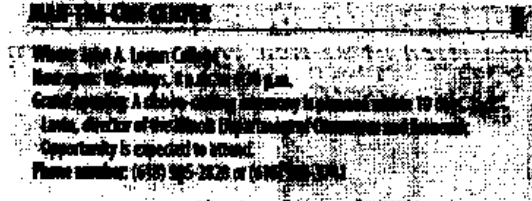


HELP: *New center helping non-traditional students feel comfortable*

FROM PAGE 1

come back to school. I wasn't sure where I would fit in, I mean, I'm way older than most of the other students," said Winters, a Pittsburg native. "I've gotten lost many a time and I'm just on my third day here. But for 15 years, I used my muscles. Now I'm ready to use my mind."

Helping Winters — and others — use their minds is among the chief aims of the newly opened Man-Tra-Con Center on the campus of John A. Logan College. The center provides a place for former Maytag employees and others facing similar challenges to "feel comfortable, and thanks



to the services we offer, feel more capable about going back to school," said Man-Tra-Con executive director Kathy Lively.

The center opened before the start of the spring semester and will provide services for more than 300 dislocated workers, including 210 former Maytag employees.

The non-traditional students can visit the center — located in the space at the front of the main building that previously housed an aerobic center — to complete necessary paperwork, receive tutoring and learn study skills, as well as to socialize and commiserate.

"This gives them a place to come before or after classes, a place where they can talk to their former coworkers who are going through the same experiences. It will help them know they aren't alone," said Larry Peterson, JALC vice president for administration.

"The center is easily accessible with its own entrance from the outside. It gives them a unique door into the institution that will make for a smooth transition."

Some students already have taken advantage of the center's tutoring services, and more are expected to as the semester continues, said Marydot Pinto, who tutors students in English, social studies and study skills.

"They are afraid they've forgotten everything they learned in high school," she said. "The world they had

prepared for no longer exists, so I need to help them prepare to function in the world as it is today. It's a matter of helping them use their life experiences to develop, rebuild or regain their skills."

The center is also a contact point for some of the students taking part in the Maytag Mentor program that pairs up students with faculty, staff or administration at the college.

Deana Smith, secretary to the college's dean for instruction, is acting as a mentor to a 50-year-old student.

"It was scary enough for me to come here right after high school, so I can't imagine how overwhelming it must be to come back as an adult," she said. "I'm here to give the person assigned to me someone to talk to, help her in whatever way I can, or give her a pat on the back. I want her to know what the college can do for her — what it has to offer."

Donna Allsopp, 42, who worked at Maytag for 10 years, is excited about her future prospects at the college. The Pittsburg woman, whose husband also worked at Maytag, is seeking a degree in the medical field.

"I've wanted to go back to school for a while. I can't tell you the number of times I heard people at work say, 'If I had the opportunity to go back to school, I would.'"

"And now we're getting the chance," she said.

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THE SOUTHERN ILLINOISAN TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2007

TUMS: *Workshops to be scheduled*

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better life for themselves — a life with more sustaining wages."

Phil Minnis, dean for workforce development and community education at John

A. Logan College, said for the most part, the displaced workers are making smooth transitions to the college classroom.

"Certainly, some students are a little apprehensive because they've not been in college before and the full classrooms can be a little intimidating," Minnis said. "But we have mentors available to help them if needed. Logan is all about the students. Whatever it takes to make them feel comfortable and succeed is what we will do."

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