

JOB TRAINING & PLACEMENT REPORT

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34 years
of service

for professionals who support employment for people with disabilities

Employment for All

JTPR Notes Disability Employment Awareness Month

Autum Beel

Goodwill Industries International recently named Autum Beel one of



its 2010 *Kenneth Shaw Graduate of the Year* for overcoming an addiction to drugs and for developing a promising career and strong family.

Beel became addicted to crystal methamphetamines when she was 13 years old. She ran away from home when she was in high school and sold drugs to support her addiction.

By the time she was 19, she had two children, but she asked her mother to raise them. Beel's drug addiction made it very difficult for her to find and keep a job, care for her children, and lead a stable life.

After living on the streets for several years, she realized that she would need to make fundamental changes to get her life back on track.

The first step for Beel, who was then 30 years old, was to stop using drugs. She hadn't worked in several years and didn't know how to find a job or support herself. She said her life changed after she saw an advertisement for free job training at Seattle Goodwill Industries® and signed up for its

retail and customer service training program.

During training, she learned the valuable customer service skills that employers look for, such as operating a cash register and merchandising on a retail sales floor. She also learned how to search for work and interview for potential jobs. Upon completion of the Goodwill® program, she had the newfound confidence she needed to land a job.

A senior job-placement specialist at the Goodwill helped Beel prepare for an interview with a recruiter for a Fortune 500 company who was impressed by her energy and enthusiasm, and hired her as a cashier. She was soon promoted to head cashier, and is currently thriving at her current job. Her next career goal is to be promoted to department supervisor.

"When I was having a hard time in my life, I didn't think I could ever make it," said Beel. "Goodwill helped me get a job, and now I've been clean and sober for almost three years. I have my kids. I have my own place. It all started when I walked into Goodwill. That day changed my life."

The job she found with Goodwill's help gave her the steady income, stability, and independence she needed to improve her life. Within months of finding

work, she moved into her own apartment, and her children were able to move in with her. She also recently became engaged and is looking forward to a brighter future with her family and career.

"With Goodwill's support and Autum's hard work and determination, she is building a stable foundation for her family and thriving in a successful career," said Jim Gibbons, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries International. "Goodwill's programs give people like Autum the confidence they need to make positive changes in their lives."

Goodwill Industries International's Kenneth Shaw Graduate of the Year award honors an outstanding person or persons for completing a Goodwill Industries career program and becoming competitively employed by a non-Goodwill employer in the community.

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Informational Interviews Work

By Cary Griffin

Informational interviewing is a great way to develop work experience settings, build a job placement network, discover new kinds of jobs, introduce yourself and your services to employers, and build the “mental database” that all of us rely on for employment ideas when beginning a job search with someone.

In addition, arranging for an informational interview is usually much easier than setting up a job-development meeting.

A casual conversation with a prospective employer at a monthly Chamber of Commerce “Business After Hours” social or at a service club meeting (e.g. Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, etc.) can lead to a question such as, “I’ve never seen your operation before. Would you mind if I called you to set up a time for a tour and a bit of a chat?”

Most folks love to talk about their business and since you are not pressing them, setting up an informational interview is considered low-risk. However, be sure to follow up with the employer soon afterward, before the conversation is forgotten.

How much time should you plan on? Generally, a request for 15 to 30 minutes works well because it signals respect for the person’s time, and indicates that you are busy as well.

However, in our experience, 15 minutes always becomes 30 to 60 minutes once the discussion and tour begins. Once on-site, the job developer or employment specialist should be seeking information about the company, its hiring practices, what opportunities exist to create or carve jobs, and gaining insights into the company culture.

The general format of an informational interview is as follows:

❖ **Brief discussion** — prompted by the employment specialist asking something to the effect of: “*Before we tour, can you tell me a bit about the history of the business, the products and services, and how the business is evolving?*” In addition, “*Tell me how you got into this line of work.*” People want to know that you care, so give them a chance to talk about themselves.

