

JOB TRAINING & PLACEMENT REPORT

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32 years
of service

for professionals who support employment for people with disabilities

Passion & Persistence:

JTPR Celebrates Disability Employment Month

Darryl
Humphrey



A dream that would not die and fierce determination were constants in Darryl Humphrey's life,

even as he was let go from a company he served for 14 years.

As Darryl's vision deteriorated, he was moved from job to job within his company, without any on-the-job support or accommodations for his vision loss. To be let go after all those years would have been a crushing blow to most individuals, but Darryl set about looking for a new job, combing the newspapers and Internet in search of opportunity.

More than a year later, after he had exhausted his savings and applied for public assistance, opportunity presented itself in the form of a progression program for the blind and visually impaired (VIP) offered by Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey (Astoria, NY).

The VIP program's focus is placing people in jobs in their communities that are a good match for their skills. The program also offers

pre-employment counseling, work readiness skills training, intensive on-site job coaching, and extended services.

When employees at Goodwill learned that Darryl had long dreamed of working for the New York Police Department (NYPD), the agency became a critical partner in making that dream come true.

"Darryl is a man whose resolve is far more powerful than his disability," says Astoria Goodwill President and CEO Rex Davidson. "We were determined to help him fulfill his dream."

Darryl registered with GoodTemps, Goodwill's temporary employment agency, so he could begin earning a paycheck. Next, staff met with him, sometimes during the evenings after his temp assignments, to help with the NYPD's application book.

VIP Program Manager Martha Jackson accompanied Darryl at interviews, advocated for accommodations during testing, assisted with documentation and background checks, and had weekly contact with the NYPD on Darryl's behalf.

The process was worth it. In December 2006, Darryl landed a job as an administrative aide for the NYPD, where he assists and interviews complainants, runs license plate and warrant checks, activates

and cancels alarms for stolen vehicles, and mans the switchboard during the night shift.

Darryl works with the ZoomText computer screen magnification program, which was provided by the New York State Commission for the Blind. NYPD's information technology department expedited installation during training so Darryl could keep up with his classes.

"Darryl is patient and compassionate with the victims and complainants that come to the 49th Precinct to file a report," says Sgt. Charlie Kim, patrol supervisor at

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Older Workers:

Don't Take a Backseat in the Hiring Process

By Joe Turner

Does age-bias exist in today's hiring process? That's a tricky question that's often hard to prove, and yet many mature workers seem to face an uphill battle when competing against younger workers from Generations X and Y.

The following are some pointers for job hunters who may have a few years under their belts.

1. Change Your Mindset

Remind yourself that you're experienced, not old. You're seasoned, not over-the-hill. You're here-and-now, not history. It's all about spin and reframing. If you have any doubts, watch the presidential campaign.

The latest recession has created a lot of employment casualties and anxiety. But you can win in any job market with a can-do attitude and by powering up the tools you need to find a good job.

2. Go on the Offensive

Use your savvy and experience to sell yourself. Sell your track record. Remember when you were fresh out of school and had no experience? It's hard breaking into a career or getting a job without experience. Appreciate being on the other end of the spectrum now, and turn your age into an advantage.

3. Wear Just One Hat

Focus only on the job for which you're applying. Tell them what they want to know and nothing more. You've probably worn many different hats during your career. If your duties and experiences from some previous positions don't address the

job's requirements, don't emphasize them. In fact, get them off your résumé entirely if you can, as it will only give employers another reason to screen you out. Magnify only the aspects of your background that are relevant to your target objective.

4. Modify Your Résumé

Stack the job hunting deck in your favor by emphasizing your strengths. Drop old work history. You generally shouldn't need to include more than 10 years' worth. Anything prior to that is most likely irrelevant, bores the reader, and emphasizes your age. Remove college degree dates and other training dates that go back more than a few years. You've been around a while, but you don't have to shine a flashing light on it.

5. Sell Results

Here's the most important tip of all: hiring managers today are looking for results, not years. Talk the language that an employer understands and appreciates, which is *Return-on-Investment*. Instead of citing 20-years of experience, identify your benefits to the employer and put them into monetary terms as much as possible. Back up your accomplishments with facts that are benefit-based.

Summary

If you're an older, experienced worker, you don't have to take a backseat in the hiring process. While there will be age discrimination with some employers, you can still stack the deck in your favor by being honest and emphasizing your strengths rather than magnifying your vulnerabilities. ■

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As a recruiter, Joe Turner has spent the past 15 years finding and placing top candidates in some of the best jobs of their careers. Author of "Job Search Secrets Unlocked" Joe offers free insider job search secrets at www.jobchangesecrets.com.

