

Self Determination Employment News



Real Work for Real Pay

Philanthropy vs. Prosperity

Loyal. Dependable. Reliable.

These are the words used by many business owners to explain and embrace disability inclusion in the workforce. Not only are employees with a disability dedicated employees, they play a major role in positively affecting the “bottom line” of a successful business! The idea of patronizing an individual with a disability in the workplace is slowly being reframed through definitive evidence of businesses thriving as a result of their dedicated employees with a disability. How? Why? Let’s take a look at some examples....

Mark Wafer, franchise owner of seven Tim Horton’s restaurants, reports that one third of his workforce is inclusive of individuals with a disability. He describes these employees as not only his “over performers”, rather, his “out performers”. He claims that the dedication and loyalty of his employees with disabilities has not only saved him money, however, have MADE him money. For example, faced with the need to replace an employee in his bakery, Wafer noted 18.4% higher measureable performance output by a new employee with

a disability as compared to the previous employee without a known disability. His message to other business owners was clear in explaining that there truly are huge financial advantages to hiring individuals with disabilities. Mark, himself, is hearing impaired.

Another example includes John & Tom D’eri, co-founders of the Rising Tide Car Wash in Parkland, FL.

Of its 43 employees, 35 have autism. "I would never work with another group of people in a car wash, & never employ another group, simply because they are the best," said Tom D’eri, co-founder of the family business that includes his brother, who is on the autism spectrum.

The business was featured on many local and national television stations, and offered insights on a business model endorsing the primary mission of creating a successful and profitable business operated by young employees with autism transitioning out of school into the workforce.

To improve the chances of their workers succeeding, they developed a 46-step training procedure, with rou-

tines suited for those with autism.

Tom D’eri stated "People with autism can strive, really thrive, in any really structured process driven business... We as a society look at autism as a disability that requires sympathy, instead of a diversity that can be valuable in the workplace".

Upon interview, both co-founders separately discussed multiple examples of their employees level of daily commitment & dedication to their jobs.

***Stay tuned for next month’s feature on Federal Tax Incentives and Credits to businesses that employ individuals with disabilities!**

Contributed By:

Amy M. Blazawski, LCSW
DDS North Region
Self Determination Director

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Upcoming Events:

- **September 10, 2014**
Resource Fair from 3-7pm at Channel 3 Kids Camp, 73 Times Farm Rd. Andover, CT
- **October 8, 2014**
Educating Employers about hiring Individuals with Disabilities. East Hartford Community Cultural Center 50 Chapman Place East Hartford, CT 06108 9:30am-11:30am Networking 11:30am-12:30pm. (See last page for more info).
- **October 22, 2014**
Community Resource Fair 3-7pm at Asnuntuck Comm. College, 170 Elm St. Enfield, CT .

Anthony Thibeault's Story— Awarded for Customer Relations & Longevity

Anthony has worked at *Stop-n-Shop* in Southington for over 15 years. He performs various tasks such as breaking down cardboard, sweeping, porter work, retrieving carts, and bagging. Anthony states “I love my job” as well as the people he works with. He usually walks to and from work but occasionally gets rides from paid and natural supports during inclement weather. Anthony

has stated that working at Stop and Shop has helped him learn how to speak up and advocate for himself. Anthony has a “nice relationship” with his supervisor and has become comfortable reporting any problems or issues to her. The store manager and the district manager appreciate Anthony’s hard work and dedication to the company. Within the past year, Anthony received an award for exhibiting

exceptional customer relations and most recently received a prize for longevity!



Contributed by:
 Elaine G. O'Connor
 North Region DDS
 Case Manager

“Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them.”

-Albert Einstein

Ricky Torres's Story – Change is a Process... Phase 2

Francisco 'Ricky' Torres is employed part time at the Walgreens Warehouse. He entered the training program with Community Enterprises almost 3 weeks after the last training session began, and jumped right in without missing a beat! He excelled at every check point and is highly recommended for the next phase of the program.

