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Jean Butcher with a
Tea Basket



Spring 2010

EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

by Tamara Woods

When we start working with job seekers, more often than not, they have no idea as to what they are ready to do in the job market. Job Squad uses a person-based approach to help the person find their personal genius by going where the job makes sense. We use the *discovery process* which consists of getting to know a person's lifestyle, likes/dislikes, and skills/talents. We discuss the different employment types in terms of wage employment or self-employment. Sometimes, both are the key. At other times, the person can start a business within a business, which is finding a business model that would compliment in an existing business- like putting a coffee shop in a book store, or auto detailing in an auto repair shop.

According to the Small Business Administration, there were an estimated 29.6 million small businesses in the U.S. in 2009. There is widely prevalent folklore that small businesses will fail. However, seven out of ten new businesses survive at least two years, and about half survive five years. Is there a fail-proof business? No. Is there a fail-proof wage job? No. There are risks involved, but, Job Squad staff tries to help job seekers minimize risk as much as possible.

For instance, starting small is vital. With a typical micro-business started by a person with disabilities, the costs average approximately \$5000, ac-

cording to Griffin-Hammis Associates. Instead of the jobseeker incurring a large amount of debt, we try to access funding through other sources including using Social Security work incentives such as the Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS), assistance through the Division of Rehabilitation Services, (DRS), our microloan program, and other funding sources.

Other issues that Job Squad helps the job seeker to address are some basic fundamental questions such as: How can I run a business? What are the modifications needed for the business to suit this person? Who can assist with the business? Are there natural unpaid supports like family and friends who can help out? Am I willing to do the work to get the business going and keep it going? From doing feasibility studies,

marketing research, and writing up a business plan, we work with our job seeker to figure out if the business idea is sound, if there's a market in the area and how it would look over a span of time.

Having a small business provides flexibility that can be very important for the people we work with who lead fairly complex lives. It allows flexibility to schedule frequent appointments for doctor visits, therapy, or to maintain a daily schedule that might not be possible in most jobs. If the person gets tired easily, for example, naps might not be a problem. Also, work hours can be flexible according to the transportation that is available to the individual. Business supports can be purchased or developed for people with disabilities just as they are for anyone. Knowing the business side of an enterprise is desirable, but never a prerequisite.

Bunny's Baskets and Beyond: Jean Butcher's Story

When Jean Butcher was growing up, she faced many difficulties in the school system during a time when accommodations for people with disabilities were not as common as they are today. This left a lasting mark on her, and even as an adult, she has faced negativity in terms of her disability.

Jean wasn't sure what she wanted to do, when she came to Job Squad through a DRS referral, but she knew she was ready for a change. She had some interests that she explored with us: funeral homes, animal shelters, and flower shops. However, one of the things that she had mentioned was an interest in making gift baskets. She has made them for friends and family for over 20 years. She also had a desire to own a business, but didn't think she would ever be able to do it. Combining this talent with her yearning to be a small business entrepreneur started *Bunny's Baskets and Beyond*, a customized gift basket business for the busy person on the go. She talks to the buyer, learns about the gift-receiver, and matches the items inside the basket to their tastes. Currently, her basket business is part-time and supplements her other job. As her business grows, she wants to be able to focus more on her business. For more information about her gift baskets, send Jean an email at: bunnysbasketsandbeyond@yahoo.com.



“Just like the cake that is only as good as the ingredients that go into it, the team can only be as good as the individual effort put into the task.”



Teamwork Is Everyone's Job

by Mike Sieber

While teamwork means working together to achieve a common goal, it also means that each team member works to achieve his or her individual goal as a part of the team. Just like the cake that is only as good as the ingredients that go into it, the team can only be as good as the individual effort put into the task. No one on the team is any less important than another member. When everyone works toward a common goal, each team member's contribution becomes just as

important as every other team member's efforts.

The first thing to do when setting up a team is to have everyone agree on the final goal. Even the best team can't complete its goal unless every team member understands and accepts the desired goal. The second part of teamwork is dividing up the work so that each member has a part of the goal that is exclusively theirs. That well-oiled team works so well because each part is coordinated with every other part to make the

process work without any friction. The third component of teamwork is helping teammates when you see that they need some assistance or direction toward the team goal. After you've done your part, remember the team goal and do what you can to accomplish it by helping others with their parts.

Teams are just people working together toward a common goal. Each person is an important part of the team, and it takes everyone to get the job done.

Get Up, Get Out, and MOVE !

By Becky George

Physical activity is one of the most essential elements for everyone's health and well-being. Everyone feels better and becomes more motivated and energized when they incorporate physical activity into their daily routine. Now that spring is in the air, it is a good time for all of us to get up and get moving.

While at work,

park a little farther from the entrance. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, and walk at a brisk pace. At home, play with your children or take your dog for a walk. No dog? No excuse. Take a walk with a family member or friend or head out on your own to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.

Exercise even in small amounts is proven to lower the risk of

high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. The goal is to move your body and increase your heart rate. You will find you will lose weight and gain muscle. You will be surprised at how much better you will feel about your body, your job, and your life in general. Lace up those sneakers or dig out that dust-gathering bike. Let's get up, get out, & MOVE!

New Faces At Job Squad

By Travis Kline

Many new faces have been added to Job Squad's ranks since our fall newsletter. The FBI custodial crew has added five new substitutes, and they are Elizabeth Boore, Mathew Cowger, Joseph Thomas, Luke Wetzel, and Dennis Workman.