❖ **A tour** — with questions asked at appropriate times, and of various people performing the many tasks at the company along the way.

❖ **Wrap-up** — thank the person for his/her time, and indicate that you may have someone interested in this field as a career or even possibly working there — either now or in the future. Make your exit and promise to stay in touch.

Remember the Purpose of the Visit

Throughout the process, opportunities to ask questions conversationally exist. *Since this is NOT a job-development visit, do not press someone for a job!* That comes later in the relationship.

For the time being, the tour needs to focus on answering questions about the varying tasks and duties that employees perform, the values and culture of the company, and the needs the business has that your organization can address.

Be Observant During a Tour!

A business tour provides an opportunity to witness, firsthand, the level of natural support that may be available to someone with a disability.

Keen observation reveals whether co-workers and supervisors help each other out during a typical day — and it reveals who conducts the training — and how an employment specialist might structure the initiation period so that the employer takes significant

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responsibility for supervision and training from the start.

Such on-site observation also reveals what is valued most at the workplace — whether it’s muscle, brains, humor, attendance, speed, quality or other worker traits.

These are important considerations when designing a job match that minimizes on-site training and consultation. ■

*Cary Griffin is a senior partner at Griffin-Hammis Associates (www.griffinhammis.com). For more on informational interviews, consult the *Job Developer’s Handbook* (Brookes Publishing and at www.amazon.com). In addition, Griffin-Hammis is also offering a Customized Employment series available at www.cequick.com/myeln/griffinhammis/default.asp — and it is collaborating with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) on in-depth self-employment Web courses that will be available soon.*

Herman Geddie



Herman Geddie is the first individual who has obtained employment by Employment Source through the *Ticket to Work* program since the organization became an Employment Network (EN).

The goal of the *Ticket to Work* program is to reduce reliance on Social Security Disability benefits through gainful employment. For ENs like Employment Source, the program provides greater access to individuals with disabilities, like Herman Geddie, who are looking for employment.

Nearly 20 years ago, Herman was diagnosed with hereditary glaucoma, which resulted in significant vision loss. Prior to the diagnosis Herman worked as an embroidery supervisor, but he was forced to leave this position when his vision deteriorated. For the next several years, Herman attempted numerous other jobs including baking and lawn maintenance.

Herman began receiving disability benefits in 1996, and though he received a Ticket in 2003, he remained unaware of its usefulness. Realizing that he needed additional training and education to find a new career, Herman visited Fayetteville Technical Community College to see what programs they offered.

One of the counselors there advised Herman to call Employment Source about the *Ticket to Work* program. When he visited Employment Source, he learned that the Ticket he held entitled him to receive a variety of vocational support services.

The staff at Employment Source immediately recognized Herman's potential, and offered him a position as a switchboard operator on the AbilityOne contract at the



Editor's Notebook

I wish to thank Charlene Sarmiento and Taylor Ham for providing stories and photos about the employees profiled for this month's coverage of Disability Employment Awareness Month.

While we are pleased to celebrate their success, remember that *JTPR* is interested in success stories anytime (not just in October)! Which successful job seekers have stood out for *you*? Send us their story, and we'll be happy to publish it in a subsequent issue.

We included our annual reader survey in last month's issue of

JTPR. The survey is similar to previous years, but this time we are asking readers to place a more measurable value to each of the *JTPR* inserts (questions #6-9). Also, given today's electronic age, we are extremely interested in your responses to question #10.

Most importantly, your suggestions for future articles are crucial in planning editorial content. We take your comments seriously and look forward to hearing from you. Until next time.

Mike Jacquart

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Communications Command Squadron at Pope Air Force Base.

Initially reluctant to accept the position due to his lack of experience and comfort working with computers and his visual difficulties, he soon changed his mind after visiting the operation and meeting Supervisor Francine Wheeler.

With the supports he receives on site, along with some accommodations, such as adjusting the computer monitor and using corrective lenses, Herman is now able to work.

