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Shannon Lengares Brings More than a Decade of Experience Helping Others



Shannon Lengares has been hired as the new Executive Director of the Women's Center at County College of Morris (CCM).

Lengares is a licensed social worker with more than 10 years of experience in nonprofit program management and development.

She graduated from Hofstra University with her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and earned her Masters of Social Work in International and Community Development from Monmouth University.

Lengares' experience includes previous work at a community learning center in rural Tamil Nadu, India. The center assisted women from the local village who were seeking employment by developing marketable skills.

She has also worked with numerous other nonprofit community organizations, including the Hope for Veterans Program with Community Hope Inc., a leading nonprofit organization that assists veterans and veteran families in overcoming mental illness, addiction, homelessness and poverty.

As executive director of the Women's Center at CCM, Lengares oversees an organization that has helped thousands of women. The Women's Center provides career counseling and other supportive services for women who are divorced, separated, victims of domestic violence or single parents who wish to become economically independent.

"I am both honored and excited for the opportunity to join the Women's Center at CCM and to carry out the mission of serving the varied needs of women in their quest to become economically self-sufficient," Lengares says.



A special thank you to Audrey Verona, for once again, contributing to the Women's Center by donating school supplies for our clients and their children.

We were fortunate to receive another donation from Connect Church in Randolph, NJ. Their parishioners supported us by donating backpacks filled with school supplies. The backpacks were very much appreciated by the people we are here to support.

"Only I can change my life. No one can do it for me."

- Carol Burnett

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Career Corner

Interested in Being Self-Employed?

- Are you willing to dedicate many hours to your goals?
- Do you have a marketable skill?
- Are you knowledgeable about the Internet and social media?
- Do you enjoy working with people, leading and influencing others?
- Do you also like to work independently?
- Are you very organized?
- Are you persuasive, ambitious and energetic?



If you said “yes” to most of these questions, you probably are an enterprising career type with entrepreneurial interests. Where does one begin exploring the possibility of having your own business?

EXPLORE and NETWORK

Talk to others who have developed their own business. Ask many questions and discuss the positives and negatives of business ownership. The path to self-employment has greatly changed in recent years because of the Internet. One major question that needs to be considered: Does your proposed business have the potential to earn a rewarding salary?

READ and RESEARCH

- *What Color Is Your Parachute?* by Richard N. Bolles (2018 edition). Chapter 12, “How to Start Your Own Business.”
- Small Business Administration: www.sba.gov. Excellent articles and advice.

Starting your own business is a major step! It is well worth the investment of your time to explore, network, read and research what it will take to be successful!



Job Search Tips for Older Workers

When you are faced with a career change, layoff, or returning to the workforce after a long absence, age can seem like the greatest obstacle to your success. You may be surprised to learn that most of the increase in employment since 2000 has been among workers aged 55 and older and that age group is expected to make up almost 24% of the workforce through 2027. Rest assured, you have a number of qualities that make you very hireable! Here are some tips for how to stand out in the job market:

Highlight your skills

Make a list of all of the skills you have developed, both in the workplace and outside of work. Then, look at job listings in the fields you want. Circle any skills on your own list that fit the requirements of the job. Pay particular attention to the transferable skills you have (such as communication or managerial skills) that will be useful in almost any job. Also think about skills and qualities you have as a result of your years of experience.

Whether or not you have been in the labor force recently, you likely have qualities gained from experience (paid or unpaid) that employers will want. For example, studies have shown that employees over 50 are particularly reliable, detail-oriented, and patient. They also have strong leadership skills.

Stay relevant and current

Think about any skills that will be necessary for the job you want, that you may either lack or have not used in a while. Through ongoing professional development or training, especially in technology, you will be able to overcome ageism by demonstrating that you are relevant and motivated to learn new things. *The Women’s Center offers free computer training and so does the Morris County Library.* Read up on what is happening in the industry by scanning for articles in the news, trade journals and company press releases to be sure you can speak to current trends in your interviews.

Streamline and upgrade your resume

While your experiences are likely impressive, the reality is that when your resume lists experience from 1984, you are dating yourself. The general rule is to limit your employment history to the past 15 years. There are some exceptions, of course, for instance, if you are transitioning back to a field you worked in more than 15 years ago or you have a significant accomplishment with an industry-leading company outside that timeframe. Also, make sure your references to job skills use contemporary vocabulary.

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For example, you should use the terms “created or formatted documents” rather than “typed documents”. Also, for high school and college, don’t list your graduation date. *The Women’s Center provides one-on-one resume assistance.*

Reach out to your network

In fact, as an older job seeker, you have an advantage in this area. You likely have a deeper professional network than someone just getting started. Consider joining a professional association in your field. Revamp (or create!) your LinkedIn profile. Send an email to your friends and family and let them know about your job search. Networking is one of the best ways to find a job.

