

TIE THAT BINDS

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ATTITUDE IS THE REAL DISABILITY

REHABILITATION IN TENNESSEE

October marks the beginning of a new fiscal year. We can take a few minutes to reflect on the success we enjoyed in the fiscal year that ended September 30, 2014.



- ✓ Assisted **2150** people into successful employment
- ✓ The RSA goal of **1967** successful closures was blown out of the water
- ✓ Highest wage **\$62.50/hour**
- ✓ **Congratulations** to the **14 TN VR units** across the state, where everyone in the unit reached their goal.

HIDDEN JOB MARKETS

As a person with a disability I would not want to hang out with people with disabilities all day. A disability is part of my life, but not the entirety of who I am. My entire life should not consist of other people with disabilities and the paid professionals surrounding me. The day of looking for the 4 “F” jobs (flowers, folding, filth and food) is coming to an end. People are exposed to more than the 4Fs. Employment consultants are savvier in their approach to businesses.

Successful employment consultants live and breathe job developing. They are out in the community observing businesses as they grocery shop, take their children to soccer practice and eat at local restaurants. They are in tune with the job market and unspoken needs and wants of businesses.

Not all companies advertise. Look at the want ads in your local newspaper. Everyone knows there are more jobs available than are listed in the newspaper.

Some employers don't have a clear idea of a job description. Since they can't describe it, they wait for someone to approach them wanting to work or know someone who could help them.

Companies are overwhelmed by the flood of applications and resumes. Word of mouth and personal references and business contacts are the favored way to fill vacancies.

Small business still makes up the majority of the business sector. Some have limited budgets; others are looking at ways to increase their bottom line. They would prefer to hire someone they know or from a referral source they trust. As an employer I can choose from “Joe Blow”, who I have a resume and spent 30 minutes interviewing. Or, I can rely on my trusted employment

consultant who has spent 3 months getting to know my business and his pool of talented people.

As you live and breathe job developing in your community, you will see opportunities that can be done more efficiently; you will become a trusted resource to the employers; and you will see how the skills of your talented pool of people can be used in the community.

Closed Sheltered Workshops

Vermont closed its last sheltered workshop in 2002, four years after the state told workshop providers that they were being carved out of the system.

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Services Division started by not allowing new people in sheltered workshops, where people with disabilities work only with other people like them.

The next step was to cut funding to sheltered workshops over time.

The state partnered with workshop providers. They were very careful not to say, "Just figure this out," They wanted to be at the table and help.

Ultimately, no public dollars were used for anything less than integrated employment.

That also eliminated enclaves, which are work programs that take people with disabilities into regular workplaces with close supervision.

What was the reaction and what happened to those in workshops?

The families were initially scared for their adult children who had worked in sheltered workshops. They couldn't envision a job in the community that their child could fill,

and parents thought they'd be unsafe and lonely without their peers.

It was a really trying time to help families understand the value of inclusion and the value of community work because they had a place of safety for their adult children and they didn't want to give it up. Within three years, about 80 percent of people who'd worked in the last sheltered workshop to close found jobs. Those who didn't received other services based in the community.

(from an article by Halley Stockton, 9/28/2014)

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, there are two sides to issues. To see the other side of this story see: www.accses.org.

Mentors

We are all thankful for the mentors in our lives. What makes for a good mentor? It is not necessarily someone in the same profession, but maybe someone that:
Has clear expectations,
Mutual respect,
Reciprocity, and
Shared values.

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THE STONE AGE
DID NOT END
BECAUSE THEY RAN OUT OF STONES....

-Sheikh Zaki Yamani,

IDEAS ARE LIKE RABBITS.
YOU GET A COUPLE
AND LEARN HOW TO HANDLE THEM,
AND PRETTY SOON YOU HAVE A DOZEN.

-John Steinbeck