Herman currently enjoys his job and is doing well. "I feel like I belong here," he says. "I feel like I am part of one big family where everyone works together."

He hopes to increase his hours and responsibilities in the future, and sees himself advancing in the company. "It has been such a joy to work for Employment Source," Herman says. "I would not hesitate to recommend that other people with disabilities visit Employment Source and discuss their options."

Source: Reprinted with permission from ServiceSource Network (www.ourpeoplework.org).

Richard Lopez



Goodwill Industries International recently named Richard

Lopez its 2010 *Achiever of the Year* for overcoming addiction and building a strong career at Goodwill.

Lopez started doing drugs when he was 12 years old. At 17, he was selling drugs and addicted to alcohol. When he was 36, Lopez and his wife, who also had an alcohol addiction, made the choice to get sober together. They wanted to be better parents to their young children, and they supported each other as they worked toward their shared goal.

As Lopez tried to rebuild his life, he found that keeping a job was his biggest challenge. He struggled through 16 different positions in four years. Then he found a job as a mail-room clerk in Goodwill Industries® of Central Texas's commercial services division.

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Agency Expands Transportation for Persons with Disabilities

Bob Rees, president of Goodwill Agency, wanted to provide transportation to Lorain County residents who were left stranded after the Lorain County Transit slashed its services.

Rees wrote a letter to Lorain County Commissioners on July 28, 2010 asking for permission for Goodwill Industries of Lorain County (in northern Ohio), to operate two county-owned buses or vans “for the benefit of people with disabilities and/or significant barriers to independent living.”

Rees wrote that the service would be limited to “citizens with a demonstrable, significant need for such transportation support.”

Commissioner Lori Kokoski brought up the proposal during a meeting and said Goodwill is “picking up where we are unable to provide services to the community that needs it the most.”

Kokoski also said the proposal had not been approved and ideas were still being tossed around. The proposal was to be reviewed by the county prosecutor’s office before any action by commissioners.

The Lorain County Transit (LCT) drastically cut services in January 2010 following the failure of the countywide half-percent sales tax increase.

The LCT had initially been scheduled to shut down completely, but because of a surge of federal money, the county was able to keep two routes. The county’s Dial-a-Ride service, which offers scheduled rides to senior citizens and people with disabilities, now

only runs within 3/4 of a mile on either side of the two routes.

“I think this is positively going to be very good,” Kokoski said, adding that what Goodwill is providing is similar to the Dial-a-Ride service, except it will be offered countywide.

“Goodwill is picking up the operating portion. We have the bus, but we don’t have the money to pay people to drive the bus,” Kokoski said. “That’s the service they will be stepping up to the plate to accomplish. It’s something greatly needed in Lorain County these days.”

Rees wrote in the letter that Goodwill would provide a dispatch call center, drivers with the proper commercial driving credentials, and driver training.

Passengers could be taken to places such as doctor appointments, pre-arranged appointments, pharmacy or grocery store, senior

day care centers, and other temporary work-related stops, the letter said. Rees also asked for the ability to get gas at a discounted price.

Goodwill would bear the costs of wages, operation of the vehicles, maintain the insurance and maintenance of the vehicle, and handle all the scheduling, Reese wrote.

If the commissioners reach an agreement with Goodwill, the service would start in 90 days. Goodwill would run a pilot program for six months.

“It will be a great partnership,” Kokoski said. “I think it’s an excellent idea. I’m grateful for Goodwill approaching me and asking me to partner with them.” ■

Sources: Goodwill Industries of Lorain County, Inc.; and “The Morning Journal,” serving northern Ohio. This article is reprinted with permission of Goodwill Industries International.

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What to Ask During an Interview — Part II

When interviewing, many job candidates don't realize that the questions they ask are just as important as how they present themselves and the answers they give.

Failing to ask questions shows a lack of genuine interest in the job. Asking foolish questions indicates the candidate didn't do enough research prior to the interview. Making either mistake can cost a candidate the job offer.

