

New Care Worker Training Academy Opens

Phil Senff sits with Charlie, a fully weighted and jointed training dummy, in the Arizona Caregiver Academy classroom.



A rizona Caregiver Academy announces plans to begin open enrollment in January 2012. Located in the Scottsdale Airpark, Arizona Caregiver Academy (ACA) is opening its doors to meet the state of Arizona's new education and training requirements for all direct care workers. Available as an extension of training departments, ACA works with direct care and in-home care employers to educate their employees across the state. With a rolling class schedule, employers can be assured that ACA will have scheduled classes available for new hires as well as established employees looking to expand and hone their skills, said founder and CEO Phil Senff.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 41 percent increase in in-home care jobs over the next 10 years. Senff said he takes a great pride in the new training academy. "We are training compassionate people to provide superior care for the less able—all the while bolstering each caregiver's ability to maintain job security and provide for their personal families. It is a win-win situation all around," said Senff.

ACA offers a class in care-giving fundamentals, level 2 classes in "aging and physical disabilities" and "developmental disabilities," as well as training in first aid and CPR. Direct care workers, or DCWs, refers to all direct support professionals, caregivers, personal assistants or attendants. Some of the many roles they may have include home-care aide, rehabilitation technician, or classroom aide. DCWs interested in obtaining the training and required certification should contact employers directly, as ACA is only open for employed care workers as an extension of their employers' training. Currently, ACA can only accept student registrations through their employers.

The academy is a natural extension of Senff's other business venture, Comfort Keepers, a multinational in-home care franchise. "We've been doing this level of training since we opened; it's not new to us," said Senff, who owns more franchise territories than any other operator in the Comfort Keeper system and oversees about 100 caregivers. "We wanted to open this up to not just our people but to our competitors. We want them to get really good training."

Cost for classes is \$150 individually, or \$250 for the fundamentals program packaged with a specialty class (both are required for certification). Each class takes two days. There is a \$75 half-day, test-out option if an employer vouches for students with previous training/ extensive experience, but those who don't pass must attend class. Online training is available, although skills classes must be completed onsite.

The Arizona Caregiver Academy is at 7600 E. Redfield Road, Suite 110. More: 480-559-6490; www.arizonacaregiveracademy.com. ■

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