

# Direct Connection

MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



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## Creating Pride Through Employment: Discovery as a Tool

*Discovery* is a term that is frequently misunderstood by people who are helping individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with career exploration and planning. Unlike traditional vocational assessments that focus on testing and measuring a person's skills, discovery is a process in which the employment support professional assists job seekers with identifying and exploring their unique strengths, talents, and interests.

Discovery is a strengths-based strategy that does not focus on one's deficits or comparison to others. Rather, through a series of activities (e.g., observing others perform work, interviewing friends and family members, performing short-term work activities), the individual develops greater self-awareness and understanding of the employment environments that match his/her strengths and preferences. The result of discovery is the creation of a personal profile unique to the individual. Discovery has been adapted from supported employment projects dating back to the 1980s.

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD Center) have released new resources for Guided Group Discovery. Guided Group Discovery materials include a Facilitator Manual, an accompanying PowerPoint slide deck (Introduction and Course), and a Participant Workbook. The purpose of Guided Group Discovery is to lay the foundation for competitive integrated employment that can benefit all job seekers. The process helps job seekers identify employment opportunities that would be good matches for themselves and their prospective employers.

A toolkit and additional resources are accessible at:  
<http://leadcenter.org/customized-employment>

*“Knowing yourself is the beginning of  
all wisdom.”*

Aristotle

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**CONNECTING WITH THE  
DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES**

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MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH



## National Autism Indicators Report: DD Services and Outcomes in Adulthood 2017

Many adults with autism have a difficult time achieving employment, continued education, and independent living. The National Autism Indicators Report, by Anne Roux, Jessica Rast, Kristy Anderson, and Paul Shattuck, explores the experiences of adults with ASD who used services funded through state Developmental Disability (DD) agencies in 2014-15. The report discusses their characteristics, the quality of their lives, the opportunities they have to participate in their communities, their ability to exercise choice in their lives, and their access to needed services.

To view the report, click on: <http://drexel.edu/autismoutcomes/publications-and-reports/national-autism-indicators-report/>

## Empowering Through Employment Initiative Update

In October 2016, the Division of Developmental Disabilities launched the Empowering through Employment Initiative to assist the growing number of individuals who express an interest in community-based employment. A two-year goal has been set that 35% of all individuals receiving services and supports are afforded the opportunity to participate in employment services to explore employment choices, address myths about earned income, and assist with becoming employed. Since the launch of the initiative, there has been a 52% increase in those receiving employment services. Albany and Rolla have each had a 100% increase in individuals using employment services, and Poplar Bluff has had 500% increase.

Congratulations to each of these areas and the committed team of support coordinators and service providers who have created these new opportunities for individuals.

## Community Collaboration

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Accommodation for Success event will be held Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the Forest Park Campus of St. Louis Community College. This event is a collaborative of service providers, state agencies, local businesses, and workforce agencies.

Workshops include:

- Colleen Starkloff, from the Starkloff Disability Institute presenting *Disability Hiring: Welcoming & Accommodating Employees with Disabilities*
- Lesa Barber, from MO Vocational Rehabilitation, and Dr. Michael Kiener, from Maryville University, presenting *Disability Etiquette: Increasing Inclusion*
- Lisa Ezeamii, from Delta Center for Independent Living, presenting *People Are People: Creating Inclusion by Changing Perception*

The link to register is:

<https://accommodationforsuccess2017.eventbrite.com>





# STEP Program Helps Javion Land a Job

## SEAMLESS TRANSITION THROUGH ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP (STEP) AT BOONE HOSPITAL



Javion participated in the Seamless Transition through Enhanced Partnership (STEP) program at Boone Hospital Center during the 2015-2016 school year. STEP partnership agencies include Alternative Community Training (ACT), Boone County Family Resources, Division of Developmental Disabilities Central Missouri Regional Office, Columbia Public Schools, Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Boone Hospital Center.

While Javion held other jobs before his STEP experience, STEP helped him develop valuable skills including interviewing, creating a resume, and specific skills necessary to maintain employment. Now, he has a career as an orderly in Patient Care Support Services at one of the nation's leading hospitals—Boone Hospital Center.

“My department is fun! There is always a lot going on. I like that,” Javion says.

Javion has a talent for comforting anxious patients as he transports them. Although he works with many different types of patients, he remains calm in every situation.

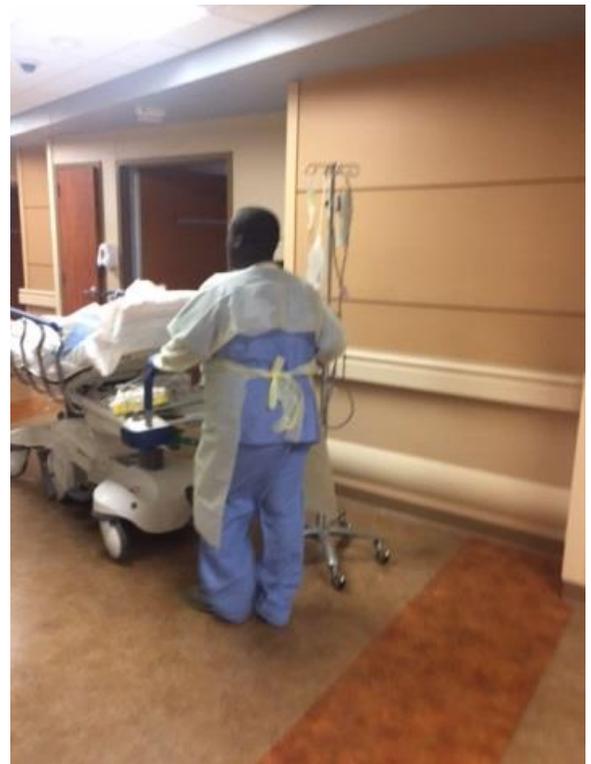
Nine months into his current position, Javion is

not only successful at performing his role as an orderly, but he has taken on new responsibilities. Javion works in additional areas of the hospital as needed including the post-anesthesia care unit, surgery waiting area, and kitchen. He also works as a patient sitter for individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's.

“I like to work, and I love my job,” Javion says. “I want to make my own money so I don't have to rely on anyone else. Right now, I am killing it in overtime!”

Javion participates in additional training at the hospital whenever he can, and he is now Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and Helicopter Pad Certified. In addition, Javion is enrolled in Moberly Area Community College and working toward his goal of becoming a nurse.

“Javion is a self-directed and motivated employee. We are proud of his success and proud to watch him grow in his career,” says STEP Career Specialist Barb Wright. “He is proof of what students can accomplish when given real-world work experience!”



# Community Calendar

**August 10, 2017** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Accommodation for Success, Forest Park Campus of St. Louis Community College, St. Louis, Missouri

For more information, click on: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/workforce-development-board-for-the-st-louis-region-8253597568>

**August 20 – 22, 2017** – 2017 Real Voices – Real Choices Conference, Tan-Tar-A Resort, Osage Beach, Missouri

For more information, click on: [http://www.missourimhf.org/?attachment\\_id=3588](http://www.missourimhf.org/?attachment_id=3588)

**September 21 - 22, 2017** – 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Thompson Center Autism Conference, Double Tree St. Louis Hotel, 16625 Swingley Ridge Rd., Chesterfield, Missouri 63017

For more information, click on: <https://thompsoncenter.missouri.edu/event/12th-annual-autism-conference/>

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

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