Fast Facts

- There are approximately 6.5 million people with cognitive disabilities, but only about 200,000 of those must be taken care of in an institutional setting — all others are capable of some kind of work! (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)

the precinct. "He doesn't rush the paperwork or get upset when a complainant unintentionally lashes out at him. He treats each individual as a person and not as a report or statistic." Any crime victim who has to go to a police station to file a report "would want to be helped by someone like Darryl," he asserts.

Darryl is now poised for long-term employment and promotion, thanks to Goodwill's help in applying for New York's 55-A Program, which excuses persons with disabilities from tests normally required for advancement as long as they prove they can do the job with reasonable accommodation.

Source: "Working!" a publication of Goodwill Industries International. Darryl Humphrey of Astoria, NY is Goodwill Industries International's 2008 Graduate of the Year. The award honors an outstanding person who has completed a Goodwill Industries career program and is now competitively employed by a non-Goodwill employer in his/her community.



Ren Monllor

Ren Monllor wanted to start his own small business pursuing his passion and talent for making handmade bamboo fly rods. With the input of the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) funded Self-Employment Technical Assistance, Resources & Training (START-UP)*, he conducted a feasibility study and drafted a business plan. He needed the most assis-



Editor's Notebook

October is Disability Employment Month, but how many people *not* working in the supported employment field are aware of this fact? Perhaps more importantly, do they know why they should care about jobs for people with disabilities?

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) produces materials to increase the public's awareness about the contributions and skills of workers with disabilities. (See a related article about these resources on page 8 in this month's newsletter.)

"I have more important things to do than promote Disability Employment Month" some of you might be thinking. I beg to differ. If people with disabilities are to be taken more seriously as an important source of labor, I don't see how anyone in the field can afford

not to promote this vital month.

Contact local media. Let them know what this month is about, and tell them about a few of your agency's success stories. Media are always looking for "feel-good" stories, but someone has to make them aware of the stories first!

That's but one idea of raising awareness of who you are and what you do. Thomas McNulty offers additional suggestions in the May 2008 *JTPR*.

If we are to embrace the social capital concept, it starts with opportunities like the ones that Disability Employment Awareness Month present. So, what are you doing to promote this important month? Until next time. ■

Mike Jacquart

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tance with financial planning. The completed business plan was submitted to the Florida Vocational Rehabilitation agency. They were very open and willing to assist Ren with his business and funded start-up costs of \$18,000.

As a result, Monllor Rods, LLC opened for business on Nov. 2, 2007 specializing in the production and sale of unique hand-crafted, split-cane bamboo fly rods, and handmade fly reels.

Recently, START-UP/Florida worked with Ren to write a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)**. The PASS was approved for an 18-month period with over \$19,500 set aside into an account using his SSDI income and projected countable earnings from his business profits. The money will be used to cover operating expenses for the first 18 months of his business.

In January 2008, Ren spoke to an audience of 100 participants at the Agency for Persons with Disabilities Employment Symposium in Lakeland, Florida. His presentation was inspiring and thought-provoking as he challenged the audience to listen to an individual's dreams and aspirations when self-employment is the desired outcome.

To achieve his dream, Ren tapped into the resources of START-UP/USA and START-UP/Florida. START-UP/USA provides technical assistance and disseminates resources nationally to individuals interested in pursuing self-employment; START-UP/Florida is a local model program of START-UP/USA.

Source: ODEP (www.dol.gov/odep).

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Using Ergonomic Tools Correctly

What exactly does the term “ergonomics” mean for consumers with disabilities? Simply put, ergonomics is the science of designing and producing tools, furniture, and other work-related implements that improve a worker’s efficiency while reducing discomfort, fatigue, and risk of injury.

“Ergonomically enhanced tools can include helpful features like angled handles, padded handgrips, and non-slip coatings. However, no matter how impressive a tool’s design, it’s almost impossible for it to be universally ergonomic since human physiques and project applications vary greatly from one to the next,” notes Paul Holstein, COO of CableOrganizer.com.

Consequently, Holstein’s firm offers these guidelines for choosing the right tool:

✓ Because finger size and placement differs from person to person, avoid using tools whose handles have built-in finger grooves. When fingers don’t naturally align with grooves, excessive

pressure from raised groove edges can cause discomfort and injury.

