

Program motivates business spirit

By Roy Bernard
Journal business editor

After eight weeks of motivation and learning, 13 people Thursday appeared ready to take on the challenge of developing small businesses.

They gained some of the skills needed to become successful entrepreneurs through a program on small business development sponsored by the Kankakee Community Development Corp. and the Kankakee Community Development Agency.

Some of those who attended Thursday's program evaluation session at the Community Resource Center in downtown Kankakee already are finding success as entrepreneurs.

Mark Carragher, who with his wife, Trina, restores ceramic tubs, said he has generated up to \$300 of business in a day. He charges an average of \$245 to redo a tub.

The Carraghers are one of the success stories that have come about from the program.

Charles Betterton, acting CDC executive director, coordinates the program.



Betterton, who also is from the Illinois Community Economic Development Association, said the entrepreneur/self-employment training, known as "micro-enterprise development," is not designed to be another social welfare program.

Some people wanted to eliminate funding for the courses but CDC Board President Walter J. Charlton and Kankakee Mayor Don Green were adamant in giving the program

one more chance, Betterton said. "We are one people, one community and one economy," he added.

The sessions are free to Kankakee residents who meet the low-income guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Others who participate pay a \$50 fee, but those entrepreneurs who took part in the latest sessions think the materials and information they received outweigh the expense.

In reviewing their eight classes the participants gave glowing responses about what they learned.

Jeanne Galtung, who is trying to start a greeting card business, told the group, "These have been energizing sessions. They make you want to tackle new things. They've offered me the most educational experience of my life."

Charjunta Mitchell said the program helped her gain motivational skills.

Darrell Williams noted that he learned many fine points about business development through the program. He has started an auto detailing shop.

The course includes materials on setting and achieving goals along with an introduction to entrepreneurship. There are projects to develop a business plan and a checklist from the U.S. Small Business Administration so people can decide whether they should start their own businesses.

Pat Hudson, executive assistant in charge of the Micro-Enterprise Development program, told the budding business people that even though they had completed the course, they should depend on each other for help in keeping their businesses thriving.

"We're trying to make you stand alone," Ms. Hudson said. "We will continue to help you find and resource what you need to be successful. We're in it for the long haul. Our objective is to stay with you."

Small business classes starting in September

Registration is under way for "Entrepreneur/Self-Employment Training," an 8-week session each Wednesday from Sept. 14 to Nov. 2 at the Community Resource Center, 150 N. Indiana Ave., Kankakee.

The three-hour training classes on Micro-Enterprise Development are provided free to Kankakee city residents who meet low-income guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The fee for self-employment training for non-Kankakee residents and those with higher income is \$30.

The scheduled classes and the speakers will be:

- Sept. 14 — Introduction and Marketing — Charles Betterton of the Illinois Community Economic Development Association.
 - Sept. 21 — The Operation Aspects — Charles R. Burke, Certified Public Accountant.
 - Sept. 28 — To Incorporate or Not to Incorporate — K. Edward Copeland, attorney with the law firm of Sacks, Albrecht, Copeland, Herzog & Sacks.
 - Oct. 5 — Financing Your Business — Marsha Lloyd of Kankakee Federal Savings & Loan.
 - Oct. 12 — Credit History & How to Clean Up Your Credit Report — Barbara Wells, Homebuyers Club/Neighborhood Housing Services.
 - Oct. 19 — Insurance Needs of Business Owners — Tom Malmer and Lashawn Johnson of Insurance Risk Managers.
 - Oct. 26 — Using the Money: Start-Up & Operating Costs — Marcie Means Kolberg of the accounting firm of Bacon, Smith, Koelling & Ohm.
 - Nov. 2 — Panel of Kankakee Entrepreneurs
- There will be an overview of the Micro-Enterprise Development classes at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Aug. 24 and 6 p.m. Aug. 31 at the Community Resource Center.
- For more information, contact Charles Betterton or Pat Hudson at 933-3356.