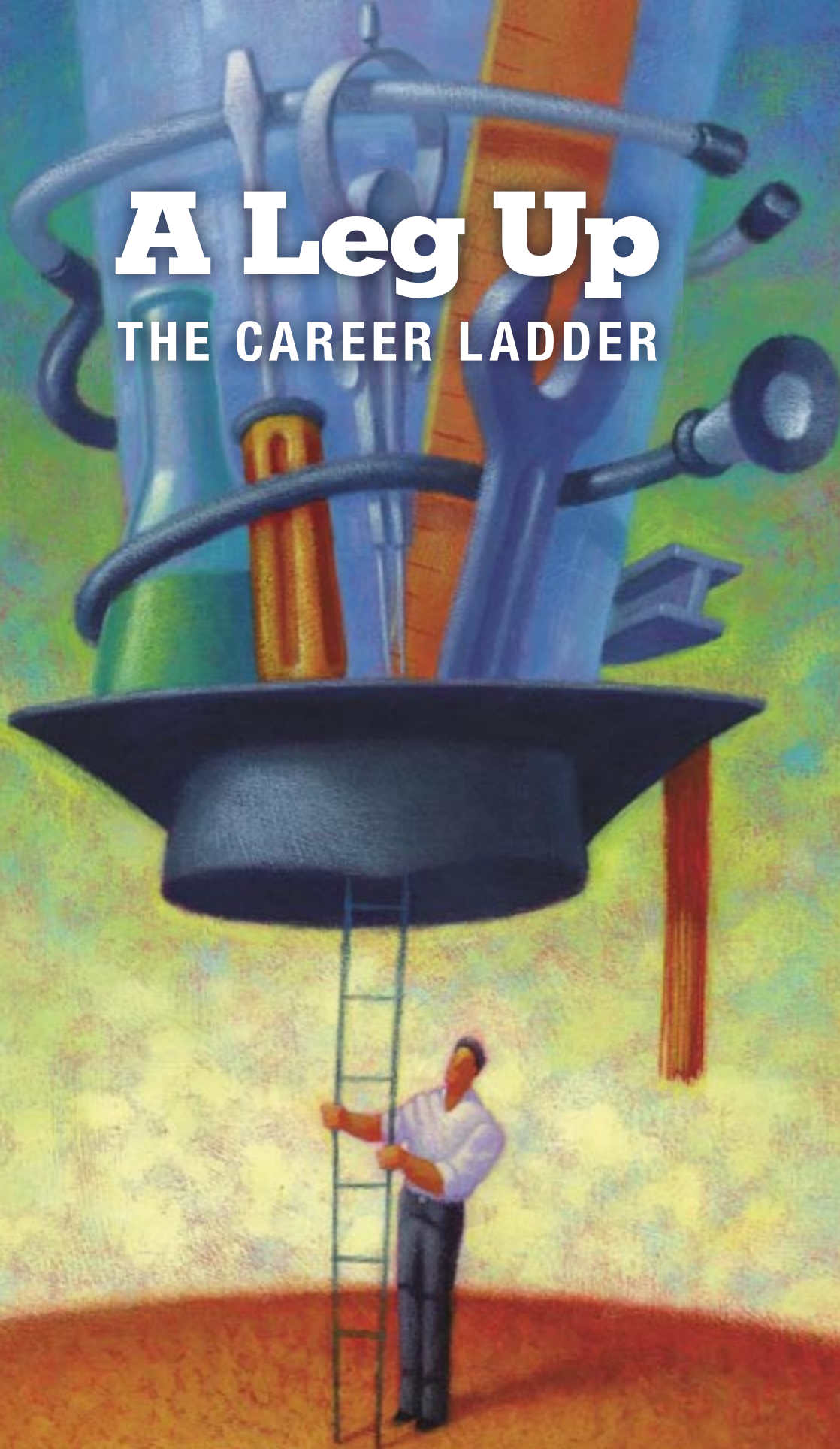


# A Leg Up

## THE CAREER LADDER



**“At a time when qualified staff are in short supply and hospitals are challenged to hire and retain the best and brightest personnel, a program like “School at Work” can produce huge dividends for the entire organization.”**

— Larry Kloess, CEO of Centennial Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn.



**The School at Work program is designed to help entry-level HCA employees achieve their full potential—while their facilities reap the benefits of having a highly skilled, homegrown workforce.**

Like many young adults, Marcos Flores knew he needed a college degree to improve his quality of life, but he didn't have the time or money to make it happen. He had decided to take a break after graduating high school and before he knew it, 10 years had flown by and he found himself working a full-time job and living paycheck to paycheck.

While he enjoyed his position at JFK Medical Center in Atlantis, Fla., the then-28-year-old knew there had to be more to life—he just wasn't sure how to obtain it. Then he found out about the School at Work<sup>®</sup> (SAW) “Building a Career Ladder in Healthcare” program, which equips entry-level healthcare workers with the skills and knowledge they need to transition into clinical, clerical and support positions (see chart on page 16). Marcos is one of about 20 employees at JFK and 60 HCA-affiliated employees nationwide currently participating.

“I always wanted to go to college, but never took that extra step,” says Marcos, now 29 and supervisor for transport and security at the hospital. “If not for the School at Work program, I probably would have continued working merely to pay the bills every month, without ever getting ahead.”

