

oregon

PERSPECTIVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE
OREGON COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES



HONOR
INTEGRITY
SEEKING KNOWLEDGE
HAVING FUN

Employment Opportunities



**OREGON
COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES**

The mission of the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities is to create change that improves the lives of Oregonians with developmental disabilities.

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Staff: Yoshiko Kardell and Bill Lynch.

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For a free subscription, contact:

Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

540 24th Place NE

Salem, OR 97301-4157

503-945-9941 (Salem, outside Oregon)

800-292-4154 (within Oregon)

E-mail: ocdd@ocdd.org

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The Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities would like to thank Jill Murray for her hard work and dedication as editor of *Oregon Perspectives* over the past two years. We wish her the best in all of her new endeavors.

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ON THE COVER: Briana Jones and Kelly Wallace.

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From the Director

Envision Employment

When we decided on employment as the theme for this issue of Oregon Perspectives, we didn't know how severe the economic downturn was going to be or how high the unemployment rates were going to soar. So it might seem like bad timing to be doing an issue on employment of people with developmental disabilities when so many people of all abilities are unemployed. After all, people with developmental disabilities always seem to be the last hired and the first fired during bad economic times.



People with developmental disabilities can't afford to accept the notion that employment is only an option for them when the economy is hot. Like anyone else, they need a fair chance at employment during good times and bad.

One exciting development that we hope will eventually make a difference is the state Office of Developmental Disability Services' "Employment First Policy" (see page 6). For years advocates have called on the state to set a vision and expectations for employment of people with developmental disabilities. The policy that was adopted last year, once implemented, will make employment a primary consideration during individualized planning processes. Employment will no longer be just one of several options for individuals to consider – it will be the first option to consider and seriously explore for every adult with developmental disabilities.

The vision for employment can't be created solely through policy. The most powerful tool we have to demonstrate the possibility of employment is to show the reality of successful employment in the lives of Oregonians with developmental disabilities. And because we believe in the power of storytelling, we offer this small collection of success stories, hoping they will expand our collective vision for the employment of working age adults with developmental disabilities.

Bill Lynch
Executive Director
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

Employment Journey

By Jill Murray, featuring Briana Jones, Arlene Jones, and Kelly Wallace, Beaverton

Briana Jones of Beaverton thinks making money is good. “I want to work. It’s fun. I cash my check.” A smile shines through her words. “I like that I am earning my own money, and I can do what I want to do with it. I can spend what I earn, and I can save what I earn, too. Being able to make my own choices makes me feel good.”

When Briana was 18 and was transitioning from Westview High School to Beaverton Transition Program, her mother Arlene set up a person-centered planning meeting, inviting facilitators from outside the school district. They looked at Briana’s future, her connections, and the supports she would need in the long run.

The Beaverton Transition Program staff fit some of Briana’s person-centered plan into her Individual Education Program (IEP). Staff noted that the plan helped both the school and the teacher quickly understand how they could support Briana’s transition and prepare her for life beyond school.

Recently, Arlene set up a new person-centered planning process focused on Briana’s employment goals. It was helpful to think of partnerships and resources and focus on what success would be for Briana. “One goal that

rose to the top was that Briana would work 20 hours per week.” Arlene continues, “At first, she worked two jobs to make those 20 hours: Dinners Done Right and a McMenamins restaurant. It worked for a while, but the McMenamins job turned out to be seasonal.” That left Briana working for Dinners Done Right for limited hours. Arlene states, “It was a great setting for Briana, but they were a small, family-run shop and couldn’t afford more hours.”

Briana worked at Dinners Done Right for two years, doing food prep. “I got to do meats and shrimp. I learned to count them and put them into bags. The people were nice.” Briana misses her old boss and admits, “It was scary changing jobs.”

When they began looking for a new job, Arlene reports, “We decided to use brokerage dollars to hire a job coach, and we used Vocational Rehabilitation for job development.” Through the brokerage, Briana receives 1-2 hours per month in job coach support, down from

4-5 hours per month at first. The job coach checks in with Briana on her job to analyze the situation objectively and advocate for her if there are other tasks she could learn to do.

Vocational Rehabilitation is in charge of job development. They have a list of contractors customers can hire to find jobs for people. “Not all contractors are alike,” admits Arlene. “Some do not see the positives of the person they are working with, only the limits they have.”



Briana Jones and Kelly Wallace

Employment Journey (cont. from page 3)

Kelly Wallace, Briana's job developer, was a contractor through brokerages for three years, doing community inclusion. Kelly says, "The first job developer had a hard time placing Briana, so I stepped into that role." Kelly has taken Vocational Rehabilitation training on how to discover an employer's needs and find the right person to fit those needs. "This allows me to present a candidate and check the fit rather than focus on a job application," she says.

"I referred to Briana's person-centered plan heavily when I began doing job coaching with her. Briana was frustrated. At her previous job, she had 10 - 15 tasks throughout the day. We worked together to develop a notebook for a job coaching tool, with photos and written instructions in language Briana understood. I spent time onsite at Dinners Done Right. Her

"She speaks with my co-workers at Red Robin, so they can get to know what my skills are and how I can help the restaurant. We talk about what I want. Kelly works hard."

Briana adds, "My supervisors have all treated me nicely. They are polite. They treat me like part of their team or like family. They help show me how to do a task."

Arlene is involved when Briana is beginning a new job, and she offers employers advice when they are learning to work with Briana and her cognitive disabilities. "Talk to her directly, set boundaries, and hold her to your expectations. Treat her like you treat your other employees," The job developer is there to assist this process. Arlene adds, "I may talk with the employer or the job coach to let people know what works for Briana, so they can set up natural supports."

"...I am happy and I am proud of myself."

employer, Steve, was extremely supportive. Briana had the hard skills, like cleaning and counting portions; she was strong there. Soft skills, such as customer relations and coworker skills, were areas she needed to work on."

Within two and a half months, Kelly had helped Briana find a position at a Red Robin restaurant for 11-12 hours per week. Arlene feels cautiously optimistic about the job. "Red Robin has a team atmosphere, with young employees. Briana has fun there." The employer is still getting to know her as a person. They want her to be recognized by employees and customers, a public figure.

"Kelly Wallace helped me get my job at Red Robin. Now, she's my job coach, helping me learn what I have to do there," says Briana. Kelly put together a task card and other tools.

Arlene shares other ideas that worked for them such as posting lists in the work areas. For Briana, a list of tasks, like "Clock in, talk to manager, start first task" works well. Also, a

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Briana Jones with Red Robin bird

Employment Journey (cont. from page 4)

chart of options helps her, so that if she comes up against a common problem, she can try to figure it out by herself.