The FBI grounds maintenance crew has three new employees. Mark Camp-

bell arrived just in time to help the rest of the crew with the monumental undertaking of *snow removal* from sidewalks and entrances at the FBI. Cody King and Trey Wilson started in March.

JSI Presort Mail has seen the most newcomers and welcomes Josh Bostic, Jennifer Burdette, Tim Combs, Jamie Gardner, Rick Gutierrez, Jorma

Houchins, Brittany Hudson, Leona Keen, Bill Patterson, Richard Perry, and Teresa Willard.

At the main office we have two new individuals, and they are WVU interns, Misty Merrifield and Sommer Bland. They are both getting some experience while finishing their Masters Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling .

Welcome!

SIDE BY SIDE

by Chris Wilson

JSI Presort has 28 wonderful and dedicated employees who are very hard workers. We process mail for the State of WV which keeps us busy day in and day out.

We process around 2 million pieces of mail a month. We also do a lot of hand insertion work each day which includes such things as labeling, inserting, and sealing envelopes. Our employees at JSI Presort are very proud of their work and work harder than anyone I have ever

worked with in my career.

Presort co-located with Champion Industries in April 2009 and it's been a smooth transition. Since this move we have been able to hire more employees and grow our business. Our employees work side by side with Champion employees and with their mail and ours, we process over 6 million pieces of mail a month. Our employees are really happy and seem to be excited to come to work each and every day.

The employees at Pre-

sort are very dedicated individuals. They are prompt and willing to work every day and do whatever it takes to get the job done. They truly go above and beyond and have impressed me with their work ethic.

The atmosphere in the building is great, and we look forward to growing and achieving our goals for years to come. This group is hands-down the best group I have ever seen and ever had the pleasure of working with.

"Our employees at JSI Presort are very proud of their work and work harder than anyone I have ever worked with in my career."

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the U.S., affecting 1 in 150 children. Every 20 minutes, a child is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Autism is referred to as a *spectrum disorder* because it ranges in severity across a wide range of conditions, like the colors of a rainbow. The cause of autism is unknown.

Autism begins at birth or within the first two-and-a-half

years of life. Autistic children may fall behind their same-aged peers in the areas of communication, social skills, and their ability to acquire knowledge. In addition, dysfunctional behaviors may start to appear, such as self-stimulatory behaviors (i.e., repetitive behavior, such as rocking, hand-flapping), self-injury, sleeping and eating problems, poor eye contact, insensitivity to pain, hyperactivity, and attention deficits. Many autistic

individuals are also sensitive to sounds in their environment.

Autism is treatable. Children don't outgrow autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes. In recent years there has been a marked increase in the percentage of children who can attend school in a typical classroom and live semi-independently in community.



Autism "Fun Raiser" for Project Lifesaver

May 22, 2010 7:00 -10:00

Live Music ~ Food ~ Fun

Al Buterol and the Inhalers

Colebank Hall

Fairmont State University

Tickets \$20 - Call Brenda for more information - 304 848-0850



PROJECT LIFESAVER

All proceeds from this event will go toward the purchase of bracelets for people with autism in North Central West Virginia. Lifesaver Bracelets allow a person who has been separated from family or friends to be found quickly. The bracelets emit a pulse-carrier wave frequency tracking signal, and search and rescue teams respond.

WE'RE ALL ABOUT JOBS!

Job Squad, Inc. was formed in 1984 and is a private nonprofit business that provides employment opportunities for people with disabilities and support needs.

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Check out our new logo!



Weston State Hospital

Brenda Hellwig

My first job in this field of human services was social work at a state mental hospital. This was sort of an accidental job that I fell into. I never expected that I would work with people with disabilities and thought that I would probably work in the school system. Well, it turned out that the state hospital was a great place to fall into.

The hospital was not the scary, prison-like place that movies depict. In the background, I only occasionally heard shrieks or screams. Patients weren't hanging upside down on ceilings, racing around acting "crazy," or pacing around in circles. This is not to say that I didn't see really strange behavior, but many of the patients were downright "doped-up" on anti-psychotic drugs and in a zombie-like state.

The outside of the hospital was typical in that it was a sprawling stone complex, windows were covered with bars, and fences surrounded the grounds. The patients and staff wore regular clothes. Only the occasional nurse wore white. Although there were no ID badges or name tags then, I could always tell staff members by the keys that were in their hands or were nearby. I had a master key that let me into most of the wards.

The diagnosis of *Chronic Undifferentiated Schizophrenia* was indiscriminately given to just about all the patients. I remember doctors using a huge stamp with those words on it and stamping it into patients' charts. On the wards there was a lot of napping, pacing,, watching TV, and staring

into space going on. There were some activities such as recreation and art therapy, but boredom was the norm. I spent a lot of time talking with the patients.

In 1994 a modern mental health facility was built, and the state hospital closed. Much progress has been made in the care and treatment of individuals with psychiatric disabilities, but I will always value the time I worked at the hospital. I enjoyed working with the patients and partnering with them, families, and community agencies to develop support networks. I also learned a lot at the hospital and became passionately committed to people with disabilities. There was an enormous need for improvements in the lives of individuals with disabilities and, though the hospital was closed, my job was not done.