In part one of this two-part article, Heather Krasna, author of *Jobs That Matter: Find a Stable, Fulfilling Career in Public Service*, presented a number of questions that job seekers should ask the interviewer. Her remaining recommendations appear below:

➤ “How did this position become available?”

This question is a bit pushy, but it is quite important if the applicant does not know how the position opened up. Is the organization expanding? Or, did the last person leave, and the job seeker may be able to subtly find out why?

➤ “What would you like to see happen in 6 to 12 months after you hire a new person for this position?”

This question is akin to, “How will I be evaluated?” or “How do you measure success in this role?” It can also clue the applicant in on whether the expectations for the job are realistic.

➤ “What resources are available for this position?”

This question addresses the technology, staff or budgeted resources the successful candidate will have and gives many insights into whether the organization is being realistic about what the applicant can accomplish given the resources available.

➤ “Is there anything you are still wondering about my candidacy that might keep you from offering me the position? Is there anything further I should clarify?”

This question demonstrates that the applicant is open to feedback or critique, and it also tells the employer that the job seeker wants

to reassure the interviewer that he or she would be a great employee.

➤ “What is the next step in the process? May I have your business card?”

The final question can help relieve anxiety after the interview because the applicant at least has some clue about how long it will be before the employer gets back to them. The applicant should ask for business cards from each person doing the interviewing so that he or she can send thank-you notes.

Krasna adds that there are also questions candidates should steer clear of asking during the interview. According to her, questions to NOT ask include inquiries about salary, scandals and office politics, and personal questions about the interviewer. ■

Excerpted from Jobs That Matter: Find a Stable, Fulfilling Career in Public Service by Heather Krasna. The book is available at www.amazon.com, major bookstores and from the publisher (www.jist.com or 1-800-648-JIST).

—Resources—

📖 ***YOU! What You MUST Know to Start Your Career as a Professional***, by Howard R. Moskowitz, www.amazon.com.

The author blends humor and expertise to outline the formative years in the development of a professional, regardless of the field.

📖 ***100 Fastest-Growing Careers***, Eleventh Edition, by Michael Farr, JIST Publishing, 1-800-JIST, www.jist.com. Rapidly growing jobs offer better-than-average

opportunities for employment and job security. Consequently, the author calls attention to jobs that are projected to grow quickly.

📖 ***Someone Like Me: An Untimely Challenge and Triumph Over Cerebral Palsy***, by John W. Quinn, <http://johnwquinn.com>.

The author dispels the negativity and low expectations that are too often prevalent in homes of persons with disabilities — and

replaces it with hope and positive thinking.

📖 ***KwikFix™*** survival language booklets, \$10.95 each, JIST Publishing. www.jist.com. The goal of these booklets is to help managers and employees quickly and efficiently close the communication gap at work — without requiring them to retain loads of information, attend classes or spend a great deal of their time and money.

Within four months he was promoted, and soon served as a mentor for new employees — helping them learn new skills. After several years of hard work, he was promoted again to become the Goodwill's contracts supervisor in charge of managing two state contracts.

Lopez believes that his four children and 13 grandchildren would have had different lives if he had not found Goodwill. When his daughter nearly dropped out of school and a son became involved with drugs, Lopez helped both of them make better decisions based on his own experiences.

His hard work also allowed Lopez to buy his first home. In addition, Goodwill staff encouraged him to take college courses — and he urged his kids to do the same.

“Goodwill brought out the best in me and had so much to do with my success,” said Lopez. “As I was learning that education and knowledge would improve my life, I wanted to help my kids improve their lives, so I passed that on to them.”

In his current position as contracts supervisor, Lopez coordinates the shipping, scanning and billing of about 600 specialty license plates daily for the Texas Department of Transportation. He trains new staff and manages mail and customer billing for the Disability Determination Services mailroom. He also took the initiative to secure a state contract for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

“Goodwill gave Richard the career support he needed, but he is the true architect of his success,” said Jim Gibbons, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries International. “His determination to succeed at work and his commitment to his family are qualities that we can all admire.”