For example, if her first task is rolling silverware, and there are no forks, she needs to a.) look by the dishwasher, b.) look in the common holding area, and c.) ask permission to open a new package. These systems or tools can help all employees, not just the ones with a job coach. Other employees also learn how a person understands directions when it is written out.

Transportation to the job cannot be

overlooked. Briana gets help to use the regular bus system. Her family enlisted a Ride Wise travel trainer to make her feel comfortable and safe on a bus route. (Ride Wise is a program of Tri-Met transportation. Free travel training is available for seniors and people with disabilities to learn how to use public transportation.)

"I like to work," says Briana. "I have liked all the jobs that I have had – Dinners Done Right, McMenamins Roadhouse, and Red Robin. At the end of my day's work, I am happy and I am proud of myself."

Small Business Provides Transition Opportunity

By Steve Harris, Tigard

I have been in the restaurant business for 3 years and had never employed anyone with a disability before. Briana went to a high school transition program, and some of the kids would come here for meals. One day I was asked if

her duties on it. There was a fresh copy every day she worked.

Having a job coach was never awkward. It was helpful when she came and gave us ideas.

"Anyone can hire a person with disabilities."

I would be willing to hire someone from the program. I decided I was.

In the beginning, I introduced Briana to customers so that everyone felt comfortable with each other. I also took her with me to a Chamber of Commerce meeting, where I talked about employing people with disabilities. She spoke about herself, things she likes to do (like Kiwanis camp), and her work.

As with any other employee, I had to refocus and direct her. The systems that her job developer brought were helpful. There was a chart called "Briana's To Do List," which had

Because of the economy, I had to make a decision about my family-run company. I could not afford to keep all of my employees, and Briana was the only one who was not family. It was agonizing, but I had to let Briana go.

I am happy we hired Briana to work at Dinners Done Right. I learned that Briana was way more capable than I first gave her credit for. Plus, hiring her felt like the right thing to do.

Anyone can hire a person with disabilities.

Steve Harris is the owner of Dinners Done Right in Tigard, a meal prep store. Steve is a life long resident of the Portland area.



Oregon

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES STATE POLICY ON: EMPLOYMENT FOR WORKING AGE INDIVIDUALS (9-18-08)

Policy Framework

1. Oregon Revised Statutes identify increased productivity, integration and independence as the desired outcomes resulting from provision of services and supports for adults with developmental disabilities.
2. The Oregon Department of Human Services, in order to implement its mission, has several stated goals. Among the goals are:
 - a. People are living as independently as possible; and
 - b. People are able to support themselves and their families.
3. It is important for Oregon that working age adults, including individuals with developmental disabilities:
 - a. Contribute to our economy;
 - b. Become part of our workforce; and
 - c. Become as self-sufficient as possible.
4. Individuals with developmental disabilities have a right to the opportunity for meaningful work and:
 - a. A vast majority want to pursue employment opportunities; and
 - b. Meaningful work can be accomplished regardless of disability; and
 - c. Partnerships, vision, and creativity are necessary to overcome perceived or real barriers to employment.
5. The benefits of meaningful work have significance and importance to all working age adults, including individuals with developmental disabilities. Benefits include the:
 - a. Ability to earn and keep meaningful wages;
 - b. Development and expansion of relationships;
 - c. Identity as a contributing member to one's community;
 - d. Increase in personal self-esteem; and
 - e. Pursuit of desired lifestyles.

Policy Statement

In order to achieve the intent outlined in the framework of this policy, employment opportunities in fully integrated work settings shall be the first and priority option explored in the service planning for working age adults with developmental disabilities. While all options are important and valued, integrated employment is more valued than non-employment, segregated employment, facility-based employment, or day habilitation in terms of employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

For those who successfully achieve the goal of employment in an integrated setting, future service planning must focus on maintaining employment as well as the consideration of additional career or advancement opportunities. For those not yet achieving employment, annual service planning must include and reflect employment opportunities as the first and priority service option explored.

Key Procedures and Principles:

Implementation of this policy shall be based on the following procedures and principles:

1. Employment services shall be specifically addressed in the Individual Support Plan;
2. Employment services shall be considered and provided using person-centered planning concepts, based on informed choice, and consistent with the philosophy of self-determination;
3. Minimum or competitive wages and benefits shall be the goal of integrated employment;
4. All natural as well as paid supports will be considered in service planning; and
5. Employment supports will be provided outside of the individual's living environment unless necessary for a self-employment plan or for the individual's medical or safety needs.

This policy statement will be accompanied by a more thorough implementation statement that further details definitions, desired outcomes, and operational procedures.

Appealing to Andy

By Jean Atalla, Medford

I want the same things for my son, Andy, that I want for everyone I care about: I want him to be safe, healthy, and happy. For Andy, being happy means participating in activities that are interesting to him and that give him a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. It means being in physical environments that do not aggravate his emotional and sensory sensitivities. It also means engaging with people who value his contributions and enjoy his unique personal style.

Andy's first post-school work assessment was conducted in a warehouse setting. He was assigned tasks that seemed easiest — sorting clothes and hanging them on hangers. The final report indicated that he was anxious, distracted, and easily frustrated. The outcome of the assessment was that he would require constant 1:1 staff assistance and that his productivity level would range between 0-15%. Andy flunked sheltered workshop!

Nine years later, Andy works in three businesses and receives commissions from the sales of his original artwork. All of these jobs appeal to one or more of Andy's interests: words and reading,



Andy painting

cats and dogs, music and dancing, the news and current events, or hanging out with others who have similar interests. He deconstructs files for recycling at a records storage facility; he prepares envelopes for mailing dog tags at an animal shelter; he works alongside other artists in a studio, painting and dancing to the music; and he handles paper recycling at a local TV station, a task formerly performed by the general manager on Sunday afternoons. Andy has been the number one fan of News Team 10 since he was a little guy; now he is a member of News Team 10, and Mr. Kelly can spend weekends with his family!

All it took was being truly person-centered, identifying Andy's interests and strengths, making connections with employers who needed and valued them, and never starting work before 11 a.m., when The Price is Right is over.

Jean Atalla is the mother of two wonderful children. She has been involved in disability issues, as a volunteer and personal advocate, as well as in government service, since 1974. Currently, she is the coordinator of Communications and Special Projects at Living Opportunities, Inc. in Medford, Oregon



Andy with coworkers of News Team 10

Job Development Can Build Community Awareness

By Roger Hassenpflug, Medford

Living Opportunities provides supported employment services to more than 100 individuals near Medford. We believe job development does not stand alone, that a big part of it is developing relationships with people in our community. At Living Opportunities, job development is linked to our goal of building general community awareness of the people we serve and what we do. We use the media in unique ways to make this happen.

