

ABILITY

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The Magazine of

Center for
Disability Services

Where people get better at life™

Winter, 2013

Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Theodore Roosevelt

EMPLOYMENT ISSUE

Enclaves

Sheltered work environment

Job Development

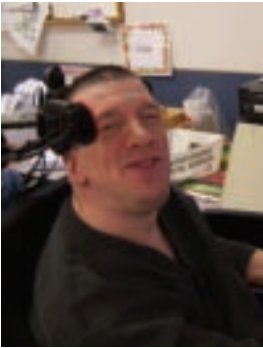
Matching the individual to the job

Supported Employment

Out in the community



Letter from the Editor: Ed Bartz



I can't relay how excited and honored I am to be a member of a huge team of individuals involved in launching capABILITY on-line. Many of our loyal readers have been anticipating this day for a long time. So, here we are with a brand new and more accessible product! This quarterly publication will introduce you to an organization, known as the place where people get better at life, which is dedicated to assisting people with disabilities and their families.

This periodical will feature different people, programs and upcoming events happening here at the Center for Disability Services in Albany, New York. You will read or hear stories which will encourage and motivate you. I will introduce you to each theme and include my own insight into its significance.

This latest issue, which is our first on-line, concentrates on employment for people with disabilities. Our Employment Options Program does its best to match the right person with the right job and vice versa. A lot of thought and energy goes into this process to optimize success. We will also have regular columns written by individuals who receive services and staff who work with them. Family members of people served by the Center are also encouraged to write about the challenges and achievements they have experienced. You will learn more as you read on.

Now that you have a glimpse of capABILITY, allow me to introduce myself. I am a 16 year veteran employee of the Center and have seen people grow by leaps and bounds through therapy and employment avenues. I love seeing people accomplish individual goals and enrich their lives. I am also a person with a disability. Born with cerebral palsy, I use a wheelchair to get around. My hands don't always do as I would like so I operate my computer and my wheelchair with my head. Technology plays a huge part in my independence and quality of life. Social media has allowed me to share my life with others and also participate in their lives. The Albany area has a very good paratransit system so I'm often out and about in the community. I enjoy life and have many friends and family to share experiences with. Please enjoy this new endeavor with us.

EMPLOYMENT ISSUE

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The Enclaves

at Commercial Services

Submitted by Katie Miller

Members of the enclaves work on a variety of contracts at Commercial Services. These contracts are with major companies and NYSID accounts. NYSID (New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc.) handles various accounts including the New York State Insurance Fund, the Department of Social Services, the New York State Thruway Authority and the New York State Divisions of Housing and Community Renewal.

All of this work comes to the Commercial Services site at Karner Road in Albany (for obvious reasons, the location is very close to the Karner Road Post Office). The contracts involve collating, inserting envelopes, metering, as well as general clerical duties such as answering phones, addressing envelopes and placing items in alphabetical order. At certain times of the year, such as major holidays, special contracts may come in. Recently, the enclaves worked on a contract for the New York State Conservation Society, assembling packets for school children to use in learning about conservation efforts around New York State.

The enclaves at Commercial Services offer distinct opportunities to the individuals who work there. Not only are participants part of the supported employment program, but they work, on an equal basis, alongside people who do not have disabilities. It is a great learning experience with a view to future individual placement, while at the same time teaching skills that may be applied throughout the individual's career. The enclaves offer not only growth in interpersonal skills, such as

Supported Employment offers a variety of job opportunities, one of which is to work in an enclave. An enclave is a group placement of not more than eight people who work with a permanent supervisor in an integrated setting where they earn minimum wage or more. Currently, the Center for Disability Services operates two supported employment enclaves, which are located at Commercial Services, the for-profit mailing service run by the Center.

knowing how to communicate work-related information, but, more importantly, these new skills boost the individual's self-confidence. The members of the enclave learn how to interact with their co-workers, while maintaining a level of speed and accuracy doing their assigned work. Employees in the enclaves have a sense of camaraderie, and they all share the feeling of accomplishment which comes from earning a paycheck. The enclaves stress teamwork and being able to seek help from co-workers when needed. The employees of Commercial Services and the enclaves are always there to assist and support each other which is an essential feature of the workplace.



