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**Patrece Scott**
**WLS Stamping**
Machine Operator/Tool and Die Apprentice

Story produced by:
The Ohio Manufacturers' Association

# Committed to Making a Change

## *Patrece Scott's Manufacturing Success Story*

Patrece Scott, 31, and mother of three young children, was working in a low-wage health care industry job, which, to her, was not fulfilling nor did she see a path for growth.

While in a mindset of being open to change, she responded to a manufacturing-based workforce opportunity through a northeast Ohio workforce and social services organization administered by Towards Employment. It was called ACCESS to Manufacturing Careers (or "WorkAdvance" in other Ohio regions).

### Towards Employment

Towards Employment's role is recruiting, screening, and coordinating the initial training of enrollees in ACCESS to Manufacturing Careers, which is equal parts soft skills and technical training to prepare individuals for success in entry-level manufacturing positions.

"What we noticed in Patrece in our early screening process was her desire to learn more, to want to give it a shot," said Haidee Garcia, Towards Employment senior manager of Industry Partnerships. "And then when we had her in training, she just excelled."

ACCESS is a proven model developed by MAGNET, an Ohio manufacturing industry sector partnership and growth consultant, geared to populating the manufacturing workforce with underrepresented jobseekers.

"Companies are joining the table because they realize they get a person who has some basic training, they get to interview them, they're assigned a coach for an entire year to help their retention, and they get access to populations of people that, for many, they don't normally have access to, because it's so difficult to reach them," said Ethan Karp, PhD, MAGNET President and CEO.

### WLS Stamping

One of those companies at the table is WLS Stamping, an 85-employee, short-run contract manufacturer of stamped parts in Cleveland.

"In the past, it was 'OK, we'll just go hire from the market. But the market doesn't really exist right now when it comes to

skilled labor," said Robert Guy, WLS controller. "I really liked the idea of finding those people who never thought of manufacturing as a career who were going down a different career path, or were underemployed or unemployed and were looking for something that could be life changing to them."

WLS was introduced to Patrece while she was in the ACCESS program, and so were a handful of other employers.

"I know we really lucked out with Patrece," he said. "When we pitched our jobs to her, it wasn't just you're going to come in and be a machine operator. It was explaining what other opportunities she could develop into."

## Manufacturing Works

And that's where Manufacturing Works comes in. Ken Patsy, the economic development organization's president and executive director, says its role is to work closely with manufacturers to solve their biggest challenges, and in recent years that has been attracting and maintaining their workforces.

"If you need talent you're either going to build it, borrow it or buy it, and WLS believes the right way is to build it," said Beth Dawson, apprenticeship director at Manufacturing Works.

She'll see her wages increase as she progresses, and upon completion Patrece will be a journeyman tool and die maker.

"The next three years are very critical, but they are very necessary," Patrece said. "And the result is going to be amazing. Yes, I had obstacles, as does everybody, but I still made it. And I love what I do."

## A New Life

"The manufacturing program has changed my life dramatically. I would have never expected it to go as good as it did," she said. "I have been with jobs over a year before, and never moved up this fast. I've never made this much money this fast."

Employed in manufacturing less than two years, Patrece has already purchased her own home and car.

"My kids have their own rooms now," she said. "They're all comfortable. I have a set schedule now and am able to spend more time with them."

Karp said Patrece's story is but one example of one individual fundamentally changing their life and getting on a new career trajectory.

**Robert Guy and Patrece Scott**
WLS Stamping

"This is the beautiful end to end system," he said. "Multiple companies, multiple organizations we are creating under the umbrella of the industry sector partnership all led by what our manufacturers have wanted, and with us working as intermediaries to make sure all these pieces get put into fidelity. That's why Good Jobs Challenge looked at the WorkAdvance model."

## Workforce Ecosystem Players

MAGNET — *Industry Sector Partnership*

MANUFACTURING WORKS — *Registered Apprenticeship Partner*

Towards Employment — *Training/Recruiting Partner*

WLS — *Employer*

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