First, we bring business people to us, in order to give them an introduction to Living Opportunities. Twice a month, we host virtual tours, held at an individual's home or at a job site. We show them a PowerPoint presentation illustrating how we carry out our mission and have them meet at least one person we support. We try to stun them with what we are doing within 45 minutes. (As services have become more individualized, we are more spread out around town, which makes these visits more challenging.)

We are involved with organizations such as Rotary; have contacts in the business community; and have developed relationships with the general managers of the local television, radio, and newspapers. A valuable outcome of this is that people from our agency are on a first name basis with people in the media. Having them on our side has several benefits: they help us identify the demographic target in our advertising and give us discounts on ads we run. We gave a tour to the owners of a voice-over company, who bought into our mission and now do pro bono voice work for us. Two TV stations have hired people with developmental disabilities



As part of Living Opportunity tours, Eric Thompson welcomes community members to his work site to see him in action

We run advertisements on radio and TV as part of job development. These ads are testimonials from community business people who have hired our employees. We get calls for information based on these ads and have placed more people in jobs because employers heard them. It's amazing the things employers share: "Hiring this person has raised the morale of all my employees." "This has been very cost-effective." "Before, I was going into work at night to make packets. Now I have Michelle to help with that task. She is a model employee who takes a lot of pride in her work, and she brings a lot of life into our small office."

One community business person said, "I can't imagine a person with a disability doing all of the tasks as outlined in the job description for the position I'm looking to fill." This access to local business people has allowed us to teach employers; we are able to show them that if they can break down the job description, they can create a position that matches an employee with a disability, freeing up other employees' time for other tasks. Getting the media involved is bringing about a shift in how people in the community view people with developmental disabilities.

Roger Hassenpflug is the CEO of Living Opportunities, an organization that provides supported employment services to individuals near Medford, Oregon. He has been in the field of supporting individuals since 1973 and with Living Opportunities since 1988. Visit their web site at www.livingopps.org

Finding a Perfect Match: Alternative Work Concepts

By Jill Murray, featuring Liz Fox, Eugene

Alternative Work Concepts (AWC) is Oregon's own nationally recognized nonprofit employment agency for persons who experience physical and multiple disabilities. Located in Eugene, AWC believes that all persons, including those who experience significant disabilities, should have the opportunity to obtain meaningful employment. Their mission is to assist individuals in finding paid, integrated jobs in their community, and they have successfully developed jobs by using unique job creation and individualized support strategies.

"Our goal is seeking ever higher levels of independence for people," says Liz Fox, Executive Director of AWC. "We do this by focusing on people's abilities and then matching that to jobs where those skills are needed."

AWC has provided its services to businesses in the Eugene/Springfield community for 23 years. "The business community is far more open now that it used to be. Now we actually have people calling us, talking peer to peer," notes Fox. "We are finding better ways to present to businesses, finding what matters to them. Things like: How will this impact your business? How will this affect the bottom line and employee morale? AWC also educates families and

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Bagel Sphere Delivery

By Jill Murray



Carlos Cox

Carlos Cox has delivered bagels and sandwiches for Bagel Sphere of downtown Eugene for three years. He is paid hourly for deliveries, plus he receives tips and bonuses when he brings in new accounts for the business. Carlos knows everyone in town. All reports say that Carlos has a great attitude - he is often smiling and happy to be at work. He works 15 hours over a 3-day week.

"Carlos brightens everyone's day, my employees and my repeat customers", says Chandra Lunt, manager of Bagel Sphere. "He has a great rapport with people. He is easy to hang out with in between deliveries, and he has brought new customers to our store.

"Carlos likes to work. I often hear him say, 'Hey Jerry, get back to work.' He wants to keep on track and be on the go.

"My biggest challenges have been around communicating with Carlos, learning his body language. I had to learn to understand his communication style, to tell when he was frustrated or needed to ask a question. To say, 'yes,' Carlos extends his right arm and lifts his right hand high over his head. He will add a big smile if the answer is

Continued on page 11

others in the community about competitive employment.”

Once a business has expressed interest in AWC services, an employment specialist performs a job analysis, looking at the many tasks that comprise different job descriptions. For instance, the employment specialist may determine that the staff is spending a certain amount of time performing routine tasks (i.e. photocopying, filing, routine data entry), which usually do not require the skills for which they

the quality standards for completing each task. The employment specialist works side by side with the employee to ensure that s/he learns the job and that the work is completed in a timely manner. The training phase for each individual can vary from 1 month to 4 months. For those who need higher levels of support, the support co-worker model allows for a team approach in doing the job on an ongoing basis.

“... anyone, regardless of significance of disability, should have the right to work in a meaningful and integrated job and that anything can be accomplished with the right attitude and creativity.”

were hired, but which need to be completed for the business to operate effectively. They then may “create” or “carve” a position focused on performance of these routine tasks, which will enable other employees to devote their time to those job duties that enhance staff efficiency and the business’s profitability.

“In this work, finding the proper match is critical,” says Fox. “That is why we spend so much time on the assessment, which is all encompassing. Some parts of it are task related and others are more environmental and personality driven. We start by having new clients do site tours to see what other people are doing. We are able to see pretty quickly which environment is of more interest and which tasks are preferred (or not!). We then match any new jobs with individuals who are good at and interested in those tasks.”

Job coaches or support co-workers then help teach the individual every aspect of the job and

Once the individual is independent in completing the duties of his/her job, the employment specialist will fade out training but will provide support at the job site on a consistent basis according to the individual’s needs. If new task demands arise, the employment specialist will come in and re-train the individual in these new tasks.

AWC’s vision is simple: that anyone, regardless of significance of disability, should have the right to work in a meaningful and integrated job and that anything can be accomplished with the right attitude and creativity.

Liz Fox has a degree in Special Education from the University of Vermont. She moved to Oregon in 1991, and she is glad that she landed at Alternative Work Concepts.

Bagel Sphere Delivery (cont. from page 9)

'really yes!' To say, 'no,' he will turn his head to the right and look down.

I also needed to learn how to communicate with him, with and without the E-Talker he carries on his wheelchair. This communication system allows Carlos to speak to his customers just like anyone else. Examples include, 'Would you like to order today?' or 'Thanks for the tip.'

"We are glad to provide a place for Carlos to work. Carlos and the staff at Alternative Work Concepts have helped us expand our business and get us out in the community. He gets a lot out of it, and we do, too."

