



**SPOKANE EASTSIDE
REUNION ASSOCIATION**
TAX ID# 45-2464484

3001 E 5th Avenue
Spokane, WA 99202

T- (509) 768-4989

E- ksutula@spokaneeastsidereunionassociation.com
URL- www.spokaneeastsidereunionassociation.com

Dear Spokane Business Owner,

My name is Karen Sutula. I am the Social Enterprise and Community Outreach Coordinator for the Spokane Eastside Reunion Association (SERA), a local 501c3 non-profit. I am writing to let you know about our programs and to ask you to partner with us in our mission to build community and bring hope for the future to the teens in our region. All we ask of our business partners is that you keep us informed of any job openings as well as interview and consider hiring graduates from our program.

Our non-profit has programs for the youth in our community designed to give them a hand up and help them along the path to a successful future. One of those programs is job training for teens 14 to 18 years old at our social enterprise restaurant, Fresh Soul. If you haven't eaten at Fresh Soul yet, I highly encourage you to do so. Our delicious soul food includes BBQ ribs, fried chicken, collard greens, red beans and rice, and is sure to satisfy your southern food cravings. We are located at 3029 E 5th Ave. in the East Central neighborhood and online at freshsoulrestaurant.com.

The SERA job training program at Fresh Soul is a unlike any other youth workforce development program in the United States. The program accepts 4 to 6 teens in 12-week terms starting in early March and continuing through mid-December. Each term starts with a Monday evening orientation that must be attended by the participant and their parent or guardian. During orientation, we explain the program, the expectations for the participant, and our rules for the parents. The following two Saturdays from 10am to 3:30pm, the crew is in the classroom learning the work flow of our restaurant. We teach them front-of-house and back-of-house positions while emphasizing teamwork, proper technique, great customer service, respect for your supervisors and managers, accountability, responsibility, and a good work ethic. They also earn their food worker's card. The following 10 weeks of the program has them working in the restaurant for 8 to 15 hours a week depending on their school schedules and attending an hour and a half class each Saturday morning where they learn important life skills. Our Saturday morning life skills curriculum comes in part from our partnership with Numerica Credit Union. The teens learn about personal finance like how to have a bank account, how to budget and build a savings account, what is a credit score and why it is important. We also cover topics like SMART goals, online and social media safety, civic duty, and we even have a drug and alcohol counselor come in and talk with them about the dangers of substance abuse. At the end of the term, we have a graduation ceremony and dinner for the participants and their families.

Our program is as demanding as it is rewarding. Participants are expected to show up and put in their best effort every shift. They are held accountable with rules like always be at least 15 minutes early, if you have time to lean you have time to clean, take pride in your work and always do your best. They also must keep up their grades and complete 15 hours of community service for a non-profit 501c3. Our graduates take with them a new found self-confidence with an understanding of hard work and a healthy respect for management. They understand what is expected of them by employers in real-world jobs. We believe the good habits and strong work ethic they develop in our program helps them to be good employees for businesses like yours.

Our program doesn't stop at graduation. We continue to offer support and resources to all our graduates who want it. We offer tutoring, if needed, to help them complete high school. We have relationships with the local community colleges, 4-year colleges, and apprenticeship and trade programs. If a graduate wants to continue their education, we can help them get into and complete a degree or program. We even have scholarships available! And we are always expanding our partnership with local businesses who are interested in hiring our graduates.

We would love for you to partner with us and be part of the network of local businesses who hire our graduates. If you agree, we will add your business name and the contact information for you and your hiring manager to our database. We will also add some general information about your business like the types of job opportunities within your company, what is the minimum age you are able to hire, and what types of skills those jobs require. Then, when we have a graduate looking for employment, we can match them to your business. Next, we will contact you or your hiring manager to see if you currently have any openings and let you know that one of our graduates will be applying for a position. You can also contact us at any time you are hiring, and we will reach out to our graduates with your job description.

We know that finding qualified and hardworking employees has become more difficult after the pandemic. Businesses need to utilize many resources to fill their open positions. Let SERA and our job training program be one of those resources. Together we can bring hope and build a stronger community in the Spokane area. To partner with us, please fill out the online form at <https://forms.monday.com/forms/818ee494134650a0f380c995c1eee5bc?r=use1>. You will be added to the database of our business partners. When we have a graduate looking for employment, we may reach out to see if you are hiring. We also encourage you to reach out to us when hiring. We can send an email to our graduates list letting them know about the open position. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or stop by Fresh Soul.

Sincerely,

Karen Sutula
Social Enterprise and Community Impact Coordinator
Spokane Eastside Reunion Association
ksutula@spokaneeastsidereunionassociation.com
(509) 768-4989