



# Business Access Community Update

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## Holiday Gratitude

Many Achievers have written us to express gratitude for the support, people, and things they have in their life, but this note from Crystal in Dallas echoes a familiar theme:

*I am thankful today for having received a full-time job...for the ability to support my children on my own.*

We thank all of those associated with Business Access for your service and for your efforts to improve the lives of individuals and families in your community. May your holiday season be safe and filled with joy.

## Case Manager Arranges for Success

Cecilia Norman, a Case Manager in the El Paso, Texas area, is willing to go the extra mile to help her youth clients. Carla, a Business Access Achiever, had been making excellent progress, completing all but six of the courses she needed to graduate in her first four months in the program. Suddenly, she stopped participating. We had difficulty contacting Carla, and when we did, it turned out she had connection issues that made it impossible for her to complete her training from home. Eventually, Ms. Norman tracked down Carla's school counselor, arranging a plan where Carla could work on computers at school and come to the local workforce office and use a computer there to complete her training. Carla completed those last six courses just days before her one-year anniversary in the program, graduating on time and earning her computer.

## Listening to Learn

Irasma, an Achiever in Lower Rio, has completed 167 BA training courses. While we've had Achievers complete more courses, Irasma's effort is noteworthy because she does not speak English. She completes the courses using an audio feature that reads the English text to her in Spanish. She takes and passes the exams by listening to the questions and answers in Spanish. Great effort, Irasma!



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## Teen's Internet Idea Making Her Wealthy

Three years ago, 14-year-old Ashley Qualls lived in a one-bedroom apartment with her sister and mom. She borrowed \$8 from her mother to start a Web site called whatever-life.com, where friends could download her designs for their MySpace pages. The site became hugely popular. Recently, it has been getting about 1 million hits a day. Advertisers have taken an interest and have paid the now 17-year-old enough that she bought a four-bedroom home for her family. Read the whole story [here](#)

The first Saturday of every month, Chicago participants in the Business Access program meet with Robin Watson, the program coordinator. "The goal of the monthly meetings is to get the group to know and support each other, through their successes and trials, provide them with awards to keep them encouraged," says Watson, who also brings in professionals "to provide supplemental insight into their learning." In a recent meeting, a Branch Manager from a local bank, who authored a book about credit, was the main speaker. At the monthly meetings, Robin says Achievers also do visualizations, goal setting, and storyboarding activities to help focus on success. LaTonya, a Chicago Achiever whose story about recovering from drug addiction will soon be published on the Web site, made a point of telling us how helpful and important those monthly meetings were to maintaining her motivation to succeed.

### Fingerprint Logins

In our continuing effort to improve the accountability of the Business Access program, we are considering using biometric or fingerprint recognition technology to ensure that the Achiever who received the BA computer is the actual person logging onto it. One of our main concerns is being certain that the in-home computer remains easily accessible to family members, and especially children, who often benefit greatly from having a computer with Internet access in their home.

### Wired Brits

In 1998, the British government set a goal of providing universal access to the Internet for all who wanted it by 2005. Between 2000 and 2003, the government invested approximately \$15 million in the Wired up Communities (WuC) initiative, which hoped to connect approximately 12,000 homes in seven disadvantaged communities.

Studies of the initiative revealed several important findings. In some communities only 50% of those residents who could have taken advantage of the program actually did. Several reasons were given, including skepticism about the offer of "free" technology, a lack of clarity regarding the application process, and lack of funds to purchase an ISP (where it was not provided for free).

Refurbished PCs also negatively affected participants' confidence in the technology. Most importantly, the government found that training and support, and in particular one-to-one support, improved interest in Internet usage. [More](#)

### Exploring Career Options

Looking for a way to help your clients match their interests and abilities with a career? Check out the [Career Voyages Web site](#). It provides tools to match interests with occupations using the John Holland RIASEC system. You'll also find information and activities connecting education requirements and wages to specified occupations.

### Online Programs Help Nurses

Many nursing professionals are going to the Internet for education and training. Lack of traditional brick and mortar classroom programs have made online learning a valuable resource. One place they turn is [eLearners.com](#). The site offers more than 300 accredited online health and medical degrees, including nursing programs that educate healthcare practitioners across the country. Click [here](#) to view several online nursing programs available.

### Learn more about how the Business Access has helped Workforce:

- [TANF Clients](#)
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