✓ Choose tools with handles that are covered in a soft material, like foam or flexible plastic.

Cushioned handles are not only comfortable for long periods, but they provide a much firmer grip.

✓ Be sure that tool handles are free from sharp edges and seams that might irritate or cut hands.

✓ When selecting double-handed gripping and cutting tools, opt for ones with spring-loaded handles that will automatically return to the open position.

✓ Only use tools that allow you to work with your wrist in a straight position.

✓ For tasks that require force, such as torquing screws and nuts, hammering, and heavy chiseling, choose single-handle tools with handle diameters that range from 1-1/4 inch to 2 inches. Larger handles allow fingers to wrap comfortably around the tool in a power grip, which prevents slippage and reduces stress and impact on hands, fingers, and wrists.

✓ For tasks that call for more precision and delicacy, opt for single-handle tools whose grips fall within the 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch range. Smaller diameter handles make it easy to comfortably grip tools between the fingertips without overexerting fingers, knuckle joints, or hand muscles.

✓ Tool length should be matched to space constraints. Excessively long tools can force you to assume awkward work postures and wrist positions when you’re trying to reach things in cramped areas. Instead, choose short-handled tools that give you the freedom to work, while keeping your wrist straight.

✓ The palms of hands are full of sensitive nerves and blood vessels. In order to avoid damage, make sure that tool handles are long enough that their ends won’t press into your palms. To measure, hold your hand palm-up, with fingers together and thumb against the side of your hand. As long as the tool’s handle is longer than the widest part of your hand (the span from the outer edge of your pinkie to the outer edge of your thumb), it’s safe to use. ■

Source: CableOrganizer.com
(<http://cableorganizer.com>).

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What's New in AT?

What is it? Accessaphone

What does it do? Accessaphone is a voice output telephone and caller identification (ID) program designed for individuals who are blind or have low vision.

How does it work? This software enables the user to control telephone functions through a computer keyboard or alternative input device.

Who makes it? Tenacity, Inc., 2020 W. Pinhook Road, Suite 101, Lafayette, LA 70508, (866) 756-0321, www.tenacitycorp.com.

What is it? Alphasmart Neo

What does it do? Alphasmart Neo is a word processor designed for individuals with learning disabilities.

How does it work? This portable device has a full keyboard and a liquid crystal display (LCD) screen, with word processor software, and more.

Who makes it? Renaissance Learning (formerly AlphaSmart, Inc.), P.O. Box 8036, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495, (800) 656-6740, www.alphasmart.com.

What is it? *AudioAccessSM

What does it do? This is a downloadable audio textbook that plays on the widely available Microsoft Windows[®] Media Player (version 10 or above) and can be synchronized with most Windows-compatible portable media players.

How does it work? AudioAccess allows students to access textbooks using software that comes bundled with most computers, and synchronize textbooks with a portable media player so they may learn in school, at home, and on the go.

Who makes it? Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic[®] (RFB&D[®]), (866) 732-3585 or visit www.rfbd.org.

What is it? Clarity Lynx

What does it do? The Clarity Lynx is a portable video magnifier designed for individuals with low vision.

How does it work? This portable system includes a large, lightweight screen; a handheld mouse camera; and a main camera on an adjustable arm, which can be used for near or distance viewing. It fits into any work space and can also be taken to business meetings, classrooms, etc.

Who makes it? Clarity USA, 6776B Preston Ave., Livermore, CA 94451, (800) 575-1456, www.clarityusa.com. ■

*Sources: RFB&D and ABLEDATA (www.abledata.com), which adds over 1,000 assistive technology products to its database each year. *This product did NOT appear on ABLEDATA's website.*

—Resources—

📖 *Research in Review*, \$24.99, VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports & Job Retention. This research monograph takes a comprehensive look at workplace supports and job retention, not limiting to one disability, illness, or injury. www.worksupport.com/store/index.cfm.

📖 *The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for First-Time Job Seekers*, and *The Idealist Guide to Nonprofit Careers for Sector Switchers* are two free e-books that offer advice and strategies for first-time job seekers, and for job switchers, respectively. Download as entire guides, or individual chapters. Visit www.idealist.org/en/career/guide/index.html.

📖 *JobEnable.com*, an online job bank that assists individuals with disabilities in finding employment, is commemorating Disability Employment Awareness Month by giving employers a free job posting. To take advantage of this free offer, visit www.JobEnable.com and post a job using the promo code "HIRE" upon checkout.