"Carlos and the staff at Alternative Work Concepts have helped us expand our business and get us out in the community."

Jerry Leff, Carlos' personal assistant, says, "I had to learn to observe better when I started working with Carlos. He wants to be involved. Carlos knows this is his job and that I'm just working with him. Even if we are running late, he will not let me do a delivery without him, because he wants his clients to see him.

"He follows a system at Bagel Sphere; I just help him add up the end of the day totals to give to Chandra. Carlos can shift other people's moods and is a highly motivated employee."

Carter's Courier

An Interview with Ben Carter and Liz Fox, Eugene



Ben Carter

Ben Carter has his own business, Carter's Courier, and he makes daily deliveries to local businesses and agencies.

Each business he delivers mail or documents for provides a locked briefcase in order to add a level of security. He attaches a box to his wheelchair to assist in carrying the briefcases. Liz Fox is very involved with all of the people AWC serves and knows Ben well.

Ben: I work 15 hours a week at my job and get paid. I get around in my wheelchair and on public transportation. I go to the post office first thing every morning, my stop with the most mail. Then I go to Senior and Disabled Services. They help a lot of people. I carry a personal alarm when I'm delivering.

Liz: Businesses and the people within them really have to trust Ben.

Ben: I remember people's names; they like that. I do my own invoicing now. I get services from a brokerage. They help me market my business and help with personal care. I just moved out of my parents' house. I feel older. I wondered about moving; I was a little nervous, but I love it! Some say I get spoiled on this route because I get cookies, balloons, and lunch dates.

Liz: When Ben is off sick, one of us provides back up and does his delivery circuit. Everyone misses him when he is gone. Every door you walk into, you hear, "Where's Ben? Where is he?" It tells how much he connects with people.

Ben: I like doing the mail. It's fun to get outside and to meet people.

Jeff's Inter Mail

By Scott Weltham, with Jeff Watkins, Eugene



Jeff Watkins

Jeff Watkins likes the outdoors and is a great bus rider, which is critical to his job. His business is called Jeff's Inter Mail. He has been running this business since 1997. Because the business need was so great, he expanded his services, and now his business works closely with Ben Carter's Courier (see story on page 11). In order to learn a new route, Jeff originally used photos to learn the office he had to deliver to. He is not a reader in the traditional sense, but his mind can link a photo or acronym to the place he needs to deliver the mail.

Jeff uses a communication board that is attached to his chair. A good job match and a work system that meets his needs have helped Jeff be successful.

Scott Whetham obtained a degree in Education and did some substitute teaching for a while but realized he needed something different. He responded to an ad by AWC and is still here after 17 years.

Tom's Telephone Service

By Tom Crites, Eugene



Tom Crites

I'm just a people person, and I like to be on the phone. Tom's Telephone Service has been my business for 17 years. I started while I was a senior in high school, with a tape recorder, a toggle switch, and duct tape. Over the years I have moved to my computer and upgraded my system many times.

I make telephone calls to remind people and organizations about their meeting times and where meetings will be held. Clients come in all sizes: big companies, small ones, non-profits, or individuals. Sometimes I remind about meetings, sometimes about appointments.

How do I do it? I go by my calendar. At the beginning and end of each month, I send a list of emails to clients to set schedules. I enter reminders into my computer of when I need to do things, and the computer program puts out ticklers for me. This program was designed just for me by Norm at the Commission for the Blind. They have helped me a lot by setting up systems and redesigning them when I need to make it better. I use a voice activated computer and software that dials the phone. I use a pointer to access my computer database of my clients, so I can call and invoice for services.

I have a job coach support me with paperwork. When I look for a job coach, I look for someone who can do the job well, as I direct them. They need to do the invoices well, too. I have space to work in at The Arc of Multnomah office. I barter services for office space.

I love to go out to lunch every day. I get , but it is not enough to do anything extra, like lunch with my friends. The money I make with my company goes for that. When minimum wage goes up, I get raises. I will keep doing this, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Alternative Work Concepts at PeaceHealth

By Jill Murray, featuring Mindy Parsons, Sheryl Beasley, Barbara Ewing, and Jacque Gerdes, Eugene



Mindy Parsons

"PeaceHealth has been great about welcoming our three clients into their workforce," stresses Jacque Gerdes, Assistant Executive Director at Alternative Work Concepts. "The people we support in the Patient Financial Services Department of this health care system have full benefits and receive training like any other employee, including ongoing computer training. There are retreats, birthday celebrations, and annual events like the Halloween party, that fully include everyone. These are real, valuable jobs, and there are people with developmental disabilities who are enjoying the benefits of working here."

"I am a very fast learner and I am good at my job," Mindy Parsons states clearly. "On June 18, I will have been at PeaceHealth two years. People are nice, I like it here."

Sheryl Beasley, a Supervisor at PeaceHealth, says, "We have had benefits from hiring people with disabilities. I think it is beneficial for all of us. Since we interact on a daily basis, our 140 + other employees have learned how to relate to people with developmental disabilities on a different level. Not only do our employees with disabilities learn their job, but their fellow employees get to learn about people with disabilities."

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I Like My Job

By Joey Eddie, Eugene

I have worked at PeaceHealth for six years. They are fun people to work with. My job is important. I help people in the hospital. If I didn't work I'd be at home. I wouldn't like that because I'd be bored.



Joey Eddie

I think I work a good amount, 20 hours per week. When I work, I do faxing, scanning, and paper recycling. I do mailings for the Patient Financial Services Department. I am comfortable now asking for help when I don't know how to do something. People help me a lot.

When my family moved from California to Eugene, they contacted Alternative Work Concepts. I came in to do an assessment. I felt scared when I got this job. I'd never used a scanner before. I was scared, but I thought I could do it.

I feel good when people here tease me about not coming to work, we laugh. See, I used to go on vacations with my family a lot. Now I live with a roommate in my new place.

I like to use my money; I go to concerts to listen to musicians. At home, I play drums and guitar. I like to go on walks. At work we have parties that are fun. At the Halloween party, our whole department dressed up in Alice in Wonderland costumes. I dressed as the Mad Hatter. I hosted a tea party at my cubicle. These help make this job fun.

AWC at PeaceHealth (cont. from page 13)

Barbara Ewing's team works under Sheryl. "We have six people in our team, including three employees supported by Alternative Work Concepts. When they started, I admit I was nervous," says Barbara. "They had trainers by their sides encouraging and teaching them. A task might be uncomfortable at first, but we all gained confidence after a while."

