

DDD Today

A Publication of the Division of Developmental Disabilities



Chris Christie, Governor
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

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dddnewsletter@dhs.state.nj.us

Jennifer Velez, Commissioner
Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner

CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION CELEBRATES NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Seven Employers Recognized for Providing Job Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities



The Departments of Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development recently joined to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month by recognizing seven New Jersey employers for providing work opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Labor Commissioner Harold Wirths and Human Services Deputy Commissioner Dawn Apgar recognized Comcast, Lowes, Virtua Health Systems, TD Bank, the U.S. Social Security Administration offices in New Jersey, the Internal Revenue Service, and the U.S. Department of Labor for their efforts to recruit and hire job-seekers with disabilities.

“Breaking down barriers to employment is important in building a diverse, accessible, and productive work force. It’s also an empowering and inspiring influence in the life of a person with a disability,” said First Lady Mary Pat Christie.” That’s why earlier this year, Governor Christie and his Administration adopted an Employment First Policy to ensure that our residents with disabilities are a seamless part of our Garden State labor force, and I congratulate each of these seven companies for their commitment to this effort.”

The seven honorees were commended for their longstanding partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and hireAbility, a non-profit, private job development and job placement agency that helps people with disabilities obtain competitive jobs and helps employers find often overlooked talent.

“I’m proud of my Department’s efforts to help people find work, get training, and improve their skills, including those with disabilities,” said Labor Commissioner. Wirths. “I encourage New Jersey businesses that may not know how to reach this pool of dependable, qualified, and hardworking workers with disabilities to get in touch with my Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The program works cooperatively with employers and job-seekers to help find suitable employment matches.”



Continued on page 3.

Message to Stakeholders from Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner Jennifer

Dear Stakeholder,



October is [Disability Employment Awareness Month](#). In recognition, the Department of Human Services will highlight ‘Employment First’, the philosophy and practice that promotes competitive employment as the first and preferred post-education activity for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Work can provide a sense of purpose, personal accomplishment, financial strength, and self-determination. But for individuals with physical or developmental disabilities, mental illness, or addiction disorders, finding an occupation can be elusive. As one of 14 states that recognize ‘Employment First’, New Jersey is setting new benchmarks – not just for people with disabilities - but for their families, school administrators, employers, government agencies, business leaders, and community partners.

We’ll be participating in several events and activities that advocate Employment First and we’ll be using [DHS Connects](#) and social media to highlight the personal stories of about 20 workers with disabilities. Please check our [Facebook page](#) regularly for updates.

There are a couple of other acknowledgments in October: [Blindness Awareness Month](#), [Mental Illness Awareness Week](#) (10/7-10/13), [Primary Care Week](#) (10/14-10/20) and [World Food Day](#) (10/16). We’ll be spotlighting these topics on our Facebook page, as well.

Last month, we [showed appreciation](#) for the State’s many [Direct Support Providers](#) and participated with Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno in the [groundbreaking](#) of an affordable housing property in Brick Township that will become home to women veterans with children, individuals with mental illness, and people with developmental disabilities. In addition, Deputy Commissioner Lowell Arye participated in a ‘[Farm to Fork](#)’ harvest in Hunterdon County, helping collect corn and apples for delivery to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey. He also joined Acting Commissioner of the Department of Banking and Insurance, Ken Kobylowski in Bayonne to [speak with](#) a group of senior citizens about life insurance, long term care insurance, prescription, and food assistance.

Finally, September held the first meeting of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. The group heard a presentation about “Opening Doors,” the federal ten year strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness from Laura Zeilinger, Director of National Programs and Field Support at the US Interagency Council on Homelessness. Information on the US Interagency Council and a copy of “Opening Doors” can be found at <http://www.usich.gov>.

We continue to have regular meetings with stakeholders on the Department’s work and outreach. I look forward to our continued partnerships.

Regards,

Jennifer Velez

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/documents/OctoberStakeholderMessage2012.pdf>

CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION CELEBRATES NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Continued from page 1.

