



JESS.....The Facts

Newsletter Date

Number 4

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JESS Funders:



Youth Opportunity Program Tax Credits Program

As of April 2009 JESS was approved by the Missouri Department of Economic Development to Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) tax credits. The purpose of YOP is to broaden and strengthen opportunities for youth. Opportunities for well thought out and organized programs that encourage positive development and participation in community services. Youth programs that will discourage youth from engaging in criminal and violent behavior.

When JESS receives a donation, the donor may be eligible for Missouri tax credits at the end of the year when filing their taxes.

For more information on YOP tax credits visit our website at www.jessinc.org or call Mary Davies or Angela Hendrix at (314) 644-1913.

Recession Hits Disabled Especially Hard

On Monday, July 27th the St. Louis Post Dispatch featured JESS in an article on the unemployment rate of persons with disabilities. In June unemployment rate nationally was 9.5 percent however for persons with disabilities the rate was 14.3 percent.

With the economy being in a state of *topsy turvy* there has been lots of layoffs and those without a disability applying for entry level jobs. These jobs were often available for disabled employees. There are many theories why people with disabilities are the “last hired” but during this time and economy persons with disabilities are having a greater problem being hired anywhere.

People with disabilities are dependable and dedicated workers. They take a lot of pride in their jobs. JESS has clients that have been on their jobs for over 10 years with full benefits and still desire JESS services. JESS has a 94% retention rate.

According to Guan Hollins, director College for Living and Employment Services, “more than incentives, employers stand to gain from the tangibles the disabled bring to their jobs. People with disabilities tend to be very loyal to their employers”.

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JESS client, Terry Tinnon, pictured here is completing online applications. Terry has been unemployed for over 11 months. He has not given up hope and believes he will get a job. Terry comes to the JESS Computer Technology and Career Center almost daily searching for employment and meeting with his Job Developer. Terry is joined by several individuals seeking employment and using the center to complete online applications. Each time they use the center they are also building their computer skills, which is an additional marketable skill on their resume.

Even though there are “murmurs” that the economy is slowly recovering many have not seen the ray of light at the end of the tunnel yet. Most persons with disabilities desire to be independent and make their own choices. The one way for them to do that is to be employed.

FamilyWise Prescription Cards

More than 840 local United Ways, America’s Promise Alliance Partners and others organize distribution of FamilyWise Prescription Drug Discount Cards to agencies that may be able to use the card for staff or clients.

If you would like additional cards to distribute, please email

kathy.gardner@stl.unitedway.org for the number of cards you would like to receive. **Please do not contact the FamilyWise** organization directly, as they will only refer you back to the local United Way.

The card:

- Provides an average savings of 30 percent or more off retail prescription prices
- Makes medicine affordable for people with no insurance or no prescription coverage
- Covers all medicine not covered by insurance, Medicaid, Medicare or other benefit plans
- Can be used during Medicare Part D plans' "doughnut hole"
- Is accepted at 95 percent of all pharmacies nationwide
- Is free to users, organizations, clinics and agencies
- Does not require applications, fees or waiting

- Does not have age, income or citizenship restrictions
- Are bi-lingual in English and Spanish
- Has resulted in more than \$60 million in savings

The Monsignor Elmer Behrmann Scholarship



Left to right: Mary Visintainer (Scholarship committee), Case manger, Don Behrmann (Monsignor Behrman's nephew), Leland Ervin (scholarship recipient) Sr. Luann Boland and Rev. John Vien (Pastor at St Pius V Church)

The Monsignor Elmer Behrmann Scholarship Committee was excited to present Leland Ervin and Clayton Sherrad each with \$1,000 scholarships. The late, Monsignor Elmer Behrmann was the Jobs and Employment Support Services (JESS) first Board President in 1979.

In keeping with his belief that youth with developmental disabilities have the right and the ability to live and grow in their community, Don and Jane Behrman continue to keep his dream alive. It is with this rich history of Monsignor Behrman's advocacy and legacy a scholarship was established in his memory.

The two recipients for this year's scholarship are Leland Ervin and Clayton Sherrad both of the St. Louis area. Leland (*pictured above*) is a 2009 graduate of Affton Senior High School. He plans to major in General Studies and Music at St. Louis Community College-Forest Park.

Clayton is a 2009 graduate of Frances Howell Central High School. Clayton's goal is to work his way up in the culinary field to one day become a Sous Chef, and then ultimately become a head chef. He is considering admission at Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School.

If you are interested Monsignor Behrmann Scholarship visit our website at www.jessinc.org for an application or donation call 314—644-1913.

