



Although retiree Happy Shaw Trapp is living a quiet country life with a host of farm animals she cares for with her husband, she has secured a part-time job in the health-care industry through her contacts.

Retirement working plan

Whether to make ends meet or pursue a new career dream, retirees have back-to-work options.

By Shirley West

FOR THE REGISTER-GUARD
Photos by Collin Andrew
THE REGISTER-GUARD

Every day more than 10,000 baby boomers turn 65 — once the golden age for retirement. But many who are approaching or well past this milestone are finding they're not able or willing to leave work behind.

From volunteer work, to part-time jobs, to full-on career changes, more and more seniors are choosing to stay in the workforce. While today's tight job market can be especially challenging, there are resources available to help seniors explore their second acts.

Successful Aging Institute

Whether you need a supplemental income or an outlet for your talents, the Successful Aging Institute at Lane Community College (LCC) is a gem of a local resource. This well-networked office prides itself on the breadth of its partnerships and the myriad resources it has to offer. Training, job counseling, workshops and activities are geared toward nurturing the rich vein of retired workers and new job seekers in the community, director Barbara Susman says.

"We currently have 28 partner organizations with whom we work to offer classes at sites throughout the community," Susman says. "Altogether we provide about 250 classes a year ... for anybody

interested in successful aging."

One example is the personal care aide training, a 40-hour hands-on class taught by a gerontologist. Folks who go through this training find that employers will give them preferential hiring, Susman says. While the work is not highly paid, it is flexible and in high demand.

The Senior Companions Program is a quasi-volunteer opportunity that offers training, placement and a modest stipend to seniors who would like to help others maintain their independence and quality of life. Debra Schwartz, who became a Senior Companion three years ago, says she started "because of the stipend and because I enjoy working with people who are dealing with challenges.

But I had no idea how it would make me feel ... like I'm making a difference in someone's life."

Retooling to compete

For those who may have felt their job-hunting days were over, Susman offers a class called "Get a Job at My Age." The free class gives information about LCC's workforce development program and the classes and services available at no cost. The idea is to help job-seekers gain confidence, retool, and compete successfully in today's challenging world of work, Susman says.

"We cover everything from overcoming

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Trapp can work the night shift once a week at PeaceHealth and still get home to feed her critters.

ing age bias to brushing up interviewing skills, to learning what kinds of computer skills are essential for any kind of entry level job," she says.

For people who want to explore career options, there's the brighter futures program. These workshops help students explore their talents and skills and available career training options. And for seniors who are interested in starting their own small business, eDev, an offshoot of the Lane Small Business Development

Center, offers training and grants.

AARP of Oregon also is partnering with LCC, Goodwill and Lane Workforce Partnership on a program to train people over 50 to be customer service representatives for Enterprise car rental and Royal Caribbean cruise line, says AARP Outreach Director Joyce DeMonnin. Everyone who completes the program is guaranteed an interview. And for people who have a lifetime of experience and want to start a business,

AARP of Oregon and the Small Business Administration (SBA) are offering an "encore entrepreneur" workshop on April 16 at the LCC downtown campus.

"This whole idea of reinventing yourself is a reality that we live in today," DeMonnin says. "So another tool that AARP has is 'Work Reimagined.'" The website, interactive networking program, can provide the information, leads and personal connections needed to succeed and compete in today's job market. "I pay attention to the discussion," DeMonnin says. "We learn from our peers. People enjoy the camaraderie of other job-seekers."

The "Work Reimagined" website uses LinkedIn user profiles to find job openings in companies that have pledged to hire workers of all ages and who value experienced workers.

An encore performance

DeMonnin and others say using social media to expand a job search network is important, but personal networks are just as critical. For retiree Happy Shaw Trapp, keeping in touch with a former supervisor led to the perfect part-time job.

Trapp retired from her job as a mental health counselor in 2008, with visions of a quiet, country life. After her husband retired in 2009, however, it was clear that a little extra income

could help with the high cost of the couple's medical insurance. Lucky for Trapp, her former boss now supervised the crisis team at PeaceHealth and needed part-time crisis workers.

"I always said to her if you have something part time I'll work for you again," Trapp said.

Flexibility is important to Trapp in her part-time work. With nearly 15 acres and a farmyard full of animals, Trapp wanted a schedule that would have her home for twice-daily feedings. Now she works the Saturday night shift (9 p.m. to 5:30 a.m.) at PeaceHealth's university district emergency room. At 60, Trapp admits working the 'no' shift can be taxing.

"Yes, it is tough on my body," she says, but the rest of the week is hers.

"Retirement is a wonderful thing," Trapp says. "There's lots to do and it's lots of fun to have your own time."

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Resources

Successful Aging Institute: www.lanecce.edu/
541-463-6262
Senior Companion Program: www.lanecce.edu/scp/
541-463-6260
Work Reimagined: <http://workreimagined.aarp.org>