

GROUP HELPS PEOPLE FIND EMPLOYMENT



Martha is an older woman living in the Framingham area. While she is 47-years old, she is currently looking for work, and she has a list of reasons as to why she is a good employee. Martha has the ability to keep an office spacious and organized, she works efficiently and fast, and she is also good at communicating with others, according to the MetroWest Daily News. Martha also knows how to use Microsoft Excel, which is commonly used in an office setting. She currently has an outstanding resume, and has brushed up on her interviewing skills. Aside from dealing with the difficulties of finding employment in a sluggish labor market, Martha is also dealing with some mental health issues. However, she has the assistance of a group in Framingham, the Project Advance, which is looking to help people find employment. Project Advance is not just about helping people find employment, but more so about helping people with mental health issues rise above the difficulties they are facing so that they can ultimately find the employment that they want and need. Project Advance wants to put these individuals back into the labor market. The director of the group, Iris Carroll, has a belief that people can work if they put their mind to it, even those with mental health issues. Carroll said, "A diagnosis of mental illness doesn't necessarily define a person's identity." The group has been able to find clients after receiving referrals that come in from different health professionals who believe that these individuals, despite their mental health issues, would be perfect candidates for different positions. Project Advance has already had the opportunity to help a total of 24 people. Many of these people were suffering from different issues, including anxiety and even schizophrenia. Martha was excited to be part of Project Advance, and has had the opportunity work with the employment counselor, Sarah Foster. Foster has helped Martha gain confidence in her own abilities, and has helped Martha make achievements, even when she was struggling to do so all on her own. Foster even managed to convince Martha to call her last employer for a reference, even though things with that employer ended on a bad note. Foster says, "Three minutes of discomfort and then it's over." While Project Advance looks forward to helping more people with mental health issues, they also have an interest in helping military veterans. Carroll has gained an interest in helping young veterans after reading a story that claimed young military veterans have an extremely high unemployment rate when compared to the unemployment rate of non-military veterans around the same age.