Get Job Search Help

If you're struggling with your job search, consider seeking assistance. There are no-cost programs provided by the Women’s Center, One Stop Career Centers, non-profit groups, and local libraries, for example, that can assist. Several resources to check out are:

Workforce 55+ (One Stop)

http://www.careerconnections.nj.gov/careerconnections/plan/foryou/mature/mature_worker_services.shtml

PathStone (ages 55+)

<https://pathstone.org/workforce-development/>

Rutgers’ New Start Career Network (ages 45+)

<https://www.newstartcareernetwork.org/>

Don’t Give Up

Job searching typically isn’t easy, regardless of how old you are. It might take a while to find a job, but there are employers who understand the value of an older worker with maturity, life experience and skills. And remember, positivity is key for any age candidate!

Sources: The Balance Careers “Job Search Strategies for Older Workers” 5/17/18 & “Fashion Tips for Older Job Seekers” 5/18/18; Top Resume “6 Ways You Can Overcome Age Discrimination During the Job Search”



Interview Question of the Month

Q: What is your greatest weakness?

A: Interviewers use this question to gauge your self-awareness and honesty. It’s not as much about **what** answer you give, but **how** you answer the question.

Oftentimes, people get tripped up on this question by making one of these mistakes:

1. Trying to turn a negative into a positive: *“I am too much of a perfectionist.”*
2. Refusing to answer the question. *“I can’t think of any.”*
3. Revealing a weakness that raises red flags: *“I have trouble getting up in the morning and getting to work on time.”*

Instead, provide an honest answer that shows you recognize a weakness and have taken steps to address it. Stay away from personal qualities and concentrate on a professional trait. Also, it’s best to pick a weakness that is not essential for the job you’re interviewing for.

Well, I used to be pretty horrible at public speaking. So, I took a public speaking class, which made a big difference. Now, even though I get nervous, I feel like it’s something that doesn’t completely hold me back, and, in fact, recently I gave a speech at a conference to over 100 people. My hands were shaking the whole time, but I got really good feedback at the end.

Here is a template you can use to answer the “**Weakness**” question:

In the past, [**Weakness**] was a huge challenge for me. I realized this was hindering my progress as an individual and a professional so I decided to [**Action You Took to Improve**]. After several months of working through it, I can honestly say that [**Weakness**] is something I’m starting to enjoy. Most recently, [**Showcase Results from Action Taken**] and my colleagues even [**Include Colleague Testimonial**].

EMPOWERMENT!

The **Women's Center at County College of Morris** has announced its next semester of **Empowerment!**

Do Your Personal and Professional Goals Need a Reboot? We're ready to roll! Are you ready?

Are you looking for...

- Pathways to identify strengths and transferable skills
- Insights into internal barriers that hold you back
- Techniques to erode self-defeating thoughts
- Ways to consistently set & achieve purposeful goals
- Strategies for managing stress and time
- A perspective shift that motivates & energizes you to take action towards employment goals

Empowerment! is a 6-week program of interactive and engaging exercises and techniques designed to develop these life enhancing skills and empower women in a supportive group environment. Created and facilitated by **Jeanne Rohach, Certified Women's Empowerment Coach & Consultant**. The course, will run from **Tuesday, November 6-December 11** from **10am-2pm**, meeting for a total of six weeks. Program tuition is funded through a [scholarship](#) by the Women's Center at CCM. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory, so please make sure to clear your calendar.

Please contact the Women's Center at County College of Morris 973-328-5025 or womenscenter@ccm.edu for more information about Empowerment! course admission and other services that might be of assistance to you through the Women's Center.

Jeanne Rohach has over a dozen years' experience creating and facilitating workshops covering a wide range of topics related to empowerment. Jeanne has conducted empowering workshops for many organizations throughout northern New Jersey including Dress for Success Northern New Jersey, Pathways 2 Prosperity at NORWESCAP and Career & Life Transitions Centers, among others. Empowerment! has been featured in the Morris Daily Record and on Cablevision's "New Directions for Women" TV program.

Learning Opportunities

Computer Lab is our one-to-one tutoring program. Our knowledgeable volunteers can help you with: Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher, LinkedIn, Job Board Profile and QuickBooks.

Legal Clinic is a free half-hour consultation with an attorney, regarding divorce/family law.

Job Club topics include (but are not limited to): Returning to the workforce after an absence, Tips for 50+ job seekers, How to present yourself professionally, Networking, Managing conflict, and Job search strategies.

Interviewing Skills Workshop is an interactive workshop for active job seekers with a current resume. You will learn skills needed for a successful and confident interview!

Mission Statement: *Serve the varied needs of displaced homemakers in their quest for economic self sufficiency.*

Women's Center Newsletter

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The Women's Center at CCM is a nonprofit organization serving women in transition. It is sponsored by the **County College of Morris**. The program is funded by the **NJ Division on Women**.