Goodwill Industries International's Achiever of the Year is a person who has shown great progress and accomplishment in overcoming obstacles to employment, and who still benefits from the Goodwill work environment or receives services to support employment at a community site.



Sandra Martin

Goodwill Industries International recently named Sandra Martin one of its 2010 *Kenneth Shaw Graduates of the Year* for her tireless work to improve the lives of people with visual impairments and disabilities in her community.

Martin began losing her vision 30 years ago as a result of juvenile diabetes. She lost her sight completely when her daughter was just a few weeks old. When her daughter was in high school, Martin overheard someone telling the teen that she'd have to take care of her mother for the rest of her life. In that moment, Martin decided she needed to find a job to become more independent.

She enrolled in courses at the Florida Division of Blind Services, where she learned to use the Job Access with Speech (JAWS) program and became computer literate for the first time. She also learned how to use a guide dog. Even with this new training, Martin still struggled to find work.

After searching for five years with no luck, she was referred to Goodwill Industries® of Southwest Florida (North Fort Myers). A Goodwill® employment consultant helped Martin develop a résumé to highlight her extensive volunteer work in the community and her computer skills. The consultant

coached Martin on the job application process and accompanied her on job interviews.

“The biggest obstacle was getting someone to believe in me, and believe that I could do a good job and be a benefit to an employer,” said Martin. “Having someone to stand behind me, support and work with me is what made Goodwill a great organization to help me find employment.”

Within a few months, the Visually Impaired Persons (VIP) of Southwest Florida hired Martin as an outreach coordinator. Her advocacy work has made Martin one of the most visible advocates for people with visual impairments and disabilities in Southwest Florida.

Her hard work helped to establish a Lighthouse Outreach Center in Naples, a nonprofit that works with VIP to support people with visual impairments and their families.

As the result of Martin's advocacy work, voters with visual impairments can use adaptive voting machines in Collier County, FL, and busy intersections have been made accessible with pedestrian signals to keep people with visual impairments safe.

“Every day, Sandra works to improve the lives of people with visual impairments and disabilities, and she dismisses any negative stereotypes that people may have about employing people with disabilities,” said Jim Gibbons, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries International. “Her story is inspiring to people in similar situations and shows employers the benefits people with disabilities can bring to the workplace.” ■

Goodwill Industries International's Kenneth Shaw Graduate of the Year award honors an outstanding person or persons for completing a Goodwill Industries career program and becoming competitively employed by a non-Goodwill employer in the community.

Survey Shares Insights on Impact of 'ADA'

Hailed as the Bill of Rights for people with disabilities, the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* has fulfilled much of its promise since it went into effect 20 years ago, according to a survey of disability leaders. However, the findings also uncover new challenges.

"Overall, more than 90% of survey respondents believe that the quality of life for people with disabilities in communities across the U.S. has improved greatly since the passage of the *ADA*," said Lex Frieden, a professor of biomedical informatics and rehabilitation at

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

"But, respondents also pointed out that there are opportunities to be realized and challenges to be overcome," added Frieden, who authored the survey to gauge the impact of the *ADA* on the disability community. Eight hundred-seventy participants responded from 400 communities in all 50 states.

Nearly 60% of those surveyed agreed that access to retail and commercial establishments has greatly improved since the *ADA*.

However, Frieden noted that not all respondents expressed satisfac-

tion with employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Frieden also emphasized the need to provide housing and personal assistance services for the approximately 79 million Baby Boomers who will face the increasing risk of disability as they age.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports there are 54 million Americans living with a disability. (**Editor's note:** See also the cover article in the August 2010 issue of *JTPR*.) ■

Source: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Assistance Technology

What's New in AT?