Supportive Living Services Available

JESS is now offering Supportive Living services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the City of St. Louis. Supportive Living services provide a training experience for clients who desire live independently. Supportive Living services offers clients but not limited to:

- Transportation to medical appointments and other necessary appointments
- Follows a tailored care plan developed by St. Louis Regional Office service coordinators or St. Louis Office for DD Resources service advocates.
- Assist clients with budgeting, housing, and other living situations
- Connect clients with community resource

For more information call Adrienne Dejournett at 314-644-1913

JESS Receives Appropriations from the PLB for Fiscal Year 2010

ST. LOUIS, MO, July 1, 2009 -- The Productive Living Board for St. Louis County Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (PLB) has appropriated \$17.7 million to 40 local agencies for fiscal year 2010, which began July 1, 2009. This money will fund 93 projects that support more than 4,300 individuals with developmental disabilities.

JESS (Jobs & Employment Support Services) was the agency receiving the eighth largest total appropriations for fiscal year 2010. Its appropriations of \$626,393 are earmarked for employment services. The Productive Living Board receives its funds from a special 8.5¢ property tax in St. Louis County, which generates approximately \$18.1 million a year. Services provided by the 40 PLB-funded agencies support individuals with developmental disabilities so they can live and work in the community.

The PLB is comprised of nine volunteer members serving staggered three-year terms. They are appointed by the St. Louis County Executive and confirmed by the St. Louis County Council. For more information regarding the PLB and the agencies it funds, please call 314-726-2606, ext. 118 or visit www.plboard.com

Walgreens: A Prescription for Opportunity

By Joan Leotta



Anderson is Walgreens 12th full-service distribution center (DC). By 2010, this DC will be shipping approximately 80,000 cases daily to more than 700 stores in South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and portions of the Florida panhandle.

When parents find out that their young son or daughter has autism, many of them are focused on the immediate concerns of how the child will function in school and what services will be available to him or her. But when those children are ready to graduate high school and enter the workforce, they often have no good options available to them. As a result, many adults with autism or other cognitive disabilities either receive state disability pay or are lifelong dependants on their parents.

Thanks to an innovative program at the drugstore chain Walgreens, that scenario is not the case for growing number employees nationwide. Hired as equals to their non-disabled peers, these individuals work at jobs that, by their nature, fit easily into the capabilities of a person with autism or cognitive disabilities. Unlike “sheltered workshop” situations, where people with disabilities work at lesser jobs for lesser pay, in Walgreens' new distribution centers, employees with disabilities work side by side with non-disabled workers and enjoy opportunities for advancement and job mobility.

At this center, 42 percent of the Anderson Center's almost 275 employees have a disclosed disability of some sort including cognitive disabilities and autism. Expectations that this facility will eventually employ 800 people.

Development of the Walgreens program

Anderson's flexible, easy-to-use workstations were designed to make the job easier for all employees, with or without disabilities.



Like many innovations that have led to success for people with disabilities, the new model for Walgreens' distribution centers began with a family story. J. Randolph Lewis, Walgreens Senior Vice President for Distribution and Logistics, has a son with autism. Lewis watched his son's difficult transition from school to workplace, aware of the high unemployment rate and the lack of

challenging jobs available for people with disabilities. Because his company was in the midst of reforming the technology used to operate their distribution centers, Lewis suggested to the management team that they redesign jobs as well.

Deb Russell, Manager of Outreach and Employee Services describe the disability-friendly component of the center redesign this way: "The Walgreens team worked to ensure that the new jobs were not more complex than currently existing jobs.

"The concept of having up to one third of the Center's workforce filled by people with disabilities was presented to Walgreens' board of directors, along with the findings that it would not cost more to do it this way," Russell continues. "Even the most cost conscious manager could support the effort, and so a new way of working inside the new facility became reality." Not only does the new approach make work easier for all employees, it also makes the centers able to operate at a projected 20 percent higher rate of efficiency.

"In designing this facility, we believed we could employ a large number of people with disabilities while holding them to the same performance standards as all team members," says Lewis. "This is a business, not a charity, and our employees with disabilities earn the same pay and benefits as other employees for the same work."

Though not a charity, Walgreens nonetheless does approach its business concerns with a generous amount of goodwill. Russell notes that each of the distribution centers connects with state and vocational rehabilitation agencies, with community-based disability organizations, and with schools to offer work-study programs to help young people transitioning into the workforce. The company uses peer sharing as the primary training method for everyone who works in the distribution centers. Says Russell, "We don't have trainers per se in the centers. It is part of the organization that everybody helps train the new staff."

Walgreens has put together several "lessons learned" talking points to help other organizations wishing to improve their efforts at hiring people with disabilities. The company maintains that people with disabilities can be integrated into the workforce without a loss of standards, and that coworker fears can be overcome through education.

A Web site, Walgreensoutreach.com, provides information to help potential employees understand what work is like at the distribution centers.



Walgreens senior vice president of distribution and logistics Randy Lewis greets a team member during the DC's grand opening event last summer.

