

A4TD's Nugget of Knowledge

November 17, 2020

Greetings Everyone ~ Gratitude for Community

Last week when I started thinking about writing this Nugget message, my intention had been to write something about community and how commitment to community – and community service - can bring diverse groups of people together. I wanted to celebrate our community of SCSEP participants and staff, a diverse group of people connected as one through our belief and engagement in community service activities.

Then, on Friday the 13th no less, circumstances changed here in Vermont which got me thinking about how far we really are willing to go in support of community. Vermont has been very fortunate with respect to our COVID numbers, having just about the lowest percentage of cases and fewest deaths in the nation. Recently, however, we have begun to see an alarming surge in cases, and contact tracing has shown that the large majority of the new cases stemmed from small groups getting together – a family baby shower, an outdoor extended-family picnic, gatherings associated with youth sporting leagues, etc. Consequently, our Governor has just issued a mandate prohibiting multi-household gatherings of any kind, private or public, inside or outside – regardless of size, social distancing, and use of masks. He also wants people to avoid activities like walking with neighbors and friends who are outside of one's household, even while wearing masks. It's a severe form of temporary social isolation intended to nip this new surge in the bud. Unfortunately, it also is putting a major crimp into the Thanksgiving plans of many Vermonters.

We were going to have our immediate family here for a total of only 7 people, but now my one son, his wife and our grandkids won't be coming as they are a different household. My neighbor's immediate family of nine (in 3 households) had planned to celebrate outside around a fire pit. Now cancelled. Across the state, all of a sudden we are being asked to put the brakes on even the smallest social gatherings – even though folks are good about wearing masks, keeping their distance and washing hands. This may be happening to you as well where you live. I guess you could say the Governor is practicing tough love and playing the long game.

Up until now, it has been easy to care for our community of Vermonters. As I said, most people have been wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and sanitizing hands and surfaces. We

could feel good about our community support without having to endure much sacrifice. Now, however, the rubber is hitting the road, and the question has become one of how much each of us is truly willing to sacrifice for the safety and wellbeing of our community.

You have already heard many stories about my Dad. He, like many of your parents, was a member of the “greatest generation”. They lived not only through the Depression but also through World War II, and they knew what it meant to sacrifice for the greater good. Rationing, curfews, blackout curtains, scrap drives, bond drives, women working in factories, victory gardens – not to mention enlisting to go off to war - so many people across the U.S. committed themselves to honoring these demands and restrictions. They did so because they understood in the long run it was what was needed for the safety and security of their neighbors and their fellow countrymen – their small and large communities. I think my Dad’s temperament was probably similar to many of his generation; he was a man of few wants and I rarely saw him demonstrate any significant degree of self-interest. Indeed, during one of the many, many “meaning of life” walks and talks I had with him, I asked him the big “why are we here” question. He paused and then responded, saying *‘we are here to help other people, because there will always be someone who needs our help.’*

So now, here in Vermont we are being challenged to truly sacrifice to help others, to be of service to our community. This challenge truly tests our sense of community. What does community mean to us? What are we willing to do for our community? How much do we truly appreciate our community? At the same time, it helps remind us that we aren’t islands, that we are and always will be part of something bigger than ourselves.

I’m reminded of the quote, *“To the world you might be one just one person, but to one person you just might be the world.”* Our sacrifice doesn’t have to be of the WWII type to be



TO THE WORLD YOU MIGHT BE JUST ONE PERSON, BUT TO ONE PERSON
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meaningful; there are so many little things each of us can do to support our communities. Just as in your training, where your contributions at your host agency benefit the community it serves.

Whether it is missing family at Thanksgiving or simply wearing a mask, every little thing we do has a ripple effect, a wide-ranging impact on our communities of family, friends, neighbors, fellow citizens, and even the critters and creatures that

share our space. I believe that our respect and care for our community and our willingness to do something for another – human or animal – not out of self-interest but rather in the interest of service to our community, is the hallmark of what makes us compassionate human beings. I further believe that when life seems bleakest, as has been the case in 2020, this humanity is

what will support us, guide us, give us hope and keep us moving forward with a positive eye toward the future.

