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MAKING A *DIFFERENCE* IN THE COMMUNITY: The Superfund Job Training Initiative in Newark, New Jersey



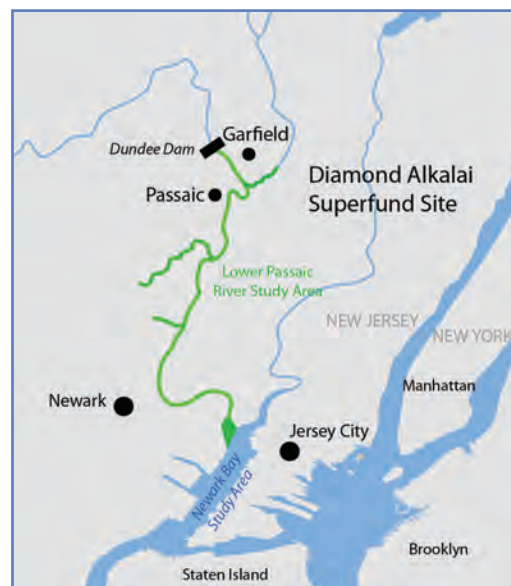
INTRODUCTION

The Diamond Alkali Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 15 trainees living near the Diamond Alkali Superfund site. Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Ironbound Community Corporation, Stuyvesant Environmental Contracting, Arcadis and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Diamond Alkali SuperJTI provided local job-seekers with new skills and work experience linked to the cleanup of the Passaic River, which is adjacent to the site. EPA's goal is to help the community create job opportunities and partnerships that remain in place for the long term.

CANDIDATE OUTREACH, RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING: JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2012

Diamond Alkali SuperJTI staff and community partner Ironbound Community Corporation did outreach, sent out fliers and hosted orientation sessions to publicize the job training program and attract interested candidates. During January and February 2012, over 60 people attended the program's three orientation sessions. Following these sessions, 44 people completed a preliminary testing stage; 38 of those participants were invited to attend program tryouts. Over 30 participants decided to continue with the program tryouts.

Program tryouts included leadership, team building and role-playing activities, basic physical fitness evaluation, and observation by a team of evaluators from the project's partners. Following the tryouts, the program selected 15 trainees.

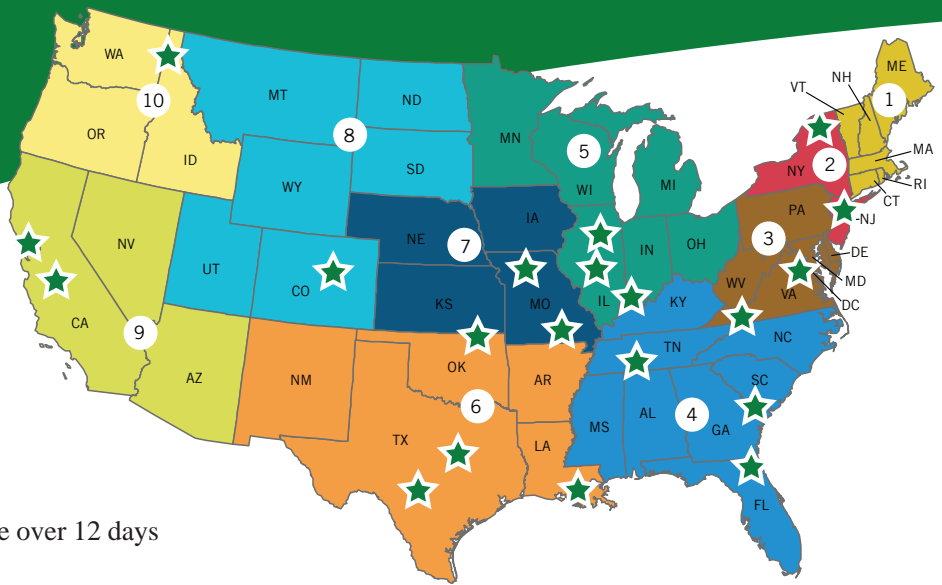


SITE HISTORY

For about 30 years during the mid-20th century, companies manufactured pesticides and herbicides at facilities in Newark, New Jersey, and surrounding Essex County. These areas are now part of the Diamond Alkali Superfund site. The site includes a former pesticides manufacturing plant and surrounding properties at 80 and 120 Lister Avenue, the Lower Passaic River Restoration Project Study Area and the Newark Bay Study Area. The Lower Passaic River Study Area is a 17-mile stretch of river from Dundee Dam near Garfield, New Jersey, to Newark Bay and several tributaries. The Newark Bay Study Area includes Newark Bay, portions of the Hackensack River, and the Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull tidal straits.

Plans for assessing and cleaning up these areas are being developed in coordination with community members, federal, state, and local governments, and local organizations.

- Dioxin, pesticides and volatile organic compounds were detected at the Lister Avenue properties. Occidental Chemical Corporation, a responsible party, has performed interim cleanup work at the properties, with additional site assessment ongoing.
- Sediments in the Lower Passaic River and Newark Bay are contaminated with several hazardous substances, including dioxin, PCBs, mercury, DDT, pesticides and heavy metals. EPA is partnering with federal and state agencies on a comprehensive study of the Lower Passaic River.
- EPA is overseeing a multi-year study of Newark Bay. The study is assessing the nature and extent of contamination in the bay and will develop cleanup plans to address those problems, as necessary.



