



Office of the County Executive

Jonathan Delagrave

730 Wisconsin Avenue

Racine, WI 53403

262-636-3273

fax: 262-636-3549

Jonathan.Delagrave@racinecounty.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17, 2017

MEDIA CONTACT: M.T. Boyle

(262) 636-3120

MT.Boyle@racinecounty.com

Start IT Program: Earn money while you learn information technology skills

Innovative new program aimed at 18- to 24-year-olds

Interested in entering a high-demand and high-paying career field? How about getting paid while you learn?

An innovative new program called Start IT is geared toward Racine County residents age 18 to 24, especially those interested in computers, technology and cyber defense. The program is a private-public collaboration between Racine County Workforce Solutions and Leeward Business Advisors.

Over 16 weeks of training at the George Bray Neighborhood YMCA in Racine, participants will learn entry-level IT skills and soft skills. Compensation for participants increases as they gain technical skills, earn badges and show up regularly and on time.

Many underestimate their abilities to be successful in the tech and IT world. With such a large number of jobs available, "Not everyone are programmers and hackers working in isolation all day," noted Michael Polzin, CEO of Leeward Business Advisors. "I was self-taught in technology. I developed a career out of a hobby playing with computers, despite dropping out of high school, and I have now gone on to run a successful technology company with my business partners, Jason Klein and Erika Keating."

Some Start IT fast facts:

- The initial scope of the training will be service desk/help desk, basic hardware and software support, small business website design, and software security.
- Under supervision, participants will provide technical support for a nominal fee to small businesses, nonprofits, and community members recruited by Start IT staff.

"Start IT will equip Racine County residents with the skills they need to continue their education or obtain an entry level job as a Cyber Defense Professional," said Mark Mundl, Racine County Manager of Workforce Solutions. He added that "this unique offering wouldn't be possible without Gateway Technical College, the George Bray Neighborhood YMCA, Racine Vocational Ministries and Leeward Business Advisors."

Information sessions will be held at the George Bray Neighborhood YMCA, 924 Center Street, on August 17, 24 and 30 and September 7. For more information, call 262.638.7706.

###