Thanksgiving is almost here, and despite the challenges of 2020, it nonetheless doesn't take much to look around and see our broader community and all the sacrifices that so many are making to allow our everyday lives to continue in a safe and healthy manner. Medical professionals, delivery drivers, Amazon workers, restaurant workers, grocery store employees, shop clerks, utility workers, thoughtful friends and neighbors and so many others, I am grateful for them all. And here at A4TD, we are grateful for you and your commitment to the diverse communities that you serve as part of your SCSEP training.

I wish you and yours a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Read on and enjoy.

An Exciting and Important Announcement . . .

When COVID 19 disrupted most of the training opportunities for our SCSEP participants in March of 2020, no one expected the situation to last this long. We are pleased that during this time we have been able to offer you paid sick leave as part of our emergency protocols developed in response to COVID 19. Yet we can't forget that the purpose of SCSEP is to provide occupational skills and workplace experience training that will prepare you, our participants, to find employment.

For these past several months, A4TD management has been working hard to establish new training options for you that would allow us to lift these emergency protocols and give you the opportunity to restart paid training. The goal has been to develop a plan to get you back to a "new normal" form of the SCSEP training experience.

So, drumroll please, we are very glad to introduce and share with you the exciting news that we are now offering you an alternative training option that will allow you to move forward in your search for employment. Called "***remote non-community service assignment (CSA) training***", this is a very big step toward a return to normalcy for our program. (If you don't already know, "community service assignment" (CSA) refers to your training for your host agency.)

Our preference has always been for our participants to return to their Community Service Assignment training at their host agency, either in person at the host agency location, or remotely from the participant's home. However, this isn't always possible or safe, so this

remote non-CSA assignment training provides a great alternative. Participant safety has always been our priority, and we have developed this new **remote NON-CSA training** option with your safety in mind. We think it is a great option and believe you will enjoy this opportunity to resume training.

As its name implies, **remote non-CSA training** will take place remotely and allow you to train from home. The training, however, is unrelated to your host agency. Training topics will include digital literacy and computer skills, job search skills, job readiness, and industry specific credentials. While it is much easier to engage in these training options if you have computer access, we are also making available training options in a workbook format for those lacking technology. Ultimately this **remote non-CSA training** provides a wonderful opportunity to prepare you for the many “work from home” jobs that are now available in the job market.

Some important details:

- A4TD will be lifting our emergency protocols, so paid sick leave will no longer be available. Instead, participants will now have three options for paid training; you may choose to do a combination of these:
 1. Traditional paid community service assignment training, done on-site at your host agency;
 2. Paid community service assignment training, for your host agency, but done remotely at your home;
 3. Paid **remote non-CSA training**, not related to your host agency, done remotely from your home.
- These training options will be available for you starting on the beginning of your pay period, as follows:
 1. For New York and Vermont participants, they will begin on December 7, 2020;
 2. For Connecticut, Maine and Pennsylvania participants, they will begin on December 14, 2020.
- You will need to submit a timesheet in order to be paid.

Your A4TD staff contacts will work closely with you as we roll out these changes to get you back into a meaningful training experience. Meanwhile, our focus will remain on offering you safe, valuable and effective training in spite of the restrictions imposed by COVID 19.

Some Cool Life Hacks . . .

Feeling stressed? Let's make life a little easier for you with these cool life hacks!

- Does microwaving your pizza usually result in a chewy crust? Try putting a small amount of water in a glass in the microwave with your pizza.
- Do you struggle when holding a nail to hammer between your fingers? Use a clothespin to grip the nail instead!



- Want a mess free, symmetrical pancake? Put the pancake batter in a cleaned out ketchup bottle and squeeze to dispense.
- Here's a novel way to eat a cupcake – turn it into a sandwich! Slice it in half, flip over the bottom section, and place it on top of the icing on the top half! Yum!



