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NEWS

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## JOBS

## South Bay workforce agency honors 21 alumni, as well as various partners

By Chris Haire  
chaire@scng.com

The South Bay's local workforce agency recently honored 21 people who completed various employment programs, as well as local government and business leaders for their service to the community.

About 500 people attended the South Bay Workforce Investment Board's 29th Annual Alumni Awards Ceremony, which took place last month at the Inuit Dome, the Inglewood home of the Los Angeles Clippers — whose owner, Steve Ballmer, was among those honored during the event.

Ballmer received the Esther Williams Award of Excellence, the workforce agency's highest honor, according to an SBWIB press release. Inglewood Mayor James Butts presented the award to Gillian Zucker, CEO of Halo Sports and Entertainment, who accepted the honor on Ballmer's behalf.

The event also recognized the successes of 21 program graduates and five organizations, including Boeing and West Basin Municipal Water District.

"Every individual we celebrate tonight is a testament to the power of resilience and opportunity," SBWIB Executive Director Jan Vogel said in an address during the event. "When given the right tools and support, people can achieve extraordinary things."

Among the SBWIB alumni who were honored was Lawndale native Maria Salazar Rivera. The Leuzinger High School graduate completed an Aero-Flex pre-apprenticeship program — part of a partnership with SBWIB, El

Camino College and Northrop Grumman Corporation — and then progressed from a high school apprentice to a full-time machining apprentice at Northrop Grumman, which she finished last winter, according to the SBWIB press release. She did that while also pursuing an engineering degree at Cal Poly Pomona.

During her speech, Rivera thanked the workforce agency and its partners for giving her the tools to "succeed and emphasized the importance of continuous learning," according to the SBWIB press release.

Inglewood resident Abdul Robertson, another program graduate, also spoke during the Nov. 21 event. Robertson sought help from the South Bay One-Stop Employment Service Center, and with guidance from SBWIB, he eventually finished project management and human resources certifications at the University of La Verne, the press release said. SBWIB provided Robertson with a laptop, which allowed him to update his resume, attend interviews and get employed in a leadership role, the press release said.

"Why waste time living someone else's life," he said, "when you can chart your own path?"

The event, according to the press release, also honored the following organizations for helping SBWIB with its workforce development mission:

West Basin Municipal Water District for hiring youth interns, which offered them career training.

Boeing for connecting suppliers to SBWIB services and work-

ing with SBWIB on pre-apprenticeships in aerospace and advanced manufacturing.

D&W Trucking, Inc., which supported "justice-involved individuals" — which are those who are or have been incarcerated, or are related to such people — with career opportunities.

OSI Systems, Inc., which partnered with SBWIB to place youth in internships that led to permanent employment.

Eravant, a Torrance company that created new federal apprenticeships that "empowered a diverse workforce through on-the-job training."

State Sen. Steven Bradford, meanwhile, received a special award for his decades of public service and support for SBWIB. And Susan Senior, who has spent more than 30 years advocating for workforce development through the California Department of Rehabilitation and serving on the SBWIB board of directors, received the Wayne Spencer Community Service Award.

The SBWIB serves 11 Los Angeles County cities, including Hawthorne, Inglewood, Gardena, Carson, Lawndale, El Segundo, Manhattan Beach, Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, Torrance and Lomita. For the past 42 years, the agency has sought to boost workforce development in the South Bay, including by offering job training and placement services to both youth and adults.

"Our work is about more than just jobs," Vogel said. "It's about transforming lives, strengthening communities, and creating a brighter future for all."



# FUTURE GENERATION

2305 Torrance Blvd. Torrance CA. 90501 | (424) 55