The enclaves employ 30 people (19 of whom are linked with Adult Day Programs):

Angelita Molano
Kim Compton
Lauren Williams
Freddy Heigel
Scott Golden
Marianne Purello
Peter LaDuke
Christina Hauser
Sarah Light
Gabrielle Weekes

Deserea Taylor
Pomea Daily
T'Asia Thomas-Earle
James Crary
David Brown
Diane Gillies
Karen Toma
Heidi Schroder
Eileen Trinkala
Jamie Gariepy

James Rabideau
Yvonne Cook
Carol Wiltse
Neil Vatsyayan
Matthew Pezzula
Diane Pearson
Barbara Golden-Hampson
Keith Clark
Sari Virkler
Allison Harrigan

Profile:

E-Biz Docs

Like many successful businesses, E-BizDocs came from humble beginnings. The company was founded in 1999 by Howard Gross with a vision to provide what he observed was lacking in the industry.

“I had worked in this industry for quite a few years and was frustrated by the lack of customer focus I saw,” explained Gross. This attention to customer needs has since become the backbone of E-BizDocs in its effort to help companies and organizations improve the accessibility, security and preservation of records. This is aptly summed up in their succinct motto and pledge, We make finding your documents as easy as turning on your computer.™

A decade later, with over 1 billion documents processed, E-BizDocs remains committed to its customer focus. The company has been the recipient of many awards and recognitions. In 2003, and again in 2007, E-BizDocs received the Best Solutions Award, a Government Technology Award from the New York State CIO. Most recently, E-BizDocs was nominated for the AIIM international Carl E. Nelson Award for Technology for its innovative use of LuraDocument software. AIIM is the global community of information professionals. These honors, along with other awards, fortify E-BizDocs’ status as a dependable leader in the content management industry.

What sets E-BizDocs apart is its attention to its customers, commitment to superior quality service and cutting-edge electronic records management. E-BizDocs exhibits a passion for serving the needs of the community. A New York State Industries for the Disabled (NYSID) and Center for Disability Services partner, E-BizDocs has provided gainful employment for New Yorkers

with disabilities, including U.S. military veterans. In 2008, E-BizDocs joined with NYS OMH (Office of Mental Health) in an unprecedented strategy to provide competitive employment opportunities for New Yorkers who have a history of mental illness.



For E-BizDocs, success is defined by the collective contributions of each employee – or more appropriately, “team member.” By intentionally cultivating a positive work environment built around teamwork, team members understand their importance to the company and therefore feel encouraged to work to their fullest. As a result, many employees have worked as valuable members of the team for several years, and with their hard work they have consistently raised the bar of quality not only for the company, but also for the industry.

By promoting a commitment to teamwork, every individual is encouraged to work to the best of his or her ability. Each month, an employee who has demonstrated dedication to the team through hard work, a good attitude,

and consistent attendance is awarded the title of “E-BizDocs Employee of the Month.”

For E-BizDocs, the greatest accomplishment is when employees are recognized for their successes by others outside of the company. Two E-BizDocs employees have been nominated for the

William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Award. This award, given annually by NYSID, recognizes the exceptional vocational and personal success for New Yorkers with disabilities in Preferred Source employment. In 2007, E-BizDocs employee Wanda Horn was nominated for her exceptional

work ethic and commitment to quality.

In 2012, another E-BizDocs team member, Catherine Allen, was awarded the prestigious William B Joslin award. During her time at E-BizDocs, she has made an invaluable contribution to the E-BizDocs team.

Employment Options and Supported Employment

Employment Options is the Supported Employment program of the Center for Disability Services. The main goal of the program is to assist individuals with disabilities in finding and keeping appropriate jobs in the community, jobs which match their skills and interests and pay a competitive wage. Support comes from the employment specialists who assist individuals as they undertake a job search, prepare a resume and practice interview skills. Once an individual is placed in a position, the next role for the employment specialist is as an on-the-job trainer, learning the various aspects of the job alongside the consumer and assisting that individual in developing independent work skills and building self-confidence. After this period of intensive job coaching, consumers are provided with long-term follow-along services to ensure job retention and continued career development.