"I like my job at PeaceHealth," Mindy says. "I knew I'd be working on computers when I got this job, but I didn't know what I'd be doing." Warming up,

"Because I'm such a fast learner, they keep giving me more things to do," Mindy says, making more eye contact. "I like learning new jobs. I work 20 hours a week. This means I don't have to stay home watching TV." She looks up and shrugs her shoulders. "I want to stay in this job. I used to be shy; I didn't smile." Now a huge grin lights up her face, "But a lot happens here; I go to baby showers, birthday parties, and I do raffles – I win some, too. At Thanksgiving, we did a canned food drive. I'm part of a team. My parents are happy. So am I."

"Staff from Alternative Work Concepts

"Try to overcome your resistance to change... Don't be afraid to be innovative; making a task easier can be simple."

Mindy says, "I have to pay attention to detail. I do batching; that means I have to match numbers to names of patients. I do these things every week: alphabetize for filing, edit, send letters (change the name and date on form letters), put things in order by date, file materials, double check scanning that my coworker is doing, fold, do mailings, and separate checks from documents and make sure they go where they need to go. I work on the computer and get letters out."

"It has had its ups and downs," says team leader Barbara. "Individuals have their different strengths. One person is self-reliant and detail-oriented, doing mail bins. He never misses when a letter is going to a foreign country. 'It needs a sticky note,' he will say. He has a very sharp eye.

"Not all employees have such a sharp eye," Barbara continues. "We have had to add steps to a scanning system, making it more accurate. We groomed the position to a tighter fit for another employee, for better accuracy. Now I count pages before giving that person a job, and I have trained him to double-check the number of pages. If any are missing, he re-does the whole document. Now, another employee verifies the document, for quality assurance."

supplemented us at first," says Barbara. "They would help retrain someone in a task. I couldn't justify staff time to do this often, so we appreciated their presence. I'm much more comfortable making adaptations when needed now. My head thinks in that direction better than it did before." Barbara shares some advice for other supervisors: "Have patience. People with disabilities are people, they just may process things differently. Try to overcome your resistance to change and have a sense of humor. Put yourself in their shoes. And don't be afraid to be innovative; making a task easier can be simple."

"The benefits reach outside of a person's team," says Sheryl. "For example, Joey has a lunch buddy he eats with every day. They each have people they check in with daily."

What benefits have come from hiring people with disabilities? Sheryl volunteers, "It gives all my employees a chance to walk in other people's shoes. It feels like the more we do it, the smoother it becomes, but it is not seamless. Our employees with disabilities receive the same training and evaluations as other employees, so they are not set apart. They are establishing relationships throughout the building." I think our entire staff has adopted these three employees as integral parts of the team."

Project SEARCH Comes to Oregon

By Jill Murray and Megan Brynelson,
Portland

DePaul Industries of Portland has been helping people with disabilities find work since 1971. Founded at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Project SEARCH, has been matching employees with disabilities with employers since 1995.

Project SEARCH is a collaborative effort among a partnering business, an employment agency, and a funding source, in which resources are joined together to successfully place an individual with a developmental disability in a real job. The Project SEARCH model enhances DePaul's Supported Employment Department and develops high quality employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The mission of Project SEARCH is to serve people with developmental disabilities through innovative career development. Project SEARCH educates employers about the potential of this underutilized workforce while meeting the employers' hiring needs. There are three models, which are designed to successfully achieve this mission:

- High School Transition Program
- Adult Employment Program
- Vocational/Educational Clinic.

Continued on page 16



Joan Krecklow

Interview with Joan Krecklow of Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital:

How long have you worked for Legacy Health System?

It has been one year on January 15th, 2009.

What department do you work for?

Housekeeping

How many hours do you work per week?

20. Monday through Friday 2 p.m.- 6 p.m.

Why do you enjoy working at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital?

I like my co-workers. They are all really nice and they help me when I need help. I love my job.

What is your favorite job to do?

Mopping. Everyone walks on the clean floor, which was frustrating at first, but then I realized it was the only area people could walk on to get to the other part of the hospital. Now, I think it's funny when people walk on the clean floor.

What do you like about Project SEARCH?

I never thought I would work at a hospital, and I make good money now.

What are you able to do now that you make good money?

My family and I went to Hawaii last summer. I am also going to a country music concert next month.

Joan Krecklow lives in Vancouver, WA and commutes two hours each direction to work every day. She works independently, and her duties include cleaning the Information and Services Department and the pharmacy. Joan has a great sense of humor, and she has developed strong relationships with her supervisors and co-workers.

Project SEARCH Comes to Oregon (cont. from page 15)

Project SEARCH has been replicated with significant success in over thirty states nationwide. In Oregon, there is currently one Project SEARCH Adult Employment Program at Legacy Health System, made possible through a partnership with Clark County Developmental Disabilities Program.

Now that DePaul is licensed to access the consulting services and materials of Project SEARCH, it has partnered with Legacy Health System's Good Samaritan Hospital and Meridian Park Hospital, as well as with Oregon Health & Sciences University. Megan Brynelson is DePaul's lead staff to make this happen. "I have been able to lay the foundation for developing potential jobs with some of Portland's largest employers," she says, "and I continue to maintain the relationships I have established during this uncertain economic climate. DePaul will be ready to facilitate recruitment efforts when businesses are ready."

"Project SEARCH is unique because there is always an employment consultant on-site to work with the managers and the new employee to problem-solve, create accommodations, supplement training, and facilitate positive working relationships." Megan asserts that this is a new way of doing business for DePaul Industries.

Employment services provided by DePaul include a variety of activities related to job development, job matching, and on-going customer support. These services benefit both the job applicant and the host business by ensuring the best possible match for the job and on-the-job training. Megan adds, "Working on-site at the host business provides insight to the work culture and essential functions of the open position, so that a qualified candidate can be matched successfully."

"When DePaul is looking for a qualified candidate for an open position at one of the hospitals we are working with, we send out a job announcement to agencies and individuals who are interested in seeking employment in the community," she explains. "This way of matching is more like what people are doing in the general community and represents a shift in how we find jobs for people with developmental disabilities."

Megan Brynelson is the Project SEARCH Program Coordinator in Oregon. She works at DePaul Industries out of Portland. For more information, go to their website at www.projectsearchdepaul.com.

Professional Privilege

By Paula Kreps, Powell's Books, Portland

Andy Owens is a high achiever and an excellent role model. He arrives ready to work every day and sets personal goals for himself. Andy's department has goals for a person in his position to reach, such as entering books into inventory; but Andy works hard in an effort to outperform those expectations.

Andy takes pride in his work and in contributing to the success of the department and ultimately the company as a whole. He has made

some lasting friendships with his co-workers and is eager to engage people. He takes his breaks and regularly stays after work with his co-workers in the lunchroom. I often get his latest movie critiques when popping into the lunchroom, and his reviews are always spot on.

