



SUCCESS STORY

C I S C O A C K N O W L E D G E S S U C C E S S A N D A C C O M P L I S H M E N T S

Cisco Networking Academy™ Program Helps Sandra Oberlies Turn Technology Knack to Career Path

After completing her third year of college, Sandra Oberlies ran out of money. She decided to take a break and work until she could afford to finish her degree. When she became pregnant with her first child, Sandra put her educational plans on hold. During the next several years she had two more children, and her family became her number one priority.

As a single mom of three, Sandra began working several jobs to make ends meet. She was a full-time library assistant at University of California-Riverside. She taught religious studies at her church, and sold Amway and Aloette Cosmetics on the side. After discovering she had a natural talent for technology, she eventually launched a small consulting and Web site design business.

Sandra was running herself ragged. She wanted one technology job to enable her to support and spend more time with her family, but she couldn't get her dream job without a formal education. When her long-time friend Michael Carter suggested she investigate the Cisco Networking Academy™ Program, her initial thought was that it might be too expensive or time-consuming.

“Other programs were offered on weekdays or took up entire weekends, which didn't work for someone with a full-time job and kids,” she says. “The Networking Academy program classes were offered two evenings per week for three hours each night. I could work this into my schedule, and the price was right.”

Sandra enrolled in the 10-course program, designed to teach students the Internet technology skills they need to design, build and maintain computer networks. Michael, the regional academy manager and instructor, was impressed at how quickly his friend caught onto the concepts in class.

“She was a quick learner and a natural leader in the classroom,” he recalls. “The program is taught at a very fast pace, yet Sandra not only learned the material, but also helped her classmates understand it.”

Michael suggested that Sandra not only continue in the Networking Academy program student course, but also enroll in the instructor course. She was soon juggling both the student and instructor curriculums in her already hectic schedule. Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa Regional Occupational Program (CRY-ROP) sponsored her. By the end of the student course, Sandra took over as the instructor for the final student course, teaching her former classmates.





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Last year, Sandra became an instructor in the Networking Academy provided by CRY-ROP at Colton High School in Colton, Calif. She currently teaches one course, two nights a week, to students ranging from high school students to adults who need additional skills for their current jobs or who are changing or launching careers.

“She’s able to apply the curriculum to real life, which makes her a great instructor,” explains Linda Denver, ROP manager and Sandra’s supervisor. “She provides hands-on instruction and offers real-life examples of work she’s done in the industry.”

Sandra isn’t the type to rest on her laurels. She continues to take classes for her permanent teaching credentials, and plans to earn a college degree in computer science and religious studies. She also continues to work as a library assistant and does technical consulting work on the side.

When she’s not working, Sandra enjoys spending time with her children: Matthew, 7; Michelle, 10; and Kevin, 15. Kevin, a sophomore at Colton High School, is proud of his mother’s accomplishments and has expressed interest in the Networking Academy program.



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