The staff of Employment Options who make all this possible are senior employment specialists Peter Hansen and Gloria Kaso, and employment specialists Amy Andolina, Charles “Chuck” Berns, Katie Miller, Katherine “Kate” Sibson, Kevin Taylor, Holly Teal and Karen Watterworth, aided by assistant director Jeff Lauridsen, who is responsible for all job development and Mike Sanders, the director of the program.

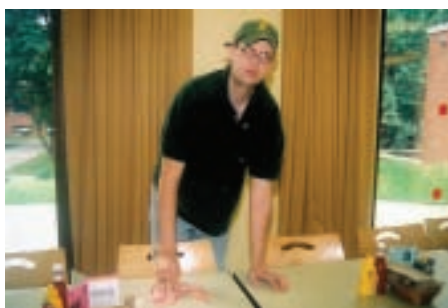
The staff work on a number of different contracts. There is the contract with the Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR). Generally, all referrals for intensive job coaching

go through the ACCES-VR contract. Once they are considered stable in their jobs, consumers move into the extended phase (long-term follow-along services) either through ACCES-VR or, more commonly, through

the extended contract of the Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Contracts also exist with the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) and individual school districts. There is also an ACCES-VR Unified Services contract, which is for job placement without any extended phase. A new contract for special job placement has recently begun with OPWDD, designed for individuals with vocational plans and goals who are considered not quite ready for supported employment.

The work done by employment specialists under these contracts is varied. They are initially involved in job development, (the topic of Jeff Lauridsen’s article in this issue of capABILITY) then on-the-job training and finally follow-along to insure job retention. With a caseload of 15 or more, an employment specialist at any one time may be involved in all these activities, which also include a lot of paperwork which has to be done on a daily and monthly basis. The employment specialist is not just involved with

the consumer and his/her immediate family or advocates. He/she must work with the employer and/or work supervisor, with service coordinators, day habilitation staff and others, such as people involved with transportation. The consumer has to be independent in their travel arrangements and many use the CDTA (Capital District Transportation Authority) Star Bus program.



While undertaking this complex role, the employment specialist must also keep an eye out for marketing opportunities, giving out specially designed brochures prepared by the Center's marketing department and promoting the program and employees. This all seems like a heavy workload, but employment specialists will emphasize the satisfaction the job brings them when they see an individual fulfill their work ambitions and become a contributing member of society.

The consumers work in a variety of settings. Employment Options currently works with more than 45 different employers. One individual works for New York

State. Others are employed by for-profit employers such as Price Chopper, Hannaford, McDonald's, Walmart, Shoprite, E-Biz Docs (also featured in this issue), Commercial Services or by non-profit agencies such as the Center for Disability Services. Two individuals work for Panera Bread and another two for Red Lobster. While one worker keeps the greens at Van Schaick Island Country Club, others clean cafeterias on various college campuses. There are two individuals who work in libraries. Each placement is a success story. For some, the success is complete independence in the workforce, the ultimate aim of Employment Options.

Job Development

Job development is the process of matching an individual's interest, skills and abilities to a community based employment position. The process begins with a meeting which usually involves the individual's family, service coordinator and where applicable, day program staff, residential staff and any other person deemed

important to molding an intensive service plan for job placement. This plan not only takes into account the person's interests, skills and abilities, but also the hours the individual is capable/willing to work, and any transportation issues. For most individuals we serve, Employment Options is assisting them in finding their first job or a position which may be a better job match. Either way, the intensive service plan meeting is crucial to developing a successful job match.

Once the plan has been determined, including the type of position, hours, location and transportation/supports, the employment specialist begins the job search utilizing a number of tools including internet listings, cold calling (by phone and in-person), one-stops, yellow pages and networking. Monthly job development meetings are held to share leads which may not be a good match for one person but which may be an appropriate match for someone else. A recent example was a lead developed for someone seeking a stock position. When follow up occurred with the employer, it turned out he was looking for a driver. When the lead was shared, it matched the requirements of another member of the program, who was on another employment specialist's caseload. It should be noted the original lead was developed by a person-to-person cold call. This position was not listed.