Powell's was approached by a professional advocating on Andy's behalf, who wanted to get him a job working in the bookstore. Andy had experience working in a local library and wanted to pursue a similar job after graduating from high school. He had concrete goals, which made it very easy from an employer's point of view to determine if he was the right fit for the

Continued on page 17

Professional Privilege (cont. from page 16)

job. It was clear from the outset we weren't being asked to create a job designed specifically for Andy, but rather, he was looking to fill an existing position, that, with some assistive technology, he could perform. With a couple of volunteers with a couple of volunteer engineers, his advocate, his family, and Powell's all working together, Andy was soon employed.

Recently we were presented with an influx of inventory and limited resources to process it. Since Andy is always looking to diversify his job responsibilities, we thought of him in this role. Andy's dad was able to modify his equipment just enough to accommodate this inventory. We will be using a new inventory system in the near future which will change again how we do things. Like everyone else, Andy will have to learn the new system, but we are thinking through how this might work. Thinking about this change in terms of how Andy might use the new system helps us design it so that everyone benefits.

While Andy has worked for Powell's for seven years, his job responsibilities haven't changed significantly. That is not for a lack of initiative on Andy's part, but it has more to do with the physical nature of the work and Andy's physical condition. Every year for the past seven years, Andy has asked during his annual performance review to diversify his work. We are always mindful of this and continually ask ourselves, "Is this something Andy could do?"

I am privileged to work with Andy and to have him as a good friend.

Paula Kreps is the Pricing Task Force Projects Manager at Powell's Books where she has worked for the past 19 years. Her favorite thing to do when she is not working is playing with her children, playing soccer for fun, and distance running.

Beating the Odds Commitment and Technology Make All the Difference

By Andy Owens, Portland



Andy Owens

I began working at Powell's Books in 2001. Since then we have made some changes to my job, and we have changed some of the types of books I process. This meant that my Dad had to add a new piece of equipment, making it possible to open the covers of paperback books.

At work I use switches on my headrest to scan the bar code on the inside cover of books. The books come to me on a conveyor belt that is part of my specially designed workstation. I hit one head switch to move the conveyor belt and the other head switch to enter information on my computer, which then interfaces with the Powell's computer through an infrared connection. My personal assistant helps by putting price stickers on the books after I scan them. Then I hit my head switch again to move the book on, making sure that it closes on its own.

My supervisor at Powell's really wanted me to do this; it took my dad to engineer it and about \$30 in parts. (Who said someone with a significant disability costs more to employ? You just need someone who is inventive on your side!)

I still receive supports on the job - they have not changed too much over the years. I am still processing and doing 90% of the job with the

Continued on page 18

Beating the Odds (cont. from page 17)

use of assistive technology and my Dynavox computer, but I need someone to drive me to work, set me up in the morning when I get to work, and help me with my personal needs.

I think because I have shown that I can work, many others now are thinking that they could work too, or that their son or daughter could work.

My working at Powell's has had an impact on people in many places in the world. I know several people who have shared my video and story in other countries as well as throughout the United States. My family and I had faith in

hour. I love the fact I am able to work, buy my own things, and be independent with my own money. I decide what I want to spend it on and because I do work, I get to do more in my life and enjoy making friends at work.

Andy Owens is an active member of the Washington County Self Advocacy group, his church, and his community. He loves spending time with his friends, good movies, outings with his family, and family get-togethers. Andy enjoys presenting to groups about his job, but because he works he has to be selective on when he can do that.

“ ... because I have shown that I can work, many others now are thinking that they could work too ... ”

my capabilities, and it was a team effort to pull it off. My mom worked hard to get the right resources and help pull it all together. My dad, people at Powell's, and good friends worked hard to help set everything up, and it was worth all the efforts. Not only did I get a job out of it, but others have seen and now believe that people with significant disabilities make good, dependable employees.

Powell's wants all employees to enjoy their jobs and be successful. Hiring me is a great example of a business doing something because it is the right thing for their business. Mine is a good job, but I don't believe that I can climb the corporate ladder, since my job relies on technology, so I don't do a lot of the other aspects of the work at Powell's.

I am reliable and Powell's can count on me to be there. Like most working people, getting a paycheck is the best part of my job. I started at \$7.68 an hour and now make \$11.14 an

A Family Commitment

By Cynthia Owens

It is a huge commitment of our family to keep Andy's schedule the main focus of our day. We make sure that we have an assistant to help Andy at work. His job is very important to all of us, and I think because we have made this a big commitment, that is why it has lasted so long. We plan vacations, activities and more around Andy in general, but his job is a big part of that.

Cynthia Owens is the Family Issues and Employment Specialist with the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Successful Competitive Employment Is More Than Just a Job

By Dora Raymaker, Portland

I have an excellent job, I make a competitive wage, and I love the work I do. I am co-editor and writer of the Autism Cause blog at <http://autism.change.org>. I couldn't ask for work more suited to my abilities: I work from home, make my own hours, do all my communication with employers and co-workers in writing, and, best of all, I actually get paid to go on and on endlessly about my special interests! My contribution is valued.

However, while "the job piece" looks like I clearly have "made it" in employment, there are other, bigger picture considerations that remain unaddressed.

1. Competitive wage vs. living wage: My job pays market value, but it's part time and doesn't meet my living expenses. However, it does pay enough to disqualify me from SSDI. What will I do when my savings runs out?
2. Access to necessary services: Because the job ensures I don't qualify for SSDI, I also don't qualify for Medicaid. This reduces or negates the amount of hours I qualify for under most support programs.
3. Work vs. the rest of life: The more I work, the less ability I have to manage self and home care, particularly with the decreased support access. I have not had any time off in several years, except for isolated periods where I became so exhausted from doing nothing but work that I became completely incapacitated. I do not have time for hobbies, exercise, or friends.



Dora Raymaker

I wish that the sorts of catch-22's and work disincentives that I mention above were things only I experience. Unfortunately, they are barriers to employment for many people who, like me, are otherwise able to manage skilled, creative, or competitive jobs.

Even more unfortunately, these issues are beyond the control of me or any individual alone—these are system-wide issues in the way that disability benefits and service delivery systems operate in the United States. I, and those bound in the same traps I am, have a lot of advocacy, education, and policy work to do before we can have fair, competitive employment that is truly sustainable.

In the mean time, feel free to congratulate me on my awesome job (yes, it really is awesome!), but don't break out the champagne. I'm not even close to "successful."

True employment success depends on more than just a job.

