



Fletcher Group Partner Success Story

A NEW BEGINNING

PAGE 1

LEARNING THE BIZ IN KY

Entrepreneurial training sponsored in part by the Fletcher Group has helped residents of five Eastern Kentucky recovery centers find a new sense of self-worth and purpose by providing them with the skills and resources to start their own businesses. "There's an abundance of talent within the recovery community," says Fletcher Group Director of Employment Services Lori Baier, "and gaining new entrepreneurial skills has really let that talent shine."



A DIFFERENCE YOU CAN SEE AND FEEL

The program came about through an innovative partnership between the Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED), the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) and The Fletcher Group. After four weeks of online training by SKED Small Business Training Director Amanda Kelly, six teams from five residences developed original business plans and then pitched them to a panel of judges who were highly impressed by the creativity, research, and detail that went into each.

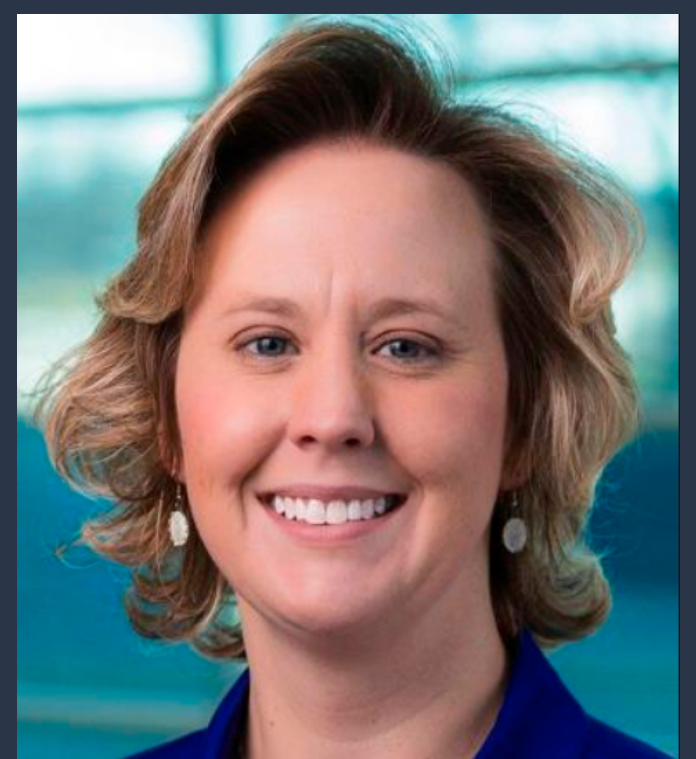
"By exploring opportunities, setting goals and making plans, they learned what it takes to be an entrepreneur and small business owner," said Baier. "It gave them something to get excited about and feel proud of and allowed them to give back to their residences by sharing the profits with them."

ABOUT SKED

The Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation works to enhance quality of life by promoting new business and employment opportunities.

According to Small Business Training Director Amanda Kelly, the partnership with EKCEP and The Fletcher Group is a good example of how new skills can be mastered to grow a business and create meaningful employment.

"I'm just so proud and excited to see where these exciting new ideas take the participants."





Fletcher Group Partner Success Story

A NEW BEGINNING

PAGE 2

A REPLICABLE MODEL

Some residence managers initially feared that starting a business might be distracting or too expensive, says Baier. "But I knew if they gave us a chance, they'd see that learning to run a business is an enhancement, not a distraction." As for replicating the training program elsewhere, Baier suggests that RH operators explore training options by contacting their local economic development agency, workforce board, small business association, or community college.



ABOUT EKCEP

The Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program has promoted the success of local employers and workers for over 50 years. The partnership with SKED and The Fletcher Group is particularly close to Project Director Melissa Quillen's heart.

"This is one of the projects I'm most proud of. Providing this type of training can make all the difference for people struggling to get back on their feet."

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Glowing testimonials from participants attest to the program's value:

- *"Exactly what I needed to fulfill my dreams."*
- *"For the first time, I feel like I can succeed in life."*
- *"I'm a better asset to the community, thanks to this program."*
- *"It helped me step outside my comfort zone and grow in ways I couldn't have otherwise."*
- *"I got more from this than I can put into words."*
- *"It showed we can accomplish anything we set our minds to and that there are people in this world who believe in us."*
- *"Words can't begin to describe how great this has been."*

