



Backside News

MARCH 2010

LEARNING CENTER UPCOMING EVENTS:

MARCH 17TH-

VITA AT CHURCHILL
DOWNS 10AM-2PM

MARCH 17TH-

VOLUNTEER MEET-
ING AT CHURCHILL
DOWNS 7PM

MARCH 31ST-

VITA AT CHURCHILL
DOWNS 2PM-6PM

Visas at the Racetrack

Written by: Kevin Oberhausen

The process of attaining a visa has time and again proven itself to be a universal headache for foreign workers from all over the world. Living, studying and working in the United States may seem like a simple ambition, but the acquisition of this one simple paper can often times keep people delayed for months. Because the majority of the horsemen here at Churchill Downs are from Latin America, many of these individuals know firsthand about the frustrations that come along with obtaining their documentation. Julio Rubio the Hispanic Benefits Coordinator for the Kentucky Horsemen's Benevolent Protection Association (KYHBPA) has as much knowledge as anyone when it comes to visas at the racetrack.

According to Mr. Rubio, the H2B is one of the most common visas horsemen attain to work in the United States. It's a seasonal non-agricultural visa, and a recognizable document to numerous hot-walkers, grooms and exercise riders working at the track. Those workers who want to obtain an H2B visa must go through the U.S. Department of Labor. Unfortunately H2 visas only last about 10 months, and often times getting them renewed can be a major challenge.

The PI is a highly sought after visa for foreign jockeys who want to compete in the United States. The PI allows entertainers, artists and athletes to enter the United States to perform in specific events. In the

case of jockeys, they qualify for this visa because they are considered professional athletes. Mr. Rubio stated that "those with a PI visa can stay 3 to 5 years and they can often eventually become legal residents".

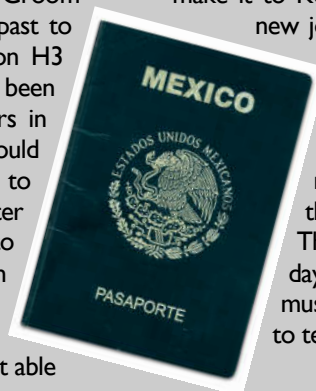
There are also multicultural visas people attain to come to the United States like the J1, J2 and J3 visas. However, in the case of some J visas (like the J1) they don't allow you to work and be paid. For this reason, J visas are not usually sought by potential racetrack workers. J2 visas are reserved for spouses and children of people who are on the J1 visa, so for all intents and purposes a J2 visa is even less common than a J1. The J3 visa is a training visa where a person can come to the USA to learn a special skill. Despite the fact that this visa seems more practical for equine workers, it is unusual to find a worker using the J3 here at Churchill Downs. All J visas if approved can last up to 1½ years.

The H3 visa is a training visa where people could come to the United States to work and train. The Learning Center has attempted to partner with the Groom Elite Program in the past to bring workers over on H3 visas. Had those visas been approved, the workers in the H3 program would have been required to attend Learning Center courses in order to continue their stay in the United States. Unfortunately, our organizations were not able

to overcome the many obstacles it took to launch this program. Nonetheless, the Learning Center is constantly in search of new innovative ways to promote education on the racetrack, whether that is through a visa program or by other means.

When trainers apply for visas at Churchill Downs the KYHBPA commonly assists in this process. Trainers are required to show that they are actively seeking to hire Americans first to fill their positions. Once they prove that US residents are not interested, they can receive a labor certification that gives them authorization to hire foreign workers. This is where Mr. Rubio and the KYHBPA step in to facilitate the visa process. Mr. Rubio will assist in collecting and providing the necessary documentation to establish legal status and identity, talk with workers by telephone to further organize them and give them accurate information about scheduling and gathering times at the consulate.

If all goes according to plan, those who applied will be approved to receive visas and eventually will make it to Kentucky to begin their new jobs. While there will still be other complications to conquer adjusting to a new country, they can rest easy knowing that they have made it. That is until their first day of work when they must wake up at 5:00am to tend to the horses...



LEARNING CENTER WISH LIST:

- Any book for adults written in Spanish
- Bilingual books
- Audio books with accompanying texts, particularly shorter or easier books, poetry or adult-appropriate learning-to-read books
- Spanish-English dictionaries
- Soccer shoes (size 8, 8 1/2, 9, gently used is fine)
- Soccer balls
- Class supplies, especially notebooks, binders, pencils, dry erase markers
- 2 Updated GED textbooks in English
- 2 Updated GED textbooks in Spanish
- 10 Pimsleur Inglés: English for Spanish Speakers with Audio CD textbooks
- Popcorn & oil packets for theater popcorn machine

Team Notes

Written by Emily Dingman:

The Backside Learning Center would like to thank all of its volunteers for being available from time to time over this long winter! Some of you have come by just to say hi and find out how we're doing; a welcome break from the silence we usually work in these days. Others have been involved with the few students who we've served; an invaluable contribution. Still others have come through to help with various aspects of fundraising and event preparation. Many of you have taken the time to respond to the emails we send out with entertaining commentary and thoughtful remarks. All of these interactions keep us motivated, your input is crucial to BLC function.

At this point, we are very eager for the students to come back, as I'm sure many of you are! We have been prepping

the BLC for this moment. We are hoping to give it a fresh look for returning clients. The bulletin board will be new and improved, the signs in the computer lab have been upgraded, we've taken some time to go through and weed out things that we no longer need, and we're planning to add some fresh artwork to the lab walls now that there's some more space. We are also thinking of things to do with the computer station in the library because we are discontinuing the English Study Lab since ELLIS (English Language Learning Instructional System) didn't take off with our clients. We have contemplated putting up a curtain to give a little privacy for people who are using Skype with their families, but we haven't decided if that's the best use for the space. Ideas are welcome!

We are always looking for donations - thanks to those of you who have helped with this



Events like the Pat Day Glass Signing wouldn't have been possible without our amazing volunteers!

already! And if anybody has ideas of high quality items that could be auctioned off during Derby week we welcome them. So far we have solicited a number of large sporting events and received two responses and one donation, let's keep it up!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HARD WORK!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Contact Emily Dingman at the Learning Center if you're interested in volunteering.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER:

If you would like to write an article for the newsletter about a class or student you teach/volunteer with, please contact the Learning Center. We would love to have your contributions!

DATA ENTRY: Volunteer needed once per month to update student and volunteer hours for soccer, movie night, guitar and other programs in Microsoft Access. Experience with Microsoft Access preferable but we can train.

HORSEMEN'S GOLF SCRAMBLE PLANNING COMMITTEE:

We are already planning for our 2nd Annual Horsemen's Golf Scramble. If you would like to be a part of the planning committee, contact the Learning Center. Tasks will include planning the event, promoting and getting donations/sponsorships. Time commitment: meet once a month starting in January and any additional planning/promoting as necessary.

DERBY GIFT SHOP TEAM: We are already thinking about Derby. We need people to help get volunteers to work the Derby Gift Shop and pick out

the merchandise we should sell. Time commitment: meet periodically starting in January, help out with the Derby Gift shop and any additional planning/promoting as necessary.

FUNDRAISING DINNER COMMITTEE:

We are planning a fundraising dinner tentatively scheduled in June. This would be the first time we have ever had the event. We need a committee to plan and organize the event. Time commitment: monthly meetings starting in January and any additional planning/promoting as necessary.