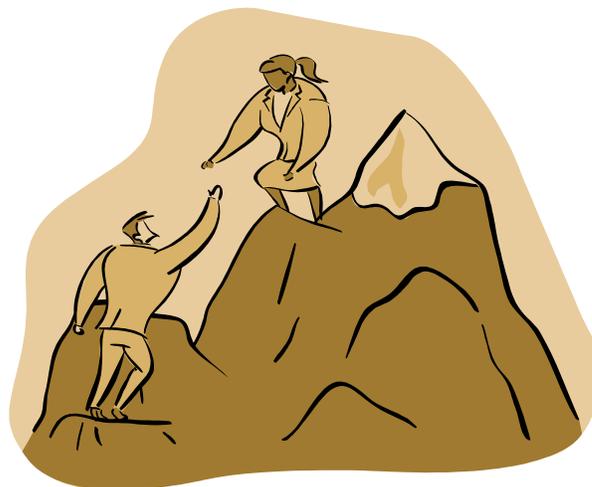
Ricky entered the program having had quite a number of pre-trial employment situations while he was still in school. He has engaged in training at several warehouse settings, including Home Goods, while still in High School (which in some cases, ended turbulently). He will freely admit that he was a bit immature at that time and had difficulty with some of his co-workers and had a hard time “minding his own business” when they were “mouthing off”.

He also engaged in a work trial experience last summer at CVS in New Britain. He excelled at this placement, however, it was understood that of the multiple persons (including himself) who were training there during the summer, only one of them would be hired at the end. As it was, the opening at this store was filled by a returning past employee and did not result in Ricky or any of the summer trainees being hired. During the time of his employment there however, he did successfully handle a 40+ hour work week. He stocked shelves, determined on his own what needed to be done next and provided bi-lingual customer service.

Presently he is waiting for the 2nd phase of the Walgreens Warehouse training to begin which will be considered a probationary period in the area he was found to be best suited for.

He will be working a full 40 hour week 2nd shift. The next stage for him is to engage in the process of finding an apartment closer to the job, and on the bus line, so that he may continue his quest for independence & greater autonomy.

Contributed by:
 Wendy Susarchick
 North Region DDS
 Case Manager



Anthony Lopez's Story - "On an Upward Path to Employment Success"

Anthony and Ricky have led parallel lives in many ways, they grew up together in DCF, living together on and off for the greater portions of their lives. They consider themselves brothers, and family of choice.

Anthony has been his own best advocate. He frequently speaks of his hopes and dreams for his future; to have his own apartment, to visit his family when he chooses, to come and go in the community of his choice when it strikes him to do so. He understands that with employment comes freedom. He has gained the maturity over the last year or so to recognize the value of working a job that is less than ideal to pull in a pay check while building a future towards a more desirable job, a very mature concept to grasp.

Anthony is currently employed in a Group Supported Employment work setting with Kuhn of Meriden. He is presently working on a Mobil Crew cleaning and caring for the parks of the Middletown Municipality. His dream job is in the culinary field for which he got a taste of while still in school. Anthony has a flare for cooking.

Anthony as well as Ricky have matured significantly over the past year. Very early in his employment with Kuhn, he showed them that he easily mastered the skills needed for his cleaning crew. He had originally been offered a job at the Police Academy at a higher wage but had the insight to turn the position down knowing himself well enough to recognize that he would not be comfortable in that setting.

He has advocated for himself to enter a Career Plan with Kuhn, stating that he had worked a less than desirable job, for the sake of a wage in order to prove his abilities to them, primarily his ability to keep his emotions in check. There was never a doubt of his skills for the job. Anthony is currently working on his Career Plan.

The current phase of Case Management for Anthony is his referral to the ARC of Meriden where we are projecting that he will have an apartment, with or without a roommate. He hopes to eventually be closer to his family, his employment, his community of choice, and on a bus line so that he may freely get himself to work, to family, and to living life!



Contributed by:
 Wendy Susarchick
 North Region DDS
 Case Manager

"If you have to judge people, judge them based on what they can do, not on what they cannot. Judge them based on who they are, not who they aren't. Otherwise, you're judging based on your own shortcomings."
 -Anonymous

Sue Caya's Story - Almost 44 years of Service at Windham High School!

Sue Caya recently retired from the Windham High School Cafeteria after almost 44 years of service! Sue began her career at Windham High School when it opened in 1974. She chose to retire just shy of 44 years by a few weeks, pursuant to a decision she made to ease into a more relaxed routine, in order to spend more time volunteering to help others.