📖 As reported in *JTPR*, new *Ticket to Work* regulations have significantly changed the scope of work and payment structure for Employment Networks (ENs). The Social Security Administration has decided that the existing RFP for prospective ENs will continue to be used until further notice. It can be accessed at the SSA website, www.socialsecurity.gov/work/documents/RFP-07-0010F.doc.

📖 *Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant*, by Daniel Tammet, \$24, Free Press. This unique first-person account offers a window into the mind of a high-functioning, British autistic savant with Asperger's syndrome.

📖 *SnagAJob.com* helps connect hourly workers with quality full-time and part-time jobs in a wide range of industries. So far this year, more than 200,000 job seekers have landed a job after using this site (www.snagajob.com). ■

Are there any resources you'd like to share with *JTPR* readers? If so, call or email:

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D'Arcee Neal



Born nearly 3 months premature at just 2 pounds,

D'Arcee Neal has challenged stereotypes of many kinds throughout his life. As a both a minority and person with a disability, he has faced racism, attitudinal barriers, and an often inaccessible landscape.

As the sole person in his family with Cerebral Palsy, his parents encouraged him to look past the indifferences of others and pursue whatever he wanted.

Choosing to use the adversity as motivation, he finished high school a year early and began his studies at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke just two weeks later. He graduated in May 2008 with a bachelor of arts in English and two minors in Creative Writing and Musical Theatre.

It was during his return from a semester-long study in Germany that he learned of the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) hosted by his school's Career Services Center. The WRP recruiter who interviewed D'Arcee was so impressed with him that she offered him a WRP summer job at her agency, NASA, where he worked in the Office of Public Affairs.

A year later, fueled by the success of his NASA experience, the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) hired him for a summer position.

Working in ODEP's Policy Communications and Outreach office, one of D'Arcee's most significant projects has been to reshape the logo for the WRP. "The WRP is a wonderful program. It has

challenged me to think creatively while working at NASA and ODEP, and it's a fantastic start for all of the things I have yet to do. I can't be thankful enough," he says.

Coordinated by ODEP and the U.S. Department of Defense, the WRP is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal and private sector employers with highly motivated postsecondary students with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs.

Source: ODEP (www.dol.gov/odep).

Sheryl Uribe



Sheryl Uribe's beaming smile is an indicator of how far she's come. It portrays the happiness and confidence she feels in her current role as an employment training specialist at Goodwill Industries of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin counties (CA), where she mentors clients in the Community Jobs Program.

At one time, however, Sheryl refrained from smiling because of how rotten and infected her teeth had become after a decade of heroin and cocaine addiction. She found herself serving time for drug-related crimes. Her tough life had taken a toll on her both physically and emotionally.

Sheryl entered a program called "Sisters" run by Walden House in the San Francisco Jail. Although she was on the road to recovery, she was met with repeated rejection when applying for work. One of her counselors at "Sisters" recommended going to Goodwill.

"When I first started at Goodwill, I had been drug-free for

only eight months. I needed major dental work, I had a poor employment history, and I'd been on public assistance for 10 years," Sheryl says.

With Goodwill's help, Sheryl started making positive changes in her life. She worked for nine months as a transitional employee on the Goodwill loading docks. Her supervisors were impressed with her work ethic and hired her as a cashier at the As-Is Store. It didn't take long for Sheryl to rise to assistant manager, and she was named Employee of the Month nine consecutive times.

"In my 13 years at Goodwill Industries I have never seen a harder-working, more dedicated, more dependable or more honest employee," says Sheldon Callum, manager of the As-Is Store. "[Sheryl] played a key role in helping the store become number one in the agency in terms of sales goals for the year."

In October 2007, Sheryl was promoted again, this time to an employment specialist position. In her new role, she can inspire clients who face similar obstacles that she's already worked tirelessly to overcome.

Clean and sober for three years, discharged from probation and reunited with her 14-year-old daughter, Sheryl has much to smile about. "Goodwill did more than make me employable. Goodwill saved my life." ■

Source: "Working!" a publication of Goodwill Industries International. Sheryl Uribe of San Francisco is Goodwill Industries International's 2008 Achiever of the Year. The award honors an outstanding person with a disability or disadvantaged condition, who has shown great progress and accomplishment in overcoming obstacles to employment, but who still benefits from the Goodwill work environment or receives services to support employment at a community site. **Editor's note:** *For more information on START-UP USA, see the November 2007 JTPR. **For more on PASS, see the October 2007 Training Connection. For another success story, see this month's Career TIPS® electronic insert.