In April, Governor Christie announced that New Jersey was adopting an Employment First initiative. The initiative embraces a philosophy – implemented through policies, programs, and services – to proactively promote competitive employment in the general workforce for people with any type of disability.

“Last year, as partner agencies, the Departments of Human Services, and Labor and Workforce Development supported programs that found jobs for nearly 5,000 people by helping to match employers that are hiring with qualified job seekers who have disabilities,” said Department of Human Services Deputy Commissioner Dawn Apgar, who oversees the Divisions of Developmental Disabilities and Disability Services. “We continue to provide support to those employees through training, counseling, or assistive technology to make sure they can stay employed.”

Each year in October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and seeks to educate a wider audience about disability employment issues. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services hosted the celebration with Human Services in partnership with hireAbility.

Employers and job-seekers interested in learning about the programs and services offered by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services can get details online at:

<http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/dvrs/disabled/DisIndex.html>,

via email at dvradmin@dol.state.nj.us,

or by phone at (609) 292-5987 or (609) 292-2919 (TTY).



DDD CONSUMER FINDS GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT AT TRENTON YMCA

In the last issue of DDD Today, we mentioned that Tammi Wieger and Marlene Brockington, DDD consumers and co-editors of The Respite Reader, will be contributing stories to DDD Today. However, in this issue, John Morton, who works with Tammi and Marlene at the Arc Mercer, shares a note of congratulations he wrote after Marlene was hired by the Trenton YMCA.



Tammi Wieger and Marlene Brockington are the creators and co-editors of The Respite Reader.

“The Aftercare Respite program would like to congratulate Marlene Brockington for getting employment at the Trenton YMCA. Marlene was a camp counselor for the summer and now works at the Y after school. She said she loves working with the youth, even though sometimes they do not listen—but she reminds me that they are just kids. Marlene works two hours a day, five days a week. Marlene uses a wheelchair, but that does not stop her from facing the challenges of life. We can get motivation and inspiration from this young lady, so we give Marlene a big hug and a smile for her new found job.” - **John Morton**

NEW JERSEY AWARDED FEDERAL GRANT TO EXPAND SERVICES TO SENIORS AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Department of Human Services recently announced that New Jersey's service delivery system known as the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) was awarded \$118,000 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The funding will standardize 'options counseling' to ensure consumers get the guidance they need for selecting appropriate programs or services.

"This grant validates and supplements New Jersey's growing ADRC program," said Lowell Arye, a Deputy Commissioner at DHS who oversees the Division of Aging Services (DoAS). "Staff will be better tooled to help individuals and their families gain access to the right services at the right time in the right setting."

The ADRC is a joint initiative between the Department of Human Services and the county Area Agencies on Aging - in partnership with other state and local governmental and nonprofit agencies. This past May, the ADRC became operational in each of the state's 21 counties, which created a ready-resource for aging residents and individuals with disabilities to seek information or referrals and inquire about services, such as personal care, home delivered meals and prescription assistance.

The federal funding will be used to instruct counselors in the ADRCs who help individuals and their caregivers identify and access long term services and supports. Staff will undergo training that meets national performance standards to achieve certification requirements. "There are a lot of services and support options available for individuals who require extra care to sustain independence at home or in order to be discharged from a hospital or a nursing home," said Kathleen Mason, Director of DoAS. "It is with the direction of well-trained counselors that individuals in crisis get the support they need, when they need it."

The ADRCs provide consumers with immediate access to community programs, such as meals-on-wheels, housekeeping, specialized transportation, assisted living and nursing home care. It also connects seniors and adults with disabilities with work and volunteer opportunities, insurance program options, financial services, health promotion and disease prevention programs, housing, crisis intervention, and other home and community-based programs.

"In furtherance of the work of county social service agencies, which determine income eligibility and process government-funded program applications, ADRCs provide outreach and educational activities that advise seniors, people with disabilities and their caregivers – regardless of their income level - about the array of long term services and supports available that may delay or eliminate the need for institutional care," said Nancy Day, Deputy Director of DoAS. "Staff conducts an intake survey that identifies individuals' needs and directs them to the most appropriate services or interventions to help them maintain their home-based independence."

