



## Chrysalis Has Unique Model For Employment

Written by Diana Martinez, Editor

Thursday, 18 August 2011 02:43

This is Part 2 on Chrysalis - the nonprofit organization with offices in Pacoima. They assist those under the most challenging circumstances to find employment



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRYSALIS

Chrysalis offers its clients jobs at Chrysalis Enterprises to help them fill in employment gaps and get back on their feet to land their next job. Emanuel Woods, Trevor Kale VP Chrysalis Enterprises, Philip Hill, Gerald Pierce.

In this economic climate, it can be difficult for even the most qualified to land a job. For those who are considered "too risky" to employ, the door to landing a job can be tightly shut.

Conversely, Chrysalis, a nonprofit organization with offices in Pacoima, Santa Monica and on skid row in Los Angeles, opens its doors to those with big gaps in work history or no really relevant work experience that they can put down on a resume. They also help those with a very checkered past, including people who are or have been homeless, or have struggled with addiction.

Those who are coming to Chrysalis are often under the most challenging of circumstances. "People who've found their way to Chrysalis in Pacoima have found a place where they can learn, become independent, make their own living and get back on their feet," said President and CEO Mark Loranger.

On the front lines, the staff at Chrysalis know that "getting back on your feet" can be easier said than done. So they've established their own, unique business model that - in addition to teaching their clients to job search online - helps them develop a resume and provides workshops on interviewing skills.

The organization also offers temporary work at Chrysalis Enterprises, giving people "Chrysalis jobs," which are described as "social enterprises."

"It's all about outreach," said Trevor Kale, vice president of Chrysalis Enterprises. "We compete with private business. We have sales people who are in the market place, talking about our product and our clients and selling them on the services we provide.

"We have a big customer function that we play, because we're working with (those) who have serious unemployment and lack of experience, so we really need to create goodwill with our customers. So inevitably, when something does go wrong, as it occasionally will, we stay very, very close to our customers. So we're checking probably more regularly than most staffing agencies," Kale said.

For those struggling to get a job, a transitional job offered by Chrysalis Enterprises can be a bridge to establish a recent work history, as well as references and a pathway toward another job.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRYSALIS

From street maintenance to desk clerks, Chrysalis Enterprises offers clients a variety of transitional jobs to help their clients transition to permanent jobs

Chrysalis monitors the progress of its clients, which is added support for employers. The formula has worked. The organization claims \$2.5 million in generated wages and 218,000 hours of employment for 450 Chrysalis clients for last year, and expects to increase those figures this year.

Veronica, previously homeless with two children, is one of the organization's success stories. She recently got her wish, to get a roof back over her family's head, and was recently hired to work at a health-related job.

"I couldn't find a job after losing my job at a hospital and I wound up homeless with my kids. People don't realize that there are a lot of moms like me out on the streets with their kids because they can't find a job. They bundle up their kids and sleep behind nearby shopping centers," Veronica said.

After seeking help at several agencies without luck, she said Chrysalis Enterprises "made the difference" in changing her situation.

"I was able to rent a room for me and my kids and they could go to school and now they don't have to worry about the other kids finding out that they were homeless. They were very stressed; we all were. Chrysalis gave me a job cleaning offices, which helped me get the job I wanted back in the medical field. Now we are all doing really well," she said.

While many employers might be reluctant to take the plunge on someone who might not be their first choice, they often find Chrysalis clients to be their most dedicated employees because they know that they have much at stake.

"Our real advantage is by the time someone works a Chrysalis Enterprise job, they've been through 22 hours of training, resume crafting, interviewing, and job readiness classes. At Chrysalis Enterprises they are trained on safety procedures, on-the-job procedures, and technical cleaning skills," Kale said.

"They've got the support of the whole organization behind them and they're really at the point of 'this might be my last chance,' and they don't let themselves down."

Chrysalis Enterprises has found that some employers really want to make a positive impact in the community, which is something Kale can relate to.

Similarly to Loranger, Kale previously worked in the private sector before joining the nonprofit organization.

"I come from the 'for profit' sector. I really find that working hard is a lot more fun and a lot more rewarding when there's an individual on the other end that's reaping the benefits. It's really something to be said when you know someone is trying like crazy, and if you weren't there they wouldn't have the opportunity," Kale said.

"Currently we work with 99 cent only stores, (we) staff their warehouse. Paper, Post Converting and Manufacturing is another warehouse staffing customer. J & B Properties is a staffing customer that's in the Valley as well as Los Angeles Family Housing. We also work with hotels, often times, to do event setup or grounds cleaning."

Under the umbrella of Chrysalis Enterprises is Chrysalis Works, a street cleaning and maintenance company, which is the organization's largest business.

"We contract with city councils, business improvement districts, and private companies to do clean up work, mostly outdoors. Then we have a smaller business that's growing, we're trying to grow it, called Chrysalis Staffing," Kale said.

"Chrysalis Staffing is just like any other staffing agency that you think of, we match our clientele for the employers. We get contracts with a warehouse or a property. (The company has a) temporary janitorial staff that does cleanup or warehousing that needs people

to unload trucks, things like that. We do the payrolling and it's a tremendous additional employment for our clients."

Chrysalis Works also supplements city services in the business improvement districts.

"In the Valley, we have contracts with the North Hollywood business improvement district and the Panorama City business improvement district to do six days a week maintenance. We change out the trash cans, sweep out the gutters, we pressure wash the streets, we remove graffiti, all of those things," Kale said.

The transitional Chrysalis jobs generally last six to nine months, Kale said, with the goal of securing a permanent job. The organization is also trying to diversify and grow the kinds of jobs its staffing company can offer.

Chrysalis has grown to include support jobs in catering, special events and post event cleanup and desk clerks.

"We had a training class for desk clerks last week, and one of the trainees was talking about the importance of common areas and making sure your common areas are taken care of. This is coming from a client who will only be around for a few weeks, and she said, 'You're not only representing yourself when you're in those common areas, you're also representing Chrysalis.' I thought it was beautiful that she came up with that on her own," Kale said.

"We help people get their own jobs, we don't just hand out jobs. So if they come in with a little bit of drive, we can really foster that and help them achieve their goals."

*For more information on Chrysalis go to [www.changelives.org](http://www.changelives.org)*

*The Pacoima office is located at 14015 Van Nuys Blvd. Suite E Pacoima (818) 794-4200*