Throughout her years of employment, Sue also volunteered to assist with the care of children at the Nursery of a local church group 'Light on the Hill'. She plans on

continuing to do this more frequently, as well as assisting a friend who plays the piano for seniors in two Skilled Nursing facilities. Sue helps some of the seniors find the right pages of a song book as they request which songs they wish to hear her friend play. Her current Case Manager, Chip Wilhide, stated "Sue is a remarkable gal who has lived up to some pretty lofty expectations". This was inspired by her step father who was a very special person. Sue certainly holds a top ranking position in demonstrating what a truly dedicated employee

looks like in the domains of successful job tenure. In her role in the High School cafeteria, she was well versed in the demands of this bustling work environment. She was dedicated to her daily schedule, catching her Dial-A-Ride transportation by 10am to arrive for her shift in time to serve the needs of the students, and returning home again after 3pm. She rarely missed a day of work, and maintained perfect attendance in her last year working at Windham High School!

We wish Sue well in her much deserved retirement and hope everyone who hears her story will be encouraged by her example of dedication to her goal of meaningful and rewarding employment. Sue's loyalty and hard work has earned her the title of a true "Employment Idol", and we celebrate her.

Congratulations Sue on a job well done!

Contributed by:
 Chip Wilhide
 North Region DDS
 Case Manager

What is the Employment First Initiative?

Connecticut is officially an “Employment First State”, but what exactly does this mean, & how can we as service professionals in the field support it?

Employment is the first priority and preferred outcome of people with disabilities. It is a concept to facilitate the full inclusion of people with the most significant disabilities in the workplace and community. Under the Employment First approach, community-based, integrated employment is the first option for employment services for individuals with disabilities. As Case Managers and other service providers, our focus should remain on assisting people who want to work through formulating goals, obtaining resources, and career planning!

Real Work for Real Pay

We Believe...

- *Everyone can work and there is a job for everyone. Our job is to be creative and persistent in providing supports that help people with intellectual disabilities to find, get and keep real pay.
- *Not working should be the exception. All individuals, schools, families and businesses must raise their expectations.
- *People will be hired because of their ability not because they have a disability.
- *Communities embrace people who contribute.
- *Everyone has something to contribute and needs to contribute.
- *People are healthier, safer and happiest with meaningful work.
- *True employment is not a social service.
- *Employment is a win/win for everybody.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Developmental Services is to partner with the individuals we support and their families, to support lifelong planning and to join with others to create and promote meaningful opportunities for individuals to fully participate as valued members of their communities.

Vision

All citizens supported by the Department of Developmental Services are valued contributors to their communities as family members, friends, neighbors, students, employees, volunteers, members of civic and religious associations, voters and advocates. These individuals:

- *Live, learn, work and enjoy community life in places where they can use their personal strengths, talents and passions.*
- *Have safe, meaningful and empowering relationships.*
- *Have families who feel supported from the earliest years and throughout their lifetimes.*
- *Have lifelong opportunities and the assistance to learn things that matter to them.*
- *Make informed choices and take responsibility for their lives and experience the dignity of risk.*
- *Earn money to facilitate personal choices.*
- *Know their rights and responsibilities and pursue opportunities to live the life they choose.*



“Innovative Ideas in Securing Competitive Employment”

What is change?

I have always understood change to be an opportunity to alter the lives of individuals in the most positive way possible. Change commonly comes easier with the help of others.

Soon, we will be sending out a survey to all of the Case Managers in the North Region, in order to identify individuals who are actively seeking employment. This survey will help us improve the lives of the individuals we serve by providing new and innovative ways of getting individuals employed.

With the permission of each individual, we will be featuring those individuals whom are ready and able to work, and in turn, connecting them with potential employers who are seeking assistance. We thank you for your help in advance!

Submitted by:
 Patricia L. Cymbala
 North Region DDS
 Self Determination Employment Instructor

“If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change”.
 -Dr Wayne Dyer

Educating Employers about Hiring Individuals with Disabilities (con’t).

On October 8, 2014 from 9:30am-12:30pm at the EHCCC, the North Regional Self Determination Division will be collaborating with various other State of CT Agencies to inform community employers about the myriad benefits of hiring individuals with intellectual disabilities! Please assist us by spreading the word to local business owners!

*We would like to thank everyone that contributed to this newsletter and are hoping that many more with contribute to future newsletters. To submit info, or for more information on Employment resources, please e-mail:

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