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Staying Fit at home – physically and mentally . . .

After eating those cupcakes and pancakes, you may want to gently exercise, or to meditate on the beauty and power of carbohydrates and sugar. Either way, here is a link to some great – and free – yoga, meditation and Pilates classes.

<https://www.glo.com/fromourhearts>

Participant Spotlight . . .

Terri Usherwood is a SCSEP participant in A4TD's Syracuse, New York subregion. She has always had an interest in social work, and earlier in her working years spent some time working in the field. Then she was sidelined by a back injury.

Fast forward to the summer of 2019 when a friend (and SCSEP participant) referred her to A4TD. Terri enrolled in SCSEP in July of 2019 and was placed at the Altamont Program in Syracuse to receive training as a general office clerk. As someone who believes her God given purpose is to help others, Terri was thrilled that her placement at Altamont gave her the opportunity to finally and truly follow her passion.

The Altamont Program is a 34-bed program that provides clinical services and transitional housing for Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. It offers these individuals case management services, training in basic life skills, counseling and assistance in obtaining employment. As part of her SCSEP training at Altamont, Terri has played an active role in case management and recreational counseling, focusing on facilitating group activities such as art groups and some addiction / recovery / relapse groups.

Because of the hundreds of hours Terri has put in on these activities, she became eligible to pursue certification as a Recovery Coach. She then enrolled in a 10-day training program in Plattsburgh, NY for this purpose, and in August of 2020 she received her certification from the Recovery Coach Academy. She hopes to pursue her New York State certification in early 2021.

When Terri enrolled in SCSEP, she hadn't been meaningfully employed for a few years. She lacked computer skills, job readiness skills, and felt like her options were limited by age. Now, 16 months later, she is very close to being able to secure her dream job. She says that A4TD and SCSEP have given her "everything", including the confidence, training and opportunity to work supporting homeless veterans. She now feels she has the knowledge, education, people skills, experience and credentials to work as a recovery coach, and her contacts in the field tell her there is a high demand for people to fill these positions. The final piece of the puzzle for Terri is computer skills training – which she is focusing on now. We are pleased to be supporting Terri's launch into her new career field!

(We'd love to showcase you and your SCSEP experience. How do you feel about your community service assignment at your host agency? Would you like to talk about the important services you are providing through your training? What has SCSEP meant for you? Please share!)

A Training Tidbit . . .

Resume building, step 4:



In the past three Nuggets I asked you:

- a) To complete various exercises in order to gain clarity about your skills, talents and gifts, with the invitation to begin crafting your Summary of Qualifications; AND
- b) To list the places where you worked for the past 10 or 15 years, with location, job title and dates of employment; AND most recently
- c) To list the skills you used in each job with examples of accomplishments you achieved using those skills.

So, now that you've begun to identify your skills – both technical and soft skills - let's look at how you can use your skill set to identify and narrow down a list of jobs that fit you and your skills. Many experts recommend that you do this step first before writing your resume.

Traditionally we are used to looking for a particular job title. However, in today's job market, job roles are being consolidated and job titles are changing significantly with wide variations. While the traditional job title may still be out there, you should know many other related jobs exist that use many of the same skills – jobs you may not otherwise think of. For example, a “copywriter” uses many of the same skills as a “content marketer”.

Expanding your job search by incorporating your skills - instead of solely looking for a particular job title – allows you to open up a doorway to a broader set of job titles and opportunities you may not have considered before. Then, once you have identified six or seven jobs that are of interest to you and that match your skill set to a reasonable degree, you can use the job descriptions to help you craft and tailor your resume.

Here are the recommended steps:

1. First, make a list of your skills – technical and soft skills. (You have already begun making this skill list.)
2. Start researching jobs on job boards like Indeed.com or Glassdoor.com by searching using your dream job title. Apply filters to narrow your initial search.