Lifelong Learning Bill Would Expand Education Benefits

Legislation was recently introduced that would provide portable, employer-matched educational accounts that workers would use to finance their education and training.

Under current law, workers can take a deduction for education and training expenses after the fact, but there is no savings vehicle for education and training that encourages employer participation.

The plan, co-sponsored by U.S. Representative Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), would address this shortcoming through the *Lifelong Learning Accounts Act*. The bill would allow workers to use a lifelong learning account at their discretion for education and training that bolsters their current career, or allows them to transition to a new career.

In addition, it would create a credit for employer contributions to the accounts. Workers could use these accounts for a variety of education expenses that current benefits do not cover.

Emanuel's proposal is designed to allow workers who attend college less than half time to benefit from the account. Currently, a significant portion of working adult students attend college less than half time, but are not able to benefit from education benefits, such as the HOPE credit.

Emanuel's plan would provide a tax benefit to the 40 million taxpayers who currently don't earn enough to qualify for any of the current education and training credits and deductions.

Currently, those between the ages of 18-65 are essentially on their own when it comes to saving for additional education and training — something that must change in a rapidly changing global economy, Emanuel states.

"Without the skills to compete with emerging competitors from abroad, millions of Americans will be consigned to the bottom rungs of the new economy — without the hope or opportunity for advancement that is the cornerstone of our democracy," Emanuel says. ■

Source: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, www.cael.org.

Funding Alert

Grant Opportunity Available

A grant opportunity is available from the Staples Foundation for Learning.

The mission of Staples Foundation for Learning is to provide funding for programs that support or provide job skills and/or education for all people, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged youth.

The foundation considers educational funding to be an investment in the future of all communities. Its goal is to help local groups, many of which include its

customers and associates, with programs and services that will have a positive, daily impact on communities.

The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate potential funding. The organization must:

- Have a nonprofit tax-exempt classification under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and
- Align with Staples Foundation for Learning's mission and focus on job skills and education.

Applications for the next funding cycle (January 2009) must be submitted between **October 10 and October 24, 2008**.

The requested amount of each grant can be up to \$25,000. Most grants awarded by the foundation are in the \$5,000-\$25,000 range.

For more information, go to: www.staplesfoundation.org/foundapplication.html. ■

Source: Channing Bete Company

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Theme Selected for Disability Employment Awareness Month

America's People, America's Talent... America's Strength! is the theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month, which is being observed in October nationwide.

The Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) produces materials to

increase the public's awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities. In fact, a poster of the graphic that accompanies this article is available on the ODEP website at www.dol.gov/odep.

Typically, private sector; federal, state and local government; and advocacy organizations piggyback on the same theme to plan events

and programs that showcase the abilities of employees and job candidates with disabilities.

"People with disabilities are the next great wave of diversity, and diversity fosters innovation to drive our economy and our nation into the future," said Neil Romano, assistant secretary for ODEP. ■

Source: ODEP.

New CARF Standards Drive Quality

Guided by new standards for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), community service providers can better provide quality support services to children with ASD and their families.

"Families with children with ASD deserve access to education, community resources, and quality services," said Brian J. Boon, president/CEO of CARF International. "A continuum of services takes advantage of early intervention, treatment planning, results-oriented therapies, and advocacy."

CARF's standards for children with ASD cover a community service provider's assistance to parents with, among other areas:

- ☑ Obtaining early intervention screening and services;
- ☑ Navigating the multiple and complex systems families need to coordinate, including medical, educational, mental health, disability, and community services; and
- ☑ Understanding the future opportunities, services, and challenges that lay before them as they raise their child to adult

transition from school to life planning.

During the standards' introductory period, they will be posted on CARF's website and can be downloaded as a .pdf file at no charge at www.carf.org/pdf/SupportsforChildrenwithASD.pdf. The standards will also be published in the next edition of CARF's Employment and Community Services standards manual in January 2009. ■

Source: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), (888) 281-6531, www.carf.org.

New Resource to Assist Veterans

The U.S. Department of Labor recently announced a new online resource to help employers in their employment of veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), two increasingly common battlefield conditions.

America's Heroes at Work at www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov provides information about TBI and PTSD as well as tools and guidance on how to implement workplace accommodations and other services that benefit affected individuals.

In addition, the website includes toll-free phone information for the Job Accommodation Network, which employers can call to receive personal assistance about job accommodations for veterans with disabilities. ■

Source: www.worksupport.com.