not even her ex-husband slashing her tires on graduation day! Flossie is working on an assembly line for a multinational company that manufactures cutting tools. She is happy and it is reported that she is doing well on the job.

M.O.S.T.® Stories - Willie

"I went from a home, to an apartment, to an efficiency, a room in a rooming house . . . to jail -- all in eight weeks."

Willie had a good job, a good upbringing from his pastor parents and a good outlook, but then the bottom fell out. "I can laugh now, because it all just happened so fast." Willie could see the writing on the wall, he knew the economy was doing poorly and not enough people were buying expensive toys, but he had a skill and figured that another opportunity was just around the corner. "I had done something stupid when I was young so I had an "arrangement" with the State of Florida." And, as long as he was employed, the "arrangement" worked for both of them, but now he was out of work.

"Once I was unemployed, the clock started ticking and I was desperate to find absolutely anything." Each day the scenario just kept getting worse, no job, no apartment, no girlfriend, no money for gas, and eventually no car. About the only thing he did have was rejections. "I had those in spades. Hell, if rejection letters were dollar bills, I was rich!" And all along the clock kept ticking. "I tried everything, right down to fast food places." And eventually the clock ran out. "I knew they were going to be looking for me, and one day two cops showed up at my door." It wasn't fair, but it was the "arrangement." Eventually a judge heard his story and released Willie from jail. And almost immediately his luck changed. His previous employer called and wanted him back, but first he had to complete the M.O.S.T.® program. "It could have been astronaut training, I didn't care, I just wanted my life back." Willie excelled in the program and two weeks later he was back at a new job in a familiar plant. "It all happened so fast, and it makes my head spin, but I'm grateful. Nah, I'm way more than grateful. I'm falling on my knees thanking the Lord above, grateful for the future the M.O.S.T.® program has given me."



Willy

The bank took his truck -- they might as well have taken his dignity.

A retired decorated Army Green Beret who also held the honor of guarding high-ranking political dignitaries was now homeless due to unemployment. The 46-year-old Willy had a wife who could not speak English and two small children living in a distressed hotel funded through two local charities in Central Florida. Willy was frustrated and depressed. He had a construction business in California but when the housing market took a plunge he moved to Florida to join a family business. Although the family business has secured a very large building contract, that deal fell through and Willy found himself living in a foreign place trying to find work. He and his family lived in the hotel for over three months while he searched; he was getting unemployment but it was not enough. The bank took his truck. Willy was quite literally out of options.

He was told about the M.O.S.T.® program at a local workforce board, and he immediately decided to apply. Willy was happy to take the training as there would be a job if he was successful in completing the program. Class was not a real challenge for Willy, but his own emotional personal barriers were. The instructors worked with him, and as he progressed, his military bearing returned. Willy had been a linguist in the service, and as he became a class leader he was able to assist another student who needed peer support in her native tongue. Eventually, Willy was hired by a small company that makes low energy lighting. He's made several advancements in the company since graduating from the program.

Steven

"If you would have told me years ago that I would be in the manufacturing industry today, I would probably think you were crazy. . ."

Steven was laid off from his seasonal job in Naples shortly after [the] season ended in 2010. He started looking for a new job, but because he lived in an area where so much of the area economy is seasonally-based, the job openings here were few and far between.

Just when all hope seemed lost, he was offered an opportunity to enroll in the M.O.S.T.® program. After listening to them speak and explain to him what the program entailed, with a promise of a job, he jumped at the chance and was excited to say the least. The training taught Steven many things and helped him learn new skills. The instructors were extremely helpful and were willing to go the extra mile to help him if he did not understand something.

"If you would have told me years ago that I would be in the manufacturing industry I would probably think you were crazy, but now I am proud to say that I am in the industry. There are so many things that I learned every day that I never believed possible. The M.O.S.T.® training just didn't give me a job; [it] gave me a career. [As a 24-year-old veteran] I am very happy that I was able to have this opportunity, and I want to thank them again for everything they have done."





M.O.S.T.® Stories - Dan

No secondary education, no plans, no future...

In a fast moving economy, Dan's story is not unusual. Dan graduated from high school with modest grades and modest ambitions. "To be honest, I had no idea what I wanted to do; you just sort of graduated and went out in the world." Nothing really caught Dan's attention, and he drifted from one low-wage job to another while living at home. "It wasn't real bad, but it wasn't real good either. My dad kept giving me that look that said 'it's time to stand on your own.'" However, for a 19-year-old with no skills and no education beyond high school, there were not many career opportunities. He worked for minimum wage at a small bike shop. Under employed, and no future for advancement, he wanted something more, but what?

As a bike mechanic, Dan worked modifying bike parts for BMX racers. He needed to learn how to make the parts for the bikes he repaired. When he first learned of the M.O.S.T.® program he jumped at the chance to participate -- he wanted a career as a machinist.

Dan was accepted into the program and each day he'd ride his bike to get to the mobile training unit. "At first I felt self-conscious about it, but the other students thought it was cool that I pedaled there." Everyone just sort of did what they had to do to get by. Dan excelled in the program. "The first time I worked with the 3D apps and CNC machine I knew what I'd be doing with my life. It all just sort of clicked."

After graduation Dan secured a job with a local machine shop. In the past three years Dan has received two salary increases and a promotion. "Dan has been a superlative employee, more than we could have ever hoped for. He just soaks up new ideas, and we now use him for the majority of our setup work," reports his employer. Dan has since moved into an apartment of his own and says he can now afford to buy the bikes he once used to repair.



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