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4/11/2010

Artists in Transition Conference
WCSU - Danbury, CT

4/24/2010

The Confetti Gala
Danbury, CT

Please visit
www.abilitybeyonddisability.org
for more information

Roses For Autism *Employing the Autism Community*

April is Autism Awareness Month and Ability Beyond Disability is celebrating by supporting Roses for Autism! Roses for Autism, a division of Ability Beyond Disability, is dedicated to providing vocational training to people with Autism. Located at Pinchbeck Rose Farm in Guilford, CT, we currently have five individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder working at the farm alongside of Pinchbeck's employees. They grow amazing, long lasting and beautiful roses while learning the vocational skills that will help them be as independent as possible.



The Roses for Autism Transition and Work Program provides individuals on the Autism Spectrum either the opportunity to work competitively or "try out" and train in a real life Greenhouse setting. It is an evolving program and as the business grows so will the number of individuals that can participate. Roses for Autism offers individuals on the Autism Spectrum three tracks; dependent on where the individual is in their employment endeavors.

The first track is a **Transition Program**. This is open to individuals on the spectrum who are 16 or older, who have little to no experience working in a greenhouse environment, but have a strong desire to learn more about the agricultural field, while also having a need to learn the basic skills of finding, obtaining and holding employment in a real life setting. This is open to students of local school systems who are in their Transition years.



Track 2 is **Paid Employment**. This track is for individuals who have already exited their high school years and are ready and able to work. Within the Roses for Autism business, there will be opportunities for individuals to apply for employment. Some of the positions will be full-time while others will be part-time or per-diem.

Track 3 is **Group Supported Employment**. This track will be developed within the next year or two to meet the needs of individuals who have already transitioned from school but are not quite able to work competitively yet. With this model the individual is working as part of a team supported by a job coach. The individual will have specific work goals to help them be as independent as possible at their job.

This month a new employee with Autism will join the Roses for Autism team. This individual will help with marketing and events, especially e-marketing...a testament to how job options at the farm continue to expand.

If you would like to celebrate Autism Awareness Month and support the people working at Roses for Autism, consider purchasing some of their roses! Visit www.rosesforautism.com for more information.



Look Who's Joined Our Team

We would like to welcome new additions to our team for April:

Bartone, Julie A., LSI
Belizaire, Woodlyne, LSI
Busher, Jennine, LSI
Clinton, Emon S., LSI
Cochrane, Felicia T., LSI
Crespo, Jonathan, LSI
Crossman, Karen, Dietetic Tech.
Daly, John G., LSI
Faticoni, Lisa M., LSI
Gillette, Danielle L., LSI
Hadgraft, Amanda K., LSI
Harris, Paul L., LSI
Howe, Tafari A., LSI
Johnson, Mukai C., LSI
King, Ashley M., LSI
Langhorn, Tumika S., LSI
Marsalisi, Patricia M., LSI
Marsh, Melissa, LSI
Matos-Rivera, Christerfer, LSI
Molinaro, Beth A., I & R Supv.
Morrow, David, Emp. Spec. I
Mota, Joily Z., LSI
Murphy, Pamela M., LSI
O'Brien, William J., LSI
Swain, Veronica M., LSI
Tavares, Marlyn, LSI
Terrillion, Darrick R., LSI

With diverse backgrounds (including many in the human services field), all of our new hires will be great additions to our organization!

Our Vision For The Future...

Ensuring a successful future for our consumers, families and employees

We have already begun to see the growth we have planned for as part of our Vision for the future and we are confident that growth will continue. Here are a few things we should all be proud of....

- As assumed, both states are looking to privatize service for people with disabilities and they are turning to organizations like Ability Beyond Disability for help.
- We are being rewarded for quality and efficiency of our services and as a result we recently opened a new group home in NY for four women who were previously being served by another agency.
- We have also seen growth in both our Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for Employment and Supported Independent Living services as a result of our successes and outcomes as a provider.
- Progress is being made in the development of a 14 bed specialized aging facility in New York to allow us to better meet the needs of those aging with disabilities.

Together we will all make our vision for the future a reality!

Introducing our new mission statement...

How many people can actually recite our mission statement (without looking)? If you haven't noticed, our mission statement is very long, complex and difficult to remember. The Mission Validation Committee of our Board has spent the past year working to fix this challenge. They set out to develop a new mission statement that would be somewhat edgy, yet reflective of what we do and easy to remember. They came up with a fantastic new mission statement that was adopted by the Board last month...

"Our mission is in our name...at Ability Beyond Disability we discover, build and celebrate the ability in all people!"

The new mission statement will go into effect on July 1st. You will be seeing additional communications about the mission roll-out plan in the coming months. In the meantime, we are asking everyone to help us eliminate waste. Please take a look at what stationery and printed materials you may have in your areas and share with others who may need it.



PENGUIN PLUNGE

This year's Annual Penguin Plunge for Special Olympics was held at Candlewood Lake in Danbury, CT. The Ability Beyond Disability team was headed up by Local Coordinator, Alanna Licursi. We had 45 brave souls from all different areas of the organization plunge into the frigid water! In total, over 100 plungers raised over \$30,000 for the Northwest Region of Special Olympics Connecticut. Thanks to everyone who made this year's plunge such a great success!



connections

“Oh My” Employee of the Month -Jessica DiPalma



Jessica DiPalma has only been working as a Life Skills Instructor (LSI) at Ability Beyond Disability since October 2009 and has already established herself as an outstanding employee. She began as a Flex Staff and chose Dodgingtown as her home base. In the short time that she has been at Dodgingtown she has already proven herself as “a hard working employee with a positive attitude”. She assists in training new staff and interacts well with the consumers. According to her supervisor, Jessica “will go above and beyond to fulfill the consumer’s needs.”