In preparation for an interview, the employment specialist will assist the individual with putting together a resume and practicing interview skills. The employment specialist will set up an interview and aid in brokering the position. Then the training phase begins. Once a person is trained and stabilized on a job and placed in extended services, this is considered a good job match. After a period of time, the individual may be interested in career development, a new job or retraining as the result of new duties. An example of this would be someone working in a cleaning position at night who would prefer daytime hours. In this case, Employment Options would look for that daytime position to meet the goal of career development, while supporting the person in their present job, thereby preserving a reference and a good work history. Supported Employment is structured to provide job placement and training assistance as a life long service for its members. For some, it may lead to complete independence in the workplace.

GETTING HIRED

It's easy to go from an applicant to an employee if you know something about the company and have researched the job opening. My recent conversation with Kim Moffre and Jude Klein will give you a better understanding of what prospective employers look for when hiring. Moffre has been the Personnel Manager for the Adult Services Division at the Center for Disability Services for four years, and she worked in the Center's Human Resources Department for nine years before that. Klein has worked in the Center's Human Resources Department for the past two years. Klein is an HR Manager who oversees multiple divisions across the Center while one of Moffre's responsibilities is to assist with the hiring process for people to work in our Adult Services Division. The information they provided for this article can help anybody become a valuable employee. As the three of us talked about material for this article, we discovered we shared common opinions regarding how people should conduct themselves during an interview.

A great way to start is to research the organization or company where you will interview. Determine how your skills/assets fit what the company seeks in an employee. Your resume should reflect your strengths as well as your attention to detail. Klein says she would be reluctant to consider a resume with obvious spelling errors. With the technology available today, there really is no excuse for any kind of mistake. Proofread your resume and ask a trusted friend or business professional to review it for you. A sloppy resume guarantees your job search will be prolonged.

Our next topic in the job search process is the interview. This is your chance to shine! In order to win over your prospective employer, there are some things you must do. Be on time for your interview. This will tell the employer you are reliable. Greet the person with a firm handshake (if possible.) This indicates confidence. Another thing which will impress your interviewer is constant eye contact. People like to know they are being listened to and in a job interview you will want to emphasize this skill. Show interest in what the person is saying. In addition to listening, participate in the interview by asking questions about the particular job. During your initial interview, concentrate on the job duties and tasks. Your main goal in your first interview is to see how or if you can benefit the employer.

This may seem obvious, but choose a job you will enjoy. Employers invest time and money into training. Give them a fantastic return on their investment. Employee turnover can be one of the highest costs for any company or organization. Don't become a statistic! When you are hired for a job do your best to keep the job. We all know with today's economy, having a job is critical. Good luck in your search for the right career.

Supported Employment in the Community

When we think about going to work every day, we take most things for granted. Instead of feeling stressed, tired, cranky, whiny, irritated or snippy, we should look at it from a different point of view. Imagine you are from the Supported Employment Program and you work out in the community. You put on a uniform that everyone at Day Hab notices. You get to say, “Yes, I am going to work today!” You have to eat lunch at a specific time so you can get to work on time. You take a different bus to work and home from work. You’ve been trained to do a specialized task or skill. You have certain freedoms that you do not get while you are at Day Hab. You are part of a team! Working makes you feel proud. You meet new people, learn new skills, see new people, and make new friends! Then, you even get something more than a sense of accomplishment—a paycheck! Awesome!

We had the opportunity to interview three individuals who are part of the Supported Employment Program and who work in the community. They are: Deserea Taylor from Charles Park Day Hab, Michael Mihok from Western Avenue Day Hab and Jennifer Corbett from New Karner Road Day Hab. Each individual works with a Job Coach who serves as a liaison between the individual and their place of employment. Job coaches assist employees with scheduling problems and any other personal issues related to their job.

