

## **Myrtle's Closet – A Thrift Store and Learning Together – a brief history of two SAPCC programs.**

In the early days of Springfield Area Parent Child Center, when the agency was still up on Myrtle Street, the idea came about to open up a Thrift Store. The thought behind this venture was to first and foremost provide a worksite for Learning Together, an intensive pre-vocational and educational program that was just being offered at SAPCC. The other benefits were a small income for the center and providing community service work as well as a venue for affordable, gently used quality clothing.

Over the years Myrtle's has moved and grown and transitioned along with us at SAPCC. From its beginning in 2002 at the Myrtle Street location, to the past 10 years here at 2 Main Street in North Springfield it's had a great run as a training facility and community thrift shop. After 13 years of providing job training and a community thrift shop experience, we have decided to close the doors on Friday August 21st for the last time. We find that we have more donations coming into the Thrift Store than sales of clothing going out of the store these days, so it's time to say goodbye to Myrtle's and look to different methods as we move forward. This does not mean that we will no longer provide worksite training experience for our Learning

Together program – we are instead looking to enhance worksite experience with internship placement experience for our participants outside the center to take them to the next level of job preparedness.

Please consider this an invitation for businesses and Community Service organizations to reach out and to partner with us. Our goal will be to have our participants continue to get their level one training in soft skills here at the center in our clerical, culinary and child care worksites, and then be ready for a level two internship out in the community, before they graduate and leave the program.

Worksites that would fit with the skill sets of our participants would be as follows:

- Health Care and Service Organizations
- Retail outlets
- Hospitality & Tourism Venues
- Entry level Clerical positions
- Offsite Child Care/Early Education

If you are interested in supporting our Learning Together program to help us reach our goals of providing intensive job training and education, we welcome you to contact us, set up a time to tour our facility and learn more about the work we do here. And as always we also continue to seek private funding and community collaboration to enhance all of our programs. Please give us a call at 802-886-5242 and ask for Julie Merrill, our Learning Together Coordinator regarding internships or Jan Zona, our Administrative Manager for more information about corporate donations and sponsorships.

On behalf of Myrtle's Closet, we thank everyone that has supported our efforts there over the past 13 years; it's been a great experience for our participants, community partners and shoppers in our surrounding towns. We look forward to creating new community partnerships in the years ahead as we continue to transition to meet the current needs in the towns we serve in South Windsor and North Windham counties.