TRAINING: MAY 2012

The Diamond Alkali SuperJTI training took place over 12 days and included:

- **Pre-Employment Training:** Trainees completed courses in environmental justice, interpersonal communication, cultural competence and effective work habits. EPA contractor Skeo Solutions provided the training.
- **Technical Training:** Trainees completed the 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training, OSHA's 10-hour safety training, and CPR and first aid training. The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey provided the training.

Upon completion of the program, trainees possess the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation and become valuable members of the workforce in these communities.

Diamond Alkali SuperJTI is one of the many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for unemployed and underemployed citizens living in communities affected by Superfund sites.

THE PASSAIC RIVER SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

- *Live in areas affected by the Diamond Alkali Superfund site. Many participants have lived close to the site for their entire lives.*
- *Include younger and older populations. Participants ranged in age from early twenties to over fifty years old.*



Graduation for the program's 15 trainees took place at the Portuguese Sport Club in March 2012. EPA Region 2 Administrator Judith Enck attended the ceremony and handed out certificates to the graduates. The program included remarks from the graduates as well as project partners.



JOB PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP: JUNE 2012 — NOVEMBER 2012

After graduation, trainees interviewed with subcontractors Stuyvesant Environmental Contracting and Arcadis for available site cleanup positions. All 15 graduates were placed in a variety of positions, all focused on cleaning up the Passaic River. Two of the 15 graduates are currently in full-time river cleanup positions.

Diamond Alkali SuperJTI staff and community partner Ironbound Community Corporation followed up with the graduates and their supervisors for six months after the graduates started work. During this time, graduates could change positions but had to remain employed, either with one of the site subcontractors or another employer.

SUPERJTI COMMUNITY PROFILES: Making a Difference

Craig Burns



Craig Burns had been unemployed and was tired of the stress and uncertainty of searching for work. When he heard about the SuperJTI program through a friend, he decided to jump at the opportunity. “The training was very informative and educational,” Craig recalled. “In addition to learning technical skills, I learned tips for working well with others and that has made all of the difference.”

As a heavy equipment operator for on-site contractor, ARCADIS, Craig continued to learn new skills on the job and looks forward to what the future holds. “I’m very grateful for the opportunity and the knowledge,” he said. “I have full-time employment and often work overtime.”

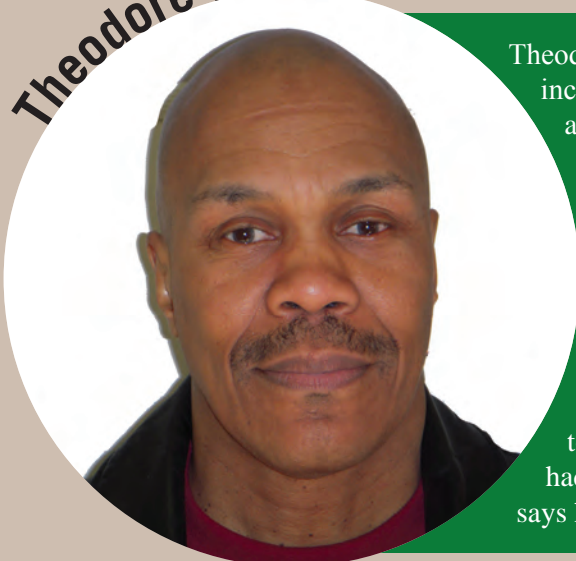
Evonna graduated from Penn State with a degree in behavioral health. After an internship ended, she had trouble finding work and was getting discouraged by the job market. When her uncle mentioned the SuperJTI training, she decided to apply.

OSHA safety training was Evonna’s favorite part of the program. “It was very informative and I’ve been able to use what I learned at my current job,” she said. After her graduation, ARCADIS hired Evonna as a Health and Safety Coordinator. “I now have a well paying career path that relates to my studies,” she said.

Evonna Crudup



Theodore Brown



Theodore Brown was looking for something different. With 30 years of incarceration on his record, it was hard for him to find a fresh start. When a city hall worker mentioned the SuperJTI program, Theodore decided to give it a try. “I had never been involved in competitive tryouts,” he said. “When I was selected to participate and when I was able to graduate from the program, those were some of my proudest moments. My daughter was so happy, she kept telling me how proud she was. That was my motivation right there.”

Theodore says he is now more marketable in the work place. “Knowledge is power and the more certifications you have, the more valuable you are to an employer,” he noted. Immediately following graduation, Theodore had a job working with ARCADIS. He has continued to learn on the job and says he is “open to learning anything new.”

What is the SuperJTI Program?

The Superfund Job Training Initiative, or SuperJTI, supports job readiness programs in communities affected by nearby Superfund sites and encourages the employment of trainees at local site cleanups. The SuperJTI program combines extensive classroom instruction with hands-on exercises for each participant. Upon completion of the program, each participant possesses the marketable skills required to become a valuable member of the community's workforce. EPA offers SuperJTI training at no cost to training participants.

For more information, please visit: www.epa.gov/superfund/community/sfjti

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