

# The Washington Times

## McDonald's stages one-day hiring blitz

*Fast-food giant was hoping to fill 50,000 positions*

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Fast-food giant McDonald's Corp. celebrated its first National Hiring Day on Tuesday with the largest one-day job spree in company history.

The nation's top burger joint sought to fill 50,000 full- and part-time positions for workers across the country, including about 1,400 positions in the Greater Washington market - all in a single day.

Carol Van Valkenburg, who owns a McDonald's franchise in the District's Friendship Heights neighborhood, said Tuesday she was looking to hire seven to eight part-time employees who could cover weekend shifts and peak hours during the week.

"You get ketchup in your veins if you're here and you're loving it," she said. "If someone has a job, they feel better about themselves. There are so many success stories."

Thousands of applicants made their pitches at McDonald's locations nationwide, the Associated Press reported, with hopefuls lining up in some cities more than an hour before doors opened. Officials at an Oak Brook, Ill.-based restaurant portrayed the event as one sign of recovery in an economy in which 13 million people are looking for employment.

The parent company and its franchisees will spend an additional \$518 million in the coming year with the new hires taken on Tuesday. That amounts to just more than \$10,000 per new employee.

About three-fourths of the workers at company-owned McDonald's outlets are part-time employees, averaging about 18 hours a week, according to the company.

Antony Hinton hopes to be the next success here. The 41-year-old Washington resident, who has been out of work since September, was one of the applicants at Miss Van Valkenburg's restaurant in Friendship Heights. He said he has 20 years of experience in the restaurant industry, cooking for everyone from Wendy's to O'Charley's, but feared he might be overqualified.

"I'm actually above fast food now," he said. "But for employment, I will step down."

Although the fast-food chain typically bulks up its workforce for the summer rush, McDonald's officials say they are expecting an uptick in business this year.

"I just want to make sure this restaurant is fully staffed and we're able to handle these sales," Miss Van Valkenburg

said.

The hiring surge should make at least a small dent in the national unemployment rate of 8.8 percent nationally and 9.5 percent in the District, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The McDonald's hiring extravaganza is a sign that discretionary spending is picking up among consumers, said Scott Watkins, a senior consultant with the Anderson Economic Group in Lansing, Mich.

"It's a good indicator that the recovery is continuing to go well," he said. "It's good to get some people back to work."

McDonald's officials said the hiring day was a way for the company to advertise its status as a responsible employer, with many ground-level hires going on to management and even franchise ownership positions.

"Hosting an event like this will help McDonald's recruit a better crop of employees than it usually attracts," Mr. Watkins said. "Now that the word is out, more unemployed workers with quality experience will apply."

"A lot of people might never think about it. But when you've been out of work for a while and you want to go back to work, you're probably feeling pretty good about your chances of being hired by McDonald's."