



## **Geralyn Rapp** ***Job Seeker of the Month***

A resident of Emerson, Ga., Geralyn Rapp worked for an engineering company for 12 years, surviving periodic layoffs and downsizing. In May 2009, her company announced it was eliminating 26 percent of its workforce, and this time she was one of them.

“This was my first experience with being let go from a job,” said Rapp. “Though mentally I knew it wasn’t performance-related – wasn’t personal – emotionally it was devastating.”

Geralyn’s day-to-day life, her sense of success and even self-worth revolved in large part around her job. Now she took up a new job – finding work. She threw herself into researching and learning about the hiring process. She realized a lot had changed since she was last in the job market and she began studying resume writing, interview etiquette and using job search engines. She found the best resume keywords, attended job fairs, looked into classes that would improve her skill set and took every opportunity to network.

In less than a year, Geralyn filled out more than 90 job applications and received only four invitations to interviews. She did everything she could think of and everything career advisors suggested, all to no avail.

“They say the longer you are unemployed, the harder it is to find work. After eight months of job searching, that was coming true for me,” said Geralyn. “I was so frustrated. I hadn’t used my job skills in so long that I wondered if maybe I was losing them. Was I becoming unemployable?”

Then in February 2010, Geralyn was at the Cartersville Department of Labor Career Center when she came across a Georgia Work Ready assessment flyer. She discussed it with the career center, visited the website, took a series of sample questions online and immediately signed up to take the assessment.

“As I completed the assessment, I remember feeling so happy that my brain was still functional,” said Geralyn. “But when the proctor told me I earned a gold certificate, I was elated. It was the push I needed to rebuild my self-confidence.”

Soon after taking the assessment, Geralyn was invited to another job interview. This time she went armed with her Work Ready Certificate, her newfound confidence and even a new interview outfit bought with the \$100 debit card she received for earning her certificate. In April 2010, just two months after taking the Work Ready assessment, she was offered a position as a Career Advisor with the Cartersville Department of Labor.

“Before taking the Work Ready assessment, I learned that 300 people were applying for the same positions that I was,” said Geralyn. “I knew I needed something on my resume to make me stand out. My Work Ready Gold Certificate did just that.”

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Geralyn attributes much of her employment success to the Georgia Work Ready assessment, both in terms of its worth and its ability to revitalize discouraged job seekers. She actively shares her story with other job seekers and tries to impress upon them the benefits of being Work Ready Certified.

Geralyn plans to improve her certificate level by following through with Work Ready skills gap training in order to achieve the platinum level.