

Nothing like the feeling of a new job

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From left, Bill Sleight, director of Livingston County Michigan Works!; Randy Green; state Rep. Bill Rogers, R-Genoa Township; Lilia Carlson of Howell; state Rep. Cindy Denby, R-Handy Township; and Charlotte Mahoney, chairperson of the Michigan Works! Board of Directors; attend the 2011 Michigan Works! Association Alumni Celebration in January. / SUBMITTED PHOTO

Michigan Works! honored Lilia Carlson of Howell for obtaining gainful employment through the agency that helps the jobless in the state find work. Carlson was recognized at the 2011 Michigan Works! Association Alumni Celebration.

Members of the state Legislature attended the event. Reps. Bill Rogers, R-Genoa Township, and Cindy Denby, R-Handy Township, presented Carlson with a tribute.

Carlson had been a production specialist for 20 years at a local automotive company when she lost her job due to plant closure. With strong determination to make a positive career change, Carlson visited Livingston County Michigan Works! and enrolled in the medical-assistant training program offered through the Ross Medical Education Center.

During this transition, Carlson faced many challenges as she balanced raising children, attending training full time, living on unemployment benefits and a career transition. The shift from a manufacturing facility into a new career working with doctors and other medical professionals was a significant challenge, yet Carlson faced the transition head on and was determined to succeed in the new environment.

With support from Michigan Works!, coupled with her own resolve and willpower, Carlson graduated with a 3.5 grade-point average.

Upon graduation, Carlson sought an opportunity to work at a medical center that provided broad responsibilities for patient care so she could utilize her newly learned technical skills and passion for working with people. In August 2009, she accepted a position with the University of Michigan Nurse Managed Centers in Ann Arbor.

"Without Michigan Works!, I would not be working in my new profession. I have the opportunity to do a variety of tasks and I love my new job. It has been a wonderful learning experience," said Carlson.

Each year, Michigan Works! hosts the celebration to honor the achievements of Michigan citizens who, with support from Michigan Works!, have attained the education and marketable skills needed for jobs in high-demand occupations and industries.

The event was held Jan. 25, at the Anderson House Office Building in Lansing. Carlson was among the 25 graduates of the Michigan Works! system presented with an Outstanding Alumni of the Year award.