Deserea Taylor has been working at Commercial Services for two years. She works one day a week and really enjoys it. Like all of the individuals we interviewed, she takes the Center’s Transportation bus to get to and from work. Her job is in the mailroom and is very important. She sticks, folds, sorts, and completes mass mailings. She is required to wear a uniform shirt that has a “Commercial Services” logo on it. She must report to a supervisor when she arrives and before she leaves. Due to her special needs, her Job Coach, Katie Miller, makes sure she has the correct equipment necessary to properly complete her job functions. While observing Deserea at work, she was all business and very dedicated. Keep up the good work, Deserea!

Michael Mihok has been working at the Price

Chopper in Guilderland for 10 years. He just received a special award for a decade of service and was allowed to pick out a prize. He chose a men’s silver ring with a jewelry box included. He works one day a week according to his Job Coach, Chuck Berns. Mike’s major job functions at Price Chopper are bagging groceries, returning carts, and restocking shelves. Mike saves up all of his vacation time, cashes it in, and then goes shopping on Black Friday. He says he likes to “Shop until I drop!” Mike wanted us to know he loves all of his customers and meeting new people in the community. Mike was very professional and very proficient at his job when we went to film him on location at Price Chopper. Good job, Mike!

Jennifer Corbett works at the Western Avenue McDonald’s in Guilderland. She has been working there for the past three years. Jen is lucky to have her Job Coach, Gloria Kaso. Gloria works by her side two of the three days a week. Jen is responsible for cleaning the tables, wiping down the trays, mopping the floors, and keeping the drink station in order and stocked. Jen doesn’t eat lunch at McDonald’s because it is just too tempting. Jen has learned to eat before she goes to work. She struggles with this because she really wants to devour everything in the restaurant! Jen has made quite a few good friends while working at McDonald’s. Everyone loves having Jen as part of the crew. Check out a day in Jen’s work life in our short video clip.

Keep in mind the next time you are getting ready for work that it is a privilege to put on a uniform or company name badge, to have a job, and to participate in the working world. For many of the people at the Center for Disability Services, having a job is a dream and a sought after goal. So let’s all be positive role models and come to work with good attitudes and excellent work habits. Let’s be polite, friendly, team players who exhibit all of the characteristics these three individuals showed us in their work lives.

By
Stacy Semago

Contributing Reporters:

Kate Pucci
Marissa Palmo
Matt Calautti
Robert Ray
Jennifer Spain
Keith Clark

The Center for Disability Services and the Joslin Award

The William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Awards Program annually recognizes individuals with disabilities who work on New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID) Preferred Source Contracts. The award was first celebrated in 2004 in memory of William B. Joslin, who was Chief Executive Officer of Human Technologies Corporation in Utica, and who served on NYSID's Board of Directors for many years.

The awards program annually recognizes individuals who perform exceedingly well at their jobs and who have accomplished a great deal in order to be considered an outstanding part of the workforce. NYSID member agencies are asked to nominate an individual as a Joslin Outstanding Performer, and then all nominees are considered for the final William B. Joslin Outstanding



Performance Award. Every Outstanding Performer receives a certificate of recognition and cash award, and all stories are published in a yearbook.

The first member of Employment Options, the Supported Employment program of the Center for Disability Services, to be recognized as an Outstanding Performer was Angelita Molano, a member of one of the enclaves working at Commercial Services in 2007, followed by Lauren Williams in 2008, Gerry Stevers in 2009, Gabrielle Weekes in 2010 and Karen Toma in 2011.

Parallel to these awards, another group of Employment Options program members were being recognized at E-BizDocs, a company which has worked closely with Employment Options and actually started at its Western Avenue offices, the home base of the Supported Employment program. In 2007, the Outstanding Performer from E-BizDocs was Wanda Horn, followed by Danielle Pollay in 2009, Ernie Langenwaller in 2010 and Dawn Henry in 2011.



The Outstanding Performers for 2012 were Keith Clark from Commercial Services and Catherine Allen from E-BizDocs. As their accompanying biographies demonstrate, they have each had a very different but equally impressive road to this achievement.