

united homecare and sunshine health collaborate for a better south florida

Rebeca C. Trujillo

What began as an in-house project to solve the ever-increasing demand for one company's services during the pandemic has flourished into a burgeoning collaboration between two South Florida healthcare providers seeking to address a shared—and most compelling—need.

Indeed, United HomeCare® (UHC), a Miami-based, 501 (C)(3) non-profit, community-based home health agency, and Sunshine Health (SH), a wholly owned subsidiary of Centene Corporation, one of the largest healthcare plans in Florida, joined forces earlier this year to expand UHC's Learn & Work™ Program as a means to alleviate the escalating shortage of skilled Home Health Aides (HHA) in the area.

As Roger Lopez, Chief Operating Officer at United HomeCare, and Nelson L. Adams III, M.D., Chairman of the Board of Sunshine Health, announced at a recent press conference in Sunshine Health's Lauderhill Center, the joint effort has been making substantial headway, surpassing expectations with more than 100 students graduating from the program so far.

it's not about "me." it's about "we."

Held at a large conference room in Sunshine Health's Lauderhill center, the press conference included the students engaged in the latest Learn & Work™ Program cycle. As he addressed the audience, Dr. Adams spoke to them directly, focusing on the significance of their participation



From left: Bridget Smith, Director of Case Management, Sunshine Health; Dr. Rudolph "Rudy" Moise, founder and Medical Director, Comprehensive Medical Aesthetics in Miami, and member of United HomeCare's Board of Directors; Roger Lopez, COO, United HomeCare; Dr. Nelson L. Adams, Chairman of the Board, Sunshine Health, and Ann Marie Hinds, MSN ARNP-BC, Learn & Work™ Program Instructor.

in the program.

"The thing that resonates with me is something that doesn't come back: a missed opportunity," he said. "You, soon-to-be-graduates, didn't miss this opportunity. To do what? I'm glad you asked. To serve. To help somebody."

His inspirational speech continued to touch the students, as he emphasized the magnitude of the care the students will be providing, especially to the elderly, upon their successful completion of the program.

"It is not about 'me.' It's about 'we.' The folks at United HomeCare get it. The folks at Sunshine Health get it, too. No man, no woman, no institution is an island. We can't do this work by ourselves. We need

each other. And the long and short of it is that as we age, we need help."

"The focus of the work you will be doing," Dr. Adams added, "is to help those who have more runway behind them than ahead. And I'm here to do one thing and one thing only, and that is to thank you for recognizing that you are the ones we've been waiting for."

an opportunity not to be missed

The individuals participating in the Learn & Work™ Program acknowledge that they are experiencing a highly advantageous opportunity, a double boon that could dramatically transform their lives: first, the prospect to be trained for skills that are in

high demand in this market—and for that fact, throughout the country—and secondly, having a job at United HomeCare upon graduation.

Such is the case of Pascale Raymonds, who is fluent in English, Spanish and Creole, as well as Hernan Saenz Lozada and Rosani Irias, who are proficient in English and Spanish.

these new skills to work providing care services to our community's home-bound disabled and elderly residents.

Dr. Adams' mention of an "opportunity not to be missed" refers to the fact that most of the Learn & Work™ students are unemployed or underemployed individuals from some of the area's most disadvantaged and

agency" in the state of Florida.

Conducted by instructor Ann Marie Hinds, MSN ARNP-BC, a family nurse practitioner with extensive experience in urgent and chronic care, the course imparts the fundamental procedures that guide home health aides' work with patients. HHAs-in-training gain significant care giving skills that are in high

The graduation of the latest 2023 class of UHC's Learn & Work Program™ sheds light on a groundbreaking initiative which provides home health aide training—without charge—to underemployed South Floridians and provides employment with United HomeCare upon a successful completion of the course to meet the increasing demand for at-home care services.

As part of the latest Learn & Work™ group of 15 trainees, Misses Irias and Raymonds and Mr. Saenz Lozada addressed the audience during the press conference, thanking United HomeCare and Sunshine Health for the chance to train as home health aides. They also spoke about looking forward to putting

underserved neighborhoods. The program and subsequent employment opportunities would have a significant impact on the trainees' future.

Training through the Learn & Work™ Program is provided free of charge by United HomeCare, which is now, by statute, the only "teaching

demand in most South Florida communities.

HHAs are tasked with monitoring the condition of their patients, in large part individuals with disabilities or chronic illnesses, reporting any health concerns to the case manager, and assisting the patients with daily living activities, such as



From left: Hernan Saenz Lozada and Pascal Raymonds, HHA trainees participating in the Learn & Work™ Program, addressed the audience and shares their experiences and their hopes for the future with this training. UHC's Manuel Sierra spoke of the trainees' dedication and hard work during the intensive, week-long course.

MIAMIEMPRESARIAL