Dora Raymaker is an autistic self-advocate. She blogs at <http://autism.change.org>, co-directs AASPIRE (<http://aaspireproject.org>), sits on the board of directors of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (<http://autisticadvocacy.org>), and is a member of SAAL (<http://askaal.org>).

The Right Supports Changed My Life

By Judy Cunio,
Salem

When I moved to Fairview at age 16, the supports I needed were not available in the community. A case worker made Fairview sound so good, like a small community or a college town. Because my speech is hard to understand, people assumed that I had mental retardation. At Fairview, all decisions were made for me and I had no idea what responsibility was. So, when I got out at age 22, I had to learn everything the hard way. I had to learn to look at what I can do, not what I can't do. Learning to make decisions led me to where I am today.



Judy Cunio

of work I wanted. So I decided to drop my DD services. That was a little scary. No one with developmental disabilities I know of had ever left the DD service system. Many people told me, "It will never work. You can't do that." It was a big risk for me.

While I was in the DD service system, everything was taken care of for me, and I did not have to worry about a lot of responsibilities. If I did have a job, I was only able to keep \$65 of whatever I earned. Now I keep all the money I earn and I'm responsible for all of my bills and everything else day-to-day. The EPD program allows me to work in my position as a state employee, support myself, and direct my own supports. There would be no way I could be doing what I'm doing now without the assistance I receive. I pay a monthly buy-in to be eligible for services like my medical card and home care. I meet with my EPD case worker every year to take a look at my plan, see if it needs changes, and figure out if I need any different supports.

"I am living proof that a person can accomplish a dream."

I am the Self-Advocacy Coordinator at the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities, where I have the opportunity to educate people about persons with developmental disabilities. In this job, I also actively participate on many state boards and committees, which help make policy decisions that affect people with developmental disabilities.

About 10 years ago, I learned about the Employed Persons with Disabilities (EPD) program, which would allow me to keep the money I earn and my medical card. At the time, I was receiving vocational services funded by the state developmental disability (DD) division, but I felt I couldn't grow and pursue the kind

In my job, I have the chance to teach professionals, parents, and people with developmental disabilities what people can do if they are given a chance. I am living proof that a person can accomplish a dream. Taking the risk wasn't an overnight decision. I had to get a real understanding of what I was taking on and get myself prepared. I had support from some friends who knew about the program, and I have had no regrets what-so-ever. It's not always easy, but it's worth it.

Judy Cunio lives in Salem and works at the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities, where she has been the Self-Advocacy Coordinator since 1999.

Perry Johnson Thrives Thanks to Community Support and His Employer

This article is reprinted with permission from Metamorphosis, an e-news article dedicated to sharing the amazing abilities of people living with developmental disabilities, published by Full Access Brokerage in July 2008.

Perry Johnson is a man of few words. That does not mean he is not listening to the conversation - in fact it is quite the opposite. He hears everything said, and he is usually busy thinking about his short but very precise response.

Perry lives with an extraordinary ability to remember numbers, historical facts, and obscure details. Most of us are lucky enough to get through a quick glance at the morning newspaper. Perry reads daily all of the Register Guard and two other newspapers, and retains a high percentage of the information.

After attendance at Lane Community College, Perry began a career as an auto detail specialist with Wentworth Buick Pontiac GMC. For his employer and friends at Wentworth Buick Pontiac, his presence is a gift to everyone who has the pleasure to meet him.

Long time employees, Ken and Dalene Schram recall stories about working with Perry.

"In thirty-eight years of working here, Perry has never called in a day sick except when he had prostate cancer. Even then, he was under doctor's order to refrain from work. The fourth generation dealership owner Scott Wentworth continued to pay all of his wages during that time. The only other time was in 2004 when his mother, Bertha Johnson, died," says Ken.

The loss of his mother was tough on Perry and his family. Ultimately, without his primary

caregiver there was a void of personal home care support. After his mother's sudden death, Perry needed to find a new place to live.

"We got all of the guys together and moved them into a new apartment. Everyone at Wentworth Buick Pontiac GMC was more than willing to help. When the time came to see if there were other community services available, we discovered that Perry never had assistance; he had to go through a series of eligibility test requirements. The Wentworth family once again chipped in to pay for an evaluation necessary for Perry to be considered eligible for help," Dalene said.

She shares the story about Perry's ability to figure out what day a person was born, no matter when their birthday was. An observer shares his birthday month, day, and year. You can see Perry is calculating multiplied years and days in his head and managing to tell each of us the exact day he was born. Perry responds, "Friday, Friday." He arrives at the correct answer instantly.

General Manager, Brandon Wentworth explains more about Perry's contribution to the company and his family's management philosophy. "Being a fifth generation family-owned and operated business, we like to encourage an environment of caring about people, and Perry is no exception. Perry is a big part of our company culture.

"He is an example of what makes our company what it is today. Our best policy is to take care of the people who build lasting relationships with customers and with each other. This is the best thing in the long term. We want to show people that everyone contributes and that

Continued on page 22

Perry Johnson Thrives... (cont. from page 21)

having a developmental disability needn't get in the way of hiring these really great people who can contribute with great resource and pride," says Brandon.

"Everyone is different in some way. In order to see the value of someone, you have to invest time into getting to know him or her. When Perry is doing his three stooges imitations, he makes all of us laugh. He is very thoughtful and never forgets the kindness of others," says Dalene.

When other businesses in the area begin to distribute their promotional holiday calendars, Perry goes to the owners and collects them to give to the Wentworth staff. Twenty years ago, when he first started doing this, business owners would call Wentworth Buick Pontiac GMC and ask what is going on with this guy and these calendars?

In the early years, no one knew who Perry was. Today when Perry speaks, people in the

community take time to listen. They listen with their hearts and their minds.

Full Access Brokerage is an Oregon based 501(c)(3) agency that provides services for people with developmental disabilities in Eugene, Cottage Grove, Madras, and Bend. FAB envisions a world where equal access ensures that all people live, work, and recreate in their communities.



*Perry Johnson with Dalene and Ken Schram.
Photo courtesy of Jeffery Fields,
FAB personal agent.*

Resources

Oregon Business Leadership Network (OBLN)
www.obln.org

Work Incentives Network (WIN)
To contact your local WIN staff go to
www.oregon.gov/DHS/vr/cep/index.shtml

For more employment success stories, go to
www.dhs.state.or.us/dd/supp_emp/#stories

Ride Wise: a travel training program provided by TriMet
Find out more at **www.trimet.org/ridewise/index.htm**

Introduction to Journey to Employment: Using Person Centered Planning as a Guide DVD.

http://ocdd.org/index.php/ocdd/publications/category/dvds_videos/

Concerned About How Working Might Affect Your Benefits?