Jessica expressed that Ability Beyond Disability is “a really great organization”; she “really likes the group home and thinks the consumers are great”. She previously worked at a supermarket along side some Ability Beyond Disability consumers and became interested in working here. Jessica would like to continue her education and become a nurse. She feels that her experiences at Dodgingtown will help her gain greater insight into the field.

On behalf of Ability Beyond Disability we would like to congratulate and thank Jessica for her hard work, dedication and commitment to the people we serve!



April “Oh My” Award Nominees

Dominique Goodman - Assistant RSC

Shameka Hansberry - LSI

Edward Loveras - DSP

Kerri Rogers - LSI

Vernon Blash - Assistant RSC

Anniversaries

Patricia Green	23	Sharon Luchsinger	4
Nancy Schmitz	23	Daniel Bond	4
Michael McLoughlin	19	Areysi Castillo	3
Christine Boisvert	19	Edward Loveras	3
Daele Corna	19	Kyla Andreasen	3
Jose Cordeiro Jr.	19	Jennifer Ehli	3
Constance Tracey	17	David Mboroki	3
Patricia Mitchell	16	Karen Holubis	3
Thomas Caprio	14	Shyee Lockett	3
Michael Smith	12	Lynn M. Pucino	3
Nereida Joseph	12	Jonathan M. Sutkitis	3
Gary E. Hull	11	Timothy H. Lenney	3
Doris I. Rodriguez	10	Milton T. Joyner	3
Joan Artis	9	Joan Maderi	2
Pascual Infante	9	Donovan Edwards	2
Jeremy Redfern	8	Beatriz Torres	2
Chris Prorock	8	Alberto Madera	2
Ikemba Chikezie	8	David Bryant Jr.	2
Karen Hofer	8	Ashlyn Godbee	2
Tessa Jack-Simpson	8	Peter Alexandratos	2
Nikeisha Wright	7	Yuri Farrison	1
Sharon Hall	7	Kimberly Hull	1
Nilsa Soto-Martinez	7	Emily Sears	1
Juan Angustia	7	Luis Merchan	1
Chantell Paris	6	Shari Schiavo	1
Mary Loveras	5	Sean Tibbitts	1
Arlene Vega	5	Ranisha Green	1
Adam Smith	5	Shishana Evans	1
Christina Alleva	5	Lawrence Penny	1
Diana Bova	5	Brian Bogholtz	1
Michele Downing	4	Nicole Perry	1
Jeffrey Huntington	4	Sharon Dair	1
Faith Japhet	4	Shannon Person	1
Yutheary Chhuop	4	Robert Layok	1
Jamie Ambrogio	4	Miguel Caraballo	1
Chris Kansky	4	Kristen Boehn	1
Pamela Creaturo	4	Rachel J. Brennan	1
Cassandra Herbert	4	Paul A. Dunne	1



Educational Profile

*-Tom Kitai,
Millington RA*

The reason I choose to go back to school was in response to the changing career demands around me. Six years

ago when I joined Ability Beyond Disability I just wanted a job. I had the experience in the field but I really did not give too much thought about the position I had. As the years went by I started taking an interest in some of the other opportunities within our agency and I felt that I could do the job but I needed more academic credentials. The agency has been very helpful passing along opportunity after opportunity and urging us to improve ourselves. Most of these opportunities never interested me until I started thinking of a career change. Having had most of my education in the United Kingdom, I felt like I was starting all over again. I was worried at first but after a couple of weeks into my semester I became comfortable with the idea and now it's hard to imagine why I waited this long.



Dutchess Community College worked out for me for a lot of reasons. It is very affordable and the fact that several of these classes were offered with a discounted rate by the agency was an extra plus for me. The distance to and from my workplace and home was very convenient. I also felt that if school did not work out at least I would not end up with huge student loans.

The tuition reimbursement that the agency offers was a major motivator into my taking up classes. It has helped me stay focused despite the financial hardships that come with extra bills. Just knowing that I have some help after I pass my classes is a comfort that I personally want to thank the agency for. Without this I feel I would not have been able to continue with my education.

BRAVO!

Some noteworthy happenings at Ability Beyond Disability

Our newest IRA home, located in **Yorktown**, NY has officially opened! This home will support 4 young women whose families requested that Ability Beyond Disability provide their services. Congratulations to Liz Sunners, Mary Pell Bidwell and Tracy Ashe for their great success! Opening this home was truly a team effort and many thanks go out to each and every person who helped to make it happen.

The **Benefits, Wellness and Education fair** was a huge hit this year! Thanks to all who helped make it happen and congratulations to our raffle prize winners:

Wandalynn Short - Wii & Wii Fit

Adam Pratt - Exercise Package

John Watson - Trader Joe's Gift Bag



"Hope"

- a poem by Carey Sokolowski, a resident in our young adult program

Hope, what is it?

Hope is the strong self will

To have inner strength and to believe

Hope is faith to believe in something true.

Hope, why do we have it?

We have hope because it keeps us emotionally strong

And it gives us faith to believe in ourselves.

Everyone deserves to have hope.

How can we grow without it?

The answer is very simple

We must have hope and confidence

Within ourselves to want to move forward with our lives

Hope, is what everyone needs to be

Uplifted from our burdens.

Hope is what we all need to function and stay strong

Your physical health will encounter how you

Feel emotionally and vice versa.

Hope is an absolutely amazing subject

Hope gives us the will

To want to change for the better.

Hope is trust.