### **Back to School**

In January 2004, Marcos began taking a two-hour “Introduction to Healthcare” class each week that refreshed his basic grammar, math and writing skills and took his computer skills to a new level. Once the introductory course was complete, he began a second course called “Becoming a Healthcare Professional,” which included sessions on medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, and building effective interpersonal/organizational skills.

Now that he has completed the SAW program, Marcos is taking prerequisites for an associate's degree in nursing and plans to earn his bachelor's degree four or five years from now. Beyond that . . . the sky is the limit.

## **“A Dream Come True”**

BY ANNA SKAE-CALDWELL

Centennial Medical Center

Nashville, Tenn.

I came to the United States from Malawi, a country in central Africa, 18 years ago. As a child, I loved to read and wanted to go to school, but my father told me school was for boys. He said my job was to cook and clean, so I had only an elementary-level education when I arrived in America.

As the years passed and I had children, I became more frustrated and embarrassed by my lack of education. When my daughter, Leticia, was in high school, I wanted to help her with her homework but didn't know how.

Then during a staff meeting in spring 2004, my director told us about a new program available through HCA called School at Work (SAW). At first I was scared because I didn't have a high school diploma and felt I didn't know much. But I ended up doing just as well as those with high school diplomas, which gave me confidence and encouraged me that I could go on and do something else with my life.

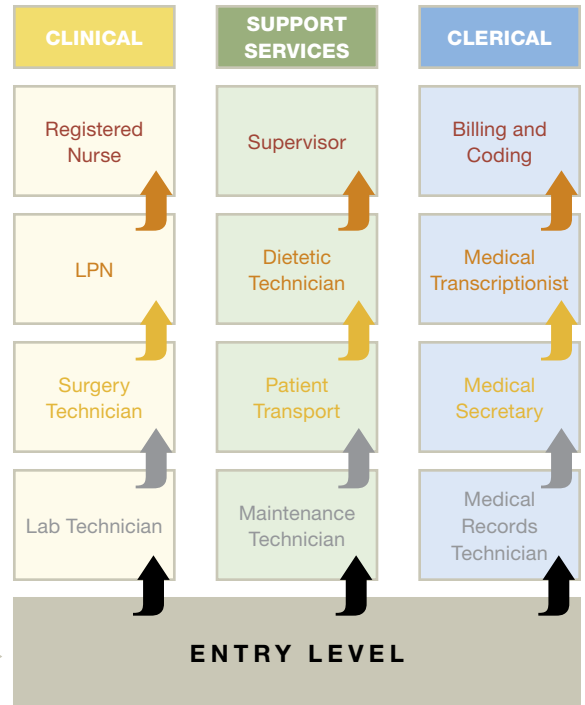
Before I enrolled in SAW, I was nervous to talk to people because I thought my English wasn't very good. Thanks to this program, I can now speak with confidence. I earned my GED this year and will enroll in college courses at Volunteer State Community College. In three years, I hope to be a radiology technician. It will be a dream come true for me.



Jack O. Bovender, Jr., chairman and CEO of HCA, and Emily DeRocco, assistant secretary for employment and training of the U.S. Department of Labor, gathered with School at Work participants Glenda Merrell and Anna Skae-Caldwell to celebrate HCA's workforce development efforts.

## Prepare for Career Takeoff

School at Work can launch you on the path to a higher-paying position through one of these career ladders.



### Three Ways SAW Can Help Your Hospital

**1** Reduces shortage of qualified employees. One-third of School at Work (SAW) students enroll in local continuing education programs within 90 days of completing the SAW session, and 67 percent of these students enroll in a health-care-related certificate or degree program.

**2** Encourages diversity in the workplace. In a typical SAW class, 50 to 70 percent of the students are non-Caucasians. For organizations seeking to increase diversity within their clinical and management staffs, SAW is an excellent opportunity to help.

**3** Supports retention and lessens employee-turnover costs. Hospitals spend millions each year in turnover costs for support employees and non-nursing clinical employees.

For more information, visit [www.schoolatwork.com](http://www.schoolatwork.com).

“I could easily envision Marcos as a chief nursing officer one day,” says Terry Eggenberger, program director for workforce and organizational development at JFK Medical Center. “He’s a perfect example of someone who recognized a wonderful opportunity and is making the most of it.”

### Building a Stronger Company, One Colleague at a Time

Piloted in 2002, SAW is helping people at hospitals nationwide. Select HCA-affiliated facilities began participating in 2004. To initially launch the program, the U.S. Department of Labor provided funding and participating HCA-affiliated hospitals provided classroom space and computers, as well as a SAW coach to monitor the students’ progress. The hospitals also paid for each participant’s time while he or she was in class—a small price for a skilled, loyal employee.

“We have a lot of great employees at the entry level who are committed, productive people,” says Thao Nelson, organizational effectiveness manager for HCA. “School at Work allows us to address the shortage of qualified workers while taking a closer look at a talent pool that’s not yet utilized to their full potential.”

Since HCA implemented the program, the company has helped more than 100 employees climb the career ladder to higher-paying jobs and a higher quality of life. While these figures are impressive, Nelson says statistics don’t quite tell the full story.

“The impact of this program simply cannot be measured in numbers,” she says. “Lives are being affected—that’s why School at Work is so valuable.”

To learn more about School at Work or to find out how your facility can get involved, call (502) 584-7337.