Top Ten Reasons to Know About Work Incentives

By Molly Sullivan

10. **Do you live in Section 8 or public housing?**
No rent increase for 1 year after the day you start working; in the 2nd year only one-half of earnings count towards a rent increase. This is called *Earned Income Disregard*.
9. **Are you legally blind?**
Keep some or all of your SSI check when you work. This is called *Blind Work Expense*.
8. **Are you a student under the age of 22?**
Attend school regularly and you can keep some or all of your SSI check when working. This is called *Student Earned Income Exclusion*.
7. **Do you get Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and want to try working?**
Keep your entire check for about 9 months while working no matter how much you earn. This is called *Trial Work Period*.
6. **Do you get SSDI and don't want to lose your eligibility?**
Keep your eligibility status for a 3 year period if you work too much to receive a cash check. This is called *Extended Period of Eligibility*.
5. **Do you get SSDI or SSI?**
Keep your SSDI check; or keep more of your SSI check when you work. This is called *Impairment Related Work Expense*.
4. **Do you need help paying for things to reach your work goal?**
Get SSI to cover your living expenses while using your money to pursue your vocational goal. This is called *Plan for Achieving Self Support*.
3. **Do you get SSI and don't want to lose medical coverage?**
Earn less than \$29,050.00 a year and you keep your Medicaid coverage. This is called *Medicaid Rule 1619b*.
2. **Do you get SSI and earn over the 1619b limit?**
Buy into Medicaid if you have \$5,000 or less in resources and earn under \$4,599 a month. This is called *Employed Persons with Disabilities Program*.
1. **Worried about figuring all this out by yourself? You don't have to!**
The Work Incentives Network (WIN) is a free service with professionals all over the state who are ready to help you maintain your critical benefits and have more money in your pocket when you work! When you work, you WIN, so find your local WIN staff today at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/vr/cep/index.shtml>

Molly Sullivan is a Program Analyst for Oregon's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, the Competitive Employment Project. She is putting together a statewide benefits counseling and work incentives system for Oregon. Ms. Sullivan has been assisting people with disabilities with their employment issues for over a decade.

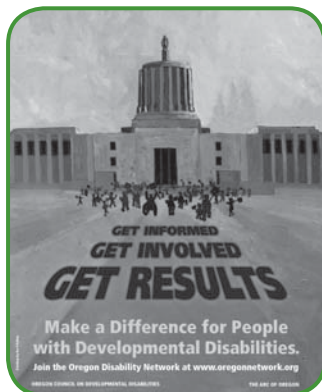
News and Views from the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



This year's DD Awareness Month Event was held at the Barbara Roberts Human Services Building on March 19, 2009. Dr. Bruce Goldberg, Director of DHS, once again presided over the event and read a proclamation from the Governor. DD Champion Awards were presented to Representative Chris Edwards and parent Roberta Dunn for their ongoing advocacy for people with developmental disabilities in Oregon. A new poster, co-produced with the Arc of Oregon, was unveiled, encouraging people to get involved in advocacy and have their voice heard on issues that are important to people with developmental disabilities.

*Order your copy today!
Contact the Council at
ocdd@ocdd.org or call
503-945-9941.*



Legislative Update

Much of the 2009 legislative session was dominated by an attempt to deal with the state's budget crisis, estimated to be about \$4.1 billion. State agencies were asked to propose budget reductions of 30%. While the use of federal stimulus dollars, the Rainy Day Fund, and some new revenue was expected to offset some of the deficit, some reductions in services to people with developmental disabilities were inevitable.

DD Awareness Month Proclamation

WHEREAS: Developmental disability is a natural part of the human experience, affecting nearly 37,000 Oregon children and adults; and

WHEREAS: All people with developmental disabilities can be productive, contributing members of their communities; and

WHEREAS: Many people with developmental disabilities rely on publicly funded services and supports in order to fully participate in community life; and

WHEREAS: During times of economic decline, essential services and supports for people with developmental disabilities are often threatened; and

WHEREAS: The power of people with disabilities is strongest when their voices are united; and

WHEREAS: Policy makers can only make good public policy when they hear from the people directly affected by their decisions.

NOW,

THEREFORE: I, Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor of the State of Oregon, hereby proclaim March 2009 to be Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Oregon and encourage all Oregonians with developmental disabilities, their families, friends, advocates, and support providers to join in this observance and participate in the process of creating good public policy.

Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder Created

In response to the issues of the rapidly growing population of children and adults identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Oregon, Governor Kulongoski issued an Executive Order creating the Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Commission, developed in response to the findings from the Oregon Autism Project, is charged with identifying priorities, effectively utilizing resources, and implementing a long term plan for service provision for people experiencing ASD and their families. Council staff was actively involved in the Oregon Autism Project and will continue to work with the Commission.

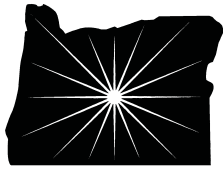
To learn more about the Oregon Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorder visit our website at www.ocdd.org



As challenging as this legislative session was, people with disabilities and families participated in hearings and made their voices heard. A few of those hearings included HB 3000, the Autism Insurance Mandate; HB 2834, the closure of the School for the Blind; HB 2445, the Family Opportunity Act; HB 2442, protective services legislation; HB 2441, vulnerable persons legislation; HB 2499, special education "best interest of the child;" SB 652, special education Burden of Proof; Early Intervention/ Early Childhood Special

Education overview in the House Education Committee; budget testimony in the Joint Ways and Means Committee on Human Services and the Joint Ways and Means Committee on Education.

A final report on legislative actions will be available on the Oregon Developmental Disability Coalition website at www.oregonddcoalition.org



**OREGON
COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES**

540 24th Place NE Salem Oregon 97301-4517

503-945-9941 (*Salem/Outside Oregon*)

800-292-4154 (*within Oregon*)

E-mail: ocdd@ocdd.org

Web site: www.ocdd.org

To receive this magazine in the mail, join the Oregon Disability Network, a collaborative statewide network of disability organizations and their members, including people with disabilities, their families, friends, providers, and policy-makers.

Members of the Oregon Disability Network share information with one another, receive *Oregon Perspectives* and other publications, can learn about training events and empowerment opportunities, and have the chance to voice opinions on policy issues at the local, state and national levels.

To request additional copies of this publication, or for more information, please contact us. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.



Jeff Wegner and Brian Bonney at DD Awareness Month Event

DD Awareness Event photos courtesy of Claudean Schaeffer