For more information, go to the ADRC website (www.adrcnj.org), which has thousands of national, state, and local resources, and other consumer-friendly tools, including Google translation and mapping features. The site is Section 508-compliant for improved access for individuals with vision impairments.

MEET DDD'S COORDINATOR OF EMPLOYMENT & DAY SERVICES

For the past year, Jennifer Joyce has served as the Coordinator of Employment & Day Services at DDD. In this role, Jenn oversees DDD's statewide implementation of employment services and Employment First initiatives. In that capacity, she serves as the point-person for the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) and has been working on operationalizing the employment services that will be available through the Supports Program, clarifying policies and practices related to employment services and supports, and leading the NJ SELN Team.

Additionally, Jenn represents DDD on the State Rehabilitation Council, the NJ Alliance for Full Participation, the State Employment & Training Commission Disability Issues Committee, and the DiscoverAbility NJ Management Team. She was also honored with the Rebecca McDonald Award on a national level

in 2008 and in 2012 for her leadership in working to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities in NJ.



Jenn said she enjoys helping students with intellectual and developmental disabilities ages 16-21 prepare for life after graduation, whether that means pursuing secondary education or employment. Currently, she is working on creating new training modules to help families understand the transition process. She hopes to begin offering training in the spring of 2013.

Jenn also recently assisted staff from the Department of Human Services with the creation of several videos that feature people with disabilities who are working as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This month is a great time for businesses to see “that people with disabilities are an untapped resource of qualified candidates for their job opportunities,” Jenn said. Furthermore, “people with disabilities can learn about the services and supports that are available to assist them in successfully finding and maintaining employment.”

“I also think it helps people who may not know someone with a disability--or know that they actually do know someone with a “hidden” disability--become aware of the many and vast talents that people with disabilities have and how those talents can lead to employment success.”

To view the videos, visit the DHS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NJDHS or the YouTube Playlist at <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLspiLS805lyeyXugJ-tX0eGpiMnTzk6eT>.

**Check out our calendar,
featuring events hosted by DDD
and our service providers.**

A SURPRISE REUNION FOR STANLEY

Submitted by the New Lisbon Developmental Center Cedar Cottage Team

Stanley King had not seen his brother Alfred King, Jr. in over 50 years. He had always known he had a brother and talked about him fondly; however, he had no idea where his big brother, lovingly referred to as “Junior” was living. Lucky for Stanley, that fact would change very soon as Alfred reached out to the Center in hopes of finding his younger brother Stanley.



Since Alfred lived in Portland, Oregon and would be traveling across the United States to meet Stanley, arrangements were made with the Center for Alfred to stay at the New Lisbon Developmental Center’s Hospitality Suite. Alfred was both excited and anxious; he was also a little nervous too. He was hoping that Stanley would be as excited to see him as he was excited to see Stanley. He was also hoping the visit would go well between the both of them. Because, if the visit went well, Alfred had another surprise for Stanley.

With the help of the direct support staff, plans were made for Alfred to finally visit Stanley. It was decided that Alfred would visit Stanley at Stanley’s work site, Esteem Industries. Alfred was the first to arrive. He had been wearing a hat and he placed it down on the table next to him, patiently waiting for Stanley to arrive for work. Finally, Stanley arrived at his work site. He immediately took notice of the new hat on the table. If you know Stanley, you know how much of a fan he is of collecting hats. Then, he looked up at Alfred. He stared

at him for a moment and then he smiled and said, “That’s my brother, Junior”! Alfred couldn’t believe that Stanley recognized him right away and was so touched at being called “Junior” again. According to Alfred, the only people who refer to him as Junior are his family. Tears of happiness welled up in both brothers’ eyes as well as all who witnessed this amazing reunion.

The brothers spent the rest of the week catching up on life and sharing stories from the past. Alfred even made arrangements to take Stanley to visit their sisters. They both shared a wonderful time having another family reunion that was long overdue and filled with fond memories.

