Women in IT Focus of Event

For the second time, a Career Options for Women Interested in Technology event was sponsored by SVCC and the Center for Information Technology Excellence (CITE) at the Lake Country Advanced Knowledge Center in South Hill.

"We want women to hear that voice: We can do it," Kelly Arnold, SVCC Apprenticeship Coordinator, said to the crowd gathered.

Arnold noted this opportunity for women to share with others about what they have learned as women in the Information Technology field is important.

The panel sharing their stories included the following:
Amanda Twisdale (EOCC Manager Enterprise Operations for Perspecta), Vicki Brock (IS Manager/Nurse Informatics for VCU Health), Shanell Toone (Telecommunications Technician II for IES), Anne Jeannette Peterson (Head of API Gateway for Capital One), Brenda Cross (Datacenter Technician for Microsoft), Kristen Wild (Regional Operations Manager for Microsoft), and Marcy Melendez (Regional L&D Trainer Manager for Microsoft).

"Every career path is different, and the diverse panel of women of different backgrounds served as an inspiration to other women sitting in the room filled with dreams of a better tomorrow," noted Melendez.

Toone and Cross are women from Southside Virginia who came through the CITE Program of SVCC. Cross noted that she worked another job for 23 years.

"Being able to work at Microsoft has been an emotional path. It is so out of my realm and I never imagined this. I wanted something else and I am glad it ended up being Information Technology," she said.

" Studying for this certification, there were four women supporting each other, pushing, motivating each other and working it out together, " Cross said.

Toone said, "As a single mother with two children, I had expenses that were a challenge. This field provides good pay and job benefits, helped pay the bills and made me believe in myself ."

Toone notes entering the CITE program was the best decision she ever made.