3. As job results pop up, read them to identify ones that are a good fit for you and that match at least some of your skills. Be true to your skills. Save the interesting jobs for later.
4. Next, look at the related jobs – with different job titles - that pop up at the same time. See to what extent any of these jobs match your skills and are of interest to you. Select and save those jobs.
5. As you continue to select new jobs, other related jobs with some matching skills – but with still different job titles - will keep appearing.
6. Continuing reviewing, selecting and saving jobs of interest until you have found seven or eight jobs.

In sum, you will look at various jobs and job titles, identify ones that appeal to you and fit your skills, and then capture the job description. Then, you can use the content of the job description to guide you in writing and customizing your resume for each job and employer.

To learn more about this and other valuable pointers for success in the job search process, I highly recommend this free class:

<https://www.skillshare.com/classes/How-to-Get-a-Job-A-Step-by-Step-Guide-Learn-with-Glassdoor/1296006568?via=list-330>

Work that Brain! . . .



I know it has been awhile since I last shared some brainteasers with you. After all the stressors of this past month - the election, hurricanes, and increasing COVID cases to name but a few – I hope you will enjoy these as a welcome distraction. Enjoy!

Brain Teasers

1. What is the only vegetable or fruit never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh?
2. Can you name six or more things you can wear on your feet that begin with the letter "s"?
3. What is the only fruit that has its seeds on the outside?

Stay tuned for the answers next time. Please feel free to submit your own fun fact or quiz for inclusion in the next Nugget!

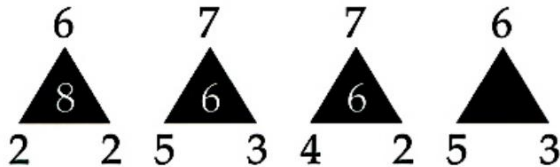
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Here are the answers to our previous challenges:

1. The Empty Triangle:

Question: *What number should be placed in the empty triangle?*

The answer is 3.



SOLUTION: Subtract the bottom left hand number from the top number. Then, multiply the remainder by the bottom right-hand number; the product is the number inside the triangle. (Example, for the top left triangle: $6 - 2 = 4$. $4 \times 2 = 8$)

2. Can you find the homograph that connects the following pairs of words?

The answers are below. (Kudos to Lucille P.)

BED	—	PAPER	(Sheet)
ARMY	—	WATER	(Tank)
TENNIS	—	NOISE	(Racket)
EGYPTIAN	—	MOTHER	(Mummy)
SMOKER	—	PLUMBER	(Pipe)

3. Last time we gave you this little quiz:

“What technique has the Royal Navy used to scare off Somali pirates?”

- a) Dropping shark nets from a helicopter
- b) Dropping tons of liquid bleach from a helicopter
- c) Loudly playing “Oops! I Did it Again”
- d) Shooting them with paintball guns while nude

The answer is: c) Playing loud music. Kudos to Tim S.

Fun fact . . .

Did you know that in 2014 fossils were unearthed in Antarctica that revealed it was once home to the biggest species of penguin ever discovered? The Colossus Penguin – or *Palaeudyptes*



klekowskii – lived 37 to 40 million years ago and stood at 6 feet 8 inches from beak tip to toe. If alive today, this penguin could have looked basketball superstar LeBron James squarely in the eyes. In contrast, the tallest penguin living today – the Emperor penguin – stands on average around 4 feet tall.

In case you need a break . . .

Community takes all forms – even interspecies. Enjoy this short video as an example of the small ways we can make a big difference. *(It’s a little sad but has a happy ending)*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Co_hmLenD8&feature=youtu.be



Now it is time to relax and enjoy some instance relief from stress and anxiety.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79kpoGF8KWU>

A Final Thought . . .

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

~ Mahatma Gandhi.

Ask A4TD . . .

Finally, remember that if you have a comment or a question for A4TD, "reply" to this message and share your thoughts or questions.

Until next time, wishing you the comfort and safety of a caring community, and may your Thanksgiving find you blessed with life's little graces.

Sincerely,

All of us here at A4TD