On the last day of his visit, Alfred wanted to thank all the staff and individuals who have enriched Stanley’s life. He stated he was overjoyed to see how happy Stanley seemed and how much he is loved by the staff and peers at the Center. And, of course, he admires his little brother’s keen sense of fashion! Stanley and Alfred promise to remain in contact with each other until they are able to meet face to face once again.

DDD CONSUMER GETS OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

The New York Jets added a new cheerleader to its roster this season—Jadyn Waiser, who was diagnosed with autism at the age of 2 and is a DDD consumer. Since she is only 8 years old, Waiser was part of the Jets Junior Flight Crew, which is specifically for youth. After several practice sessions with the team's adult cheerleaders, the crew was invited to perform during half-time at a pre-season game against the New York Giants.

Her mother Michelle said she learned about the Jets Junior Flight Crew from a sorority sister who thought it would be perfect for Jadyn. Staff involved with the program were very accommodating and also allowed Jadyn to have a shadow to assist her during practice and on the field.

“It was fun,” Jadyn said of the experience. She also enjoyed making new friends and wearing a pretty uniform. Jadyn, who began cheering for a local Challenger League last year, does some modeling and ballet as well. The Bridgewater resident also enjoys playing baseball, surfing, shopping, going to the movies, and spending time with friends.

Jadyn's parents, who are both strong advocates in the autism community, always make sure they give her opportunities to engage in social activities. “We expose her to different things and see what she likes,” Michelle said. “My advice is you are your child's advocate, and you are their voice and you need to fight for your child. Remember that they are a child first and that their autism is secondary. You've got to let them have play time. They don't need therapy 50 hours a week; let them be a kid.”



For more information or to share your stories about autism, go to:

<http://www.facebook.com/JadynWaiser>.

To learn more about the Jets Junior Flight Crew, visit:

<http://www.newyorkjets.com/flight-crew/junior-program.html>

ANNOUNCEMENTS



ANNOUNCEMENT



We are excited to announce that CMS has granted New Jersey's request for its Comprehensive Medicaid Waiver.

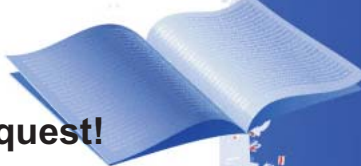
For details, visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/news/press/2012/approved/20121004b.html>

STORY IDEAS?

E-MAIL US AT:

DDDnewsletter@dhs.state.nj.us

We will happily consider your request!



DDD Today Has A New Look!

Each month, DDD Today will have a theme. This month is employment. And, in an effort to keep you better apprised, each issue will focus more on internal initiatives at DDD and at DHS. As always, we welcome your input and story ideas.



Crime Prevention for People with Disabilities

Courtesy of the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office

A physical disability, impaired vision, hearing, or mobility doesn't prevent you from being a victim of crime. Common sense actions can reduce your risk:

- Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings, whether on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, or waiting for the bus or subway.
- Send a message that you're calm, confident, and know where you're going.
- Be realistic about your limitations. Avoid places or situations that put you at risk.
- Know the neighborhood where you live and work. Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, restaurants, or stores that are open and accessible.
- Avoid establishing predictable activity patterns. Most of us have daily routines, but never varying them may increase your vulnerability to crime.

For more tips, visit: <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/sheriff/crimeprevention/victim/Crime%20Prevention%20for%20People%20with%20Disabilities.pdf>



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The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) was created in response to the need for better and more effective services for state residents with developmental disabilities. Advocates for those services included many parents and other family members who wanted community-based alternatives to the institutional care that had been their only option for many decades.

Today, more than 43,000 individuals are eligible to receive services funded by the division, including a growing number who are under the age of 22. Most DDD-eligible individuals live in the community, either with family or in a community residence such as a group home or supervised apartment or in a Community Care Residence with a family caregiver. Almost 2,600 individuals reside in one of the seven developmental centers now administered by DDD.

Visit us on the Web at: www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd