

# Direct Connection

MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



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CONNECTING WITH THE  
DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

Missouri Department of  
Mental Health

Division of Developmental  
Disabilities

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## Promoting Employment First

Over the past 25 years, the employment of individuals with disabilities has continued to evolve from a community “activity” to a protected civil right - the opportunity for all people to experience typical lives which involve work, vocational planning, career laddering, and long-term purposeful employment. The following are ways in which we can promote employment first:

- Create high expectations in personal responsibility and activities.
- Allow individuals the ability to explore their communities to determine interests, understand job tasks, and learn job environments.
- Create early work experiences to shape and broaden employment interests and skills.
- Plan for success, yet, be accepting of failure. No one is successful in all new activities in life.
- Allow individuals to adapt to new experiences and understand responsibility.
- Develop a list of strengths, skills, and abilities. Frequently reevaluate the list.
- Identify challenges or barriers which will require additional support.
- Be creative in solutions and innovative in supports which promote independence.
- Build self-confidence by celebrating accomplishments.
- Support individuals in the way they want to be supported, not the way in which you want to support them.
- Utilize programs and services which foster independence in employment.
- Empower individuals to dream.

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH



# From High School Graduate to Entrepreneur

In May 2014, Sam Shortal graduated from St. Louis Special School District's pre-employment training program housed at Fontbonne University. Sam learned valuable job and customer service skills.

He is now actively using his training in his new business, SammySoap, located in Kirkwood, Missouri. Sam's mother has worked endlessly to provide the natural support of a job coach and independent living coach.



Since starting SammySoap, Sam has grown and gained independence. Sam is now grinding soap, stamping soap, cleaning the counters at his store, sweeping the floor, and receiving packages. In the future, Sam would like to hire other individuals with disabilities and help others obtain employment who might not have had an opportunity to work. Sam is a great role model showing self-determination and leadership among young adults in the community.



Story by *Brenda Halastanis*

## Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act

On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Although there are parts of WIOA with later implementation, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 is when the Act generally becomes enacted. This law replaces the Workforce Investment Act (1998) and amends other Federal Acts related to education, training, and employment services.

There are several notable changes which will impact individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. A few of those changes are:

- Mandated collaborative agreements between Vocational Rehabilitation, state intellectual/developmental disability programs, and state Medicaid programs.
- A new definition of competitive integrated employment.
- A revised definition of supported employment to include customized employment.
- Requirements to afford individuals under the age of 24 opportunities to explore and pursue competitive integrated employment prior to entering into jobs paying sub-minimum wages.
- Extension of VR post-employment supports for individuals receiving supported employment services.

The exact implementation of these changes and the impact of these changes will gain clarity in the weeks and months ahead when regulations and rules are completed. To learn more about WIOA and the implementation of WIOA, please visit [www.doleta.gov/wioa/](http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/) or [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-reauthorization.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-reauthorization.html).





# Governor's Council on Disability Annual Inclusion Awards

The Governor's Council on Disability's annual Inclusion Award program recognizes and honors a Missouri resident, organization, or business that illustrates excellence in leadership for the "best of the best inclusion practices". Individuals are also encouraged to nominate state and local government divisions or universal design/assistive technology that demonstrate excellence in inclusive practices. The winning award and honorable mention will be presented at the 2015 Power Up assistive technology conference.

Deadline for submitting nominations is December 1, 2014.

## What is Inclusion?

- A philosophy, not a policy
- A place where EVERYONE belongs
- A place where EVERYONE is accepted
- A place where EVERYONE supports and is supported by their peers and other members of the community
- When EVERYONE, with or without disabilities, is included on an equal basis

## Principles of Inclusion:

- Educating all persons with disabilities in their local schools with students who do not have disabilities
- Providing appropriate services and supports within the community, regardless of their complexity
- Receiving job training in regular community settings instead of simulated settings
- Encouraging interactions between persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities
- Understanding and acceptance of individual differences
- Participating in community life
- Being proactive in marketing to people with disabilities in the workforce and customer base

For more information or nomination forms, please contact the Governor's Council on Disability at (573) 751-2600 or toll-free (800) 877-8249, by email at [gcd@oa.mo.gov](mailto:gcd@oa.mo.gov) or visit its website: <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd>; click on Inclusion Awards.



## Being at the Right Place at the Right Time

Christina's parents had expectations she would get a job after high school. Her mother reached out to a therapist she knew who worked at a local nursing home. Through the therapist's assistance, Christina was able to volunteer two days a week. While volunteering, an employee approached her about a job opening at the nursing home. She was offered the position on the spot.

Christina now enjoys working in the dietary department. Her supervisor has been very pleased with her performance and has expanded her duties. Christina loves earning a paycheck, feeling valued, and belonging to her work community.





# What can YOU do? The Campaign for Disability Employment

The Campaign for Disability Employment is a collaborative effort that seeks to promote positive employment outcomes for people with disabilities by encouraging employers and others to recognize the value and talent they bring to the workplace as well as the dividend to be realized by fully including people with disabilities at work. People with disabilities can and do make important contributions to America's businesses every day. By implementing good workplace practices, like maintaining a flexible and inclusive work environment, businesses can capitalize on the talents of qualified people with disabilities, benefiting everyone.

Among its collaborating organizations are:

[American Association of People with Disabilities \(AAPD\);](#)  
[National Business and Disability Council \(NBDC\);](#)  
[Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\);](#)  
[Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\);](#)  
[U.S. Business Leadership Network \(USBLN\).](#)

The Campaign is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's [Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\).](#)

## The "What Can You Do?" Initiative

Through its national "What can YOU do?" public outreach initiative, the Campaign for Disability Employment reinforces the reality that people with disabilities want to work and that their talents and abilities positively impact businesses both financially and organizationally. Several unique [tools](#) characterize the "What can YOU do?" initiative, including the Campaign's Web site, [WhatCanYouDoCampaign.org](#), which offers users the chance to learn, express their commitment to disability employment efforts, and share what they "can do." The site also features tools and tangible ideas for supporting the Campaign's goals, such as Discussion Guides, posters, CDE support badges that users can display on their own websites and blogs, and ready-to-publish news briefs for publications and social media platforms.

Also featured on the site are video public service announcements (PSAs) that challenge assumptions about people with disabilities and employment. The Campaign's new "Who I Am" PSA is available for download in the [video library](#), which also includes the "Because" PSA and the award-winning "I Can" PSA. Both "Because" and "I Can" have aired more than 150,000 times on television, cable and radio stations nationwide.

Source: [www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org](#)

Have you or someone you've known faced an employment barrier which was difficult to overcome? The Job Accommodation Network is a free online resource funded by the Office of Disability Policy. Information is available about the Americans with Disabilities Act and accommodations which can be implemented in the workplace. Resources are available for employees as well as employers. The next time you are looking for a resource, visit [www.askjan.org](#).

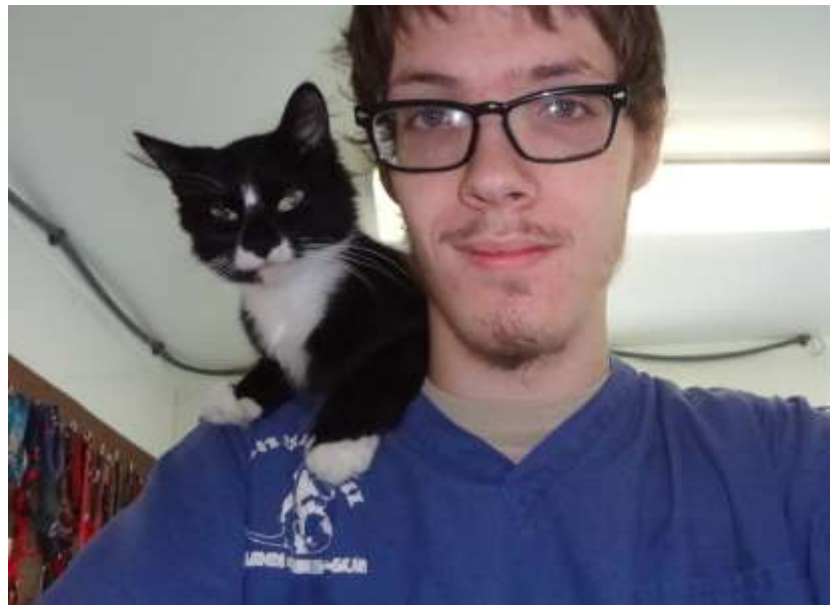




# Everyone Can Contribute: Zach's Story

My name is Zachariah Atteberry, and I work at the Northeast Missouri Humane Society in Hannibal, Missouri. I have been employed for 3 ½ years at the shelter and during that time, I have helped countless animals find their forever homes and befriended people who I have been blessed to create memories with. I have learned that we create change by working with the community and by combining our individual skills to create a difference, one step at a time, and one day at a time. And I have found that where you come from and the circumstances of your birth are irrelevant; it is what you do with your life that determines who you are.

In fact, when I first started working at the animal shelter, I was faced with an onslaught of resistance, from many people. I was facing a battle of inner courage and there were many that doubted that I would succeed...but at the same time, a lot of others saw hope and possibility. I see the unique traits and the power of a successful worker in every individual – human and animal alike. My experience through this stage of development is not at all unique; it is repeated hundreds of times throughout the United States. The truth is everyone has something they can contribute to society, one way or another.



On the first year I volunteered [through school], I did nothing and completely shut down when I was asked to do work. This got me kicked out of the [work] program, and I ended up dropping out of school that year with a grade card full of falling grades. It was Learning Opportunities that got me in the spirit to try again and give my full attention to the shelter.

The second time around they got me started on cats where I learned to sweep floors, mop floors, clean cat cages, and dishes. At first I did not succeed well even in the mundane tasks because I never had the support as a teenager in learning basic skills. It was my desire to help animals and ambition that got me past the learning stage. The learning stage was very hard because of autism, a communication disability which I had to work with and work around.

When I graduated, the humane society hired me as a full time employee and I did more with the animals and with the people. When I first started, the only way I would communicate concerns or any ideas was with written letters and emails, and I worked my way up from there.

I eventually was able to teach people about the cat section and interact with volunteers more. I even went on to write a book about animal sheltering. None of this happened over night, and it was scary walking into unknown territory, but I kept up with it and got it done.

This is what being confident and determined can get done.

*Failure is simply an opportunity to begin again...Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right...One of the greatest discoveries a person makes, one of their great surprises, is to find they can do what they were afraid they couldn't do. – Henry Ford*



# Accomplishing Goals One Step at a Time

Chris was referred to Employment Solutions, a division of The ARC of the Ozarks, by the Springfield Regional Office in May 2008. Chris began working on a work crew at Ozarks Food Harvest. Throughout the years, Chris has worked on the floor crew where he used machinery to clean and wax floors, he worked at the Waterford nursing home completing custodial duties, and he worked at Aramark where he did a variety of production work.

Chris was initially identified for Group Community Employment due to requiring additional assistance with refining his social skills and punctuality, further developing work skills, and learning how to accept constructive criticism. When Chris first began working on the work crews, he required daily support from his job coach to ensure



that the job duties were being completed and that his interactions with others were appropriate. Throughout the years, Chris's independence and self-confidence began to grow. He required less support from the job coach and began to take it upon himself to complete his job duties - going above and beyond what was expected of him. Chris's social skills continued to develop, interactions with others increased, and he gained new relationships within the organizations and businesses who partnered with Employment Solutions.

When Chris began services with Employment Solutions he set a goal, and that goal was one day he would be completely independent. Chris stated that he wanted to live on his own, have his own job, and not receive services anymore.

Chris took a step in that direction when he was approved to move into a progressions home with the ARC where he has free time without staff supervision and has more independence while at home. In April 2014, Chris moved into his own job cleaning an office building three nights a week. In September 2014, Aramark Uniform Services, where Chris had once been on a work crew, was hiring for a stocking and sorting position and asked for Chris by name. Someone at Aramark had watched Chris work, learn, and grow over the years and knew he would be perfect for this position.

Chris began working at Aramark on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014 where he works independently without a job coach and relies on the natural support of the other Aramark employees. Chris has quickly been given more responsibility and job tasks as a result of doing so well. His next goal is to one day become a full time Aramark employee. Chris states "having a job is holding me up to be responsible and making progress with my life."

*All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them....The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing...It's kind of fun to do the impossible. – Walt Disney*





# Missouri DD: Systematically Implementing Best Practices Statewide and Demonstrating National Leadership

## **NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE**

- State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)
- National Association of State Directors Developmental Disabilities Services
- Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
- Institute for Community Inclusion/UMASS
- Partnerships in Employment
- Office of Disability Employment Policy
- National Employer Technical Assistance Center/Cornell University
- National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research
- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities



## **MISSOURI DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

Translating national evidence-based practice into action through:

- ShowMeCareers (SMC)
- Missouri Governor's Council on Disability
- Missouri Interagency Transition Team
- Missouri SELN
- Missouri APSE
- Employment First
- Statewide Technical Assistance on youth transition and employment resources
- Self Determined Career Development Model



## **LOCAL IMPACT**

Youth Transition/Employment Resource Coordinators reaching 114 Missouri counties to improve the lives of 30,000 Missourians with developmental disabilities through:

- Employment Outreach
- Certified Benefits Planning
- Asset Development
- Community Transition Teams
- SMC Pilot Communities
- IEP Technical Assistance
- ISP Reviews
- Support Coordinator Training
- Regional Transition Networks



Through the efforts of Easter Seals Midwest and the foresight of Etta Mitchell, KCRO Regional Director, Jaiwen was able to experience first-hand both the value of employment and the excitement of the 2014 World Series.



MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



Improving lives THROUGH  
supports and services  
THAT FOSTER self-determination.

Division of  
Developmental  
Disabilities

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Fostering Self-determination



Supporting Families



Facilitating Individualized  
Services and Supports



Developing Accessible Housing



Promoting Employment First

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