What is it? Clarity Professional Amplified Cordless Telephone

What does it do? This is an amplifier telephone designed for people who are hard of hearing.

How does it work? This phone amplifies incoming sound up to 50 decibels. It is hearing aid compatible.

Who makes it? Clarity, a Division of Plantronics, Inc., 4289 Bonny Oaks Dr., Suite 106, Chattanooga, TN 37406, (800) 426-3738, www.clarityproducts.com.

What is it? Flip and Talk

What does it do? This is a direct selection communicator designed for individuals with speech or communication disabilities.

How does it work? This communication aid straps to the user's waist. He/she simply flips through the four icon holders to select the desired message and then lightly squeezes the icon to play the pre-recorded message.

Who makes it? Enabling Devices, 50 Broadway, Hawthorne, NY 10532, (800) 832-8697, www.enablingdevices.com.

What is it? Laidback Portable Table

What does it do? The Laidback Portable Table is a notebook/laptop computer support or bookholder designed for individuals with mobility or severe physical disabilities or spinal cord injury.

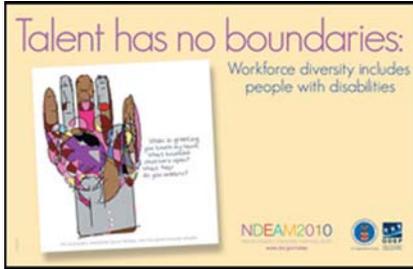
How does it work? This adjustable unit can be used in a recliner, on a sofa, or while lying in bed to hold most laptop computers or books in an optimal position.

Who makes it? The distributor is Elderlux, LLC, 1130 West 37th St., Chicago, IL 60609, (888) 537-5893, www.elderlux.com. Manufacturer information was not available. ■

Source: ABLEDATA (www.abledata.com), which adds over 1,000 assistive technology products to its database each year. ABLEDATA records are provided for informational purposes only. Products contained in ABLEDATA have not been examined, reviewed, or tested.

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Theme Selected for Disability Employment Awareness Month



Talent Has No Boundaries: Workforce Diversity **INCLUDES** Workers With Disabilities is the theme for National Disability Employment

Awareness Month, which is being observed in October nationwide.

Selection of an annual theme helps the private sector; federal, state and local governments; and advocacy organizations plan events and programs that showcase the abilities and skills of job seekers and working Americans with disabilities.

Color posters, which are available in English and other languages, are among the tools available to promote this special occa-

sion. Information about the poster and ordering is available at www.dol.gov/odep/index.htm. (See also the accompanying graphic.)

The responsibility for leading nationwide recognition of Disability Employment Awareness Month was transferred to the newly created Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) in 2001. ■

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

Book Review

Lack of Confidence Could be Reason You're Still Job Hunting

Employers and recruiters can tell the difference between candidates who possess confidence and those who don't.

If you're one of those who don't, employers are likely to wonder why they should have confidence in you when you don't seem to have any in yourself.

Confidence also plays a role in the way you look for a job, and how successful you are in your endeavors. Chances are, if you lack confidence you're probably not networking enough; communicating your value in cover letters, résumés, and interviews; and setting yourself up for a better job than your last one.

"Landing the right job is about being hopeful and optimistic, as well as being determined and motivated to do what it takes to achieve your goal," says Lisa

Caldas Kappesser, author of *The Smart New Way to Get Hired: Use Emotional Intelligence and Land the Right Job*.

The following are among Kappesser's tips to develop self-confidence during a job search:

✓ *Thoroughly prepare for your interviews.* Know and rehearse your answers to interview questions.

✓ *Accept yourself.* Admit your mistakes and move on.

✓ *Make a conscious effort to not compare yourself to others.* Affirm your uniqueness. Remind yourself of your talents and strengths.

✓ *Surround yourself with positive people and situations.* Job hunting is a challenging and difficult process, and you need the support of family, friends, and possibly a career coach.



✓ *Focus on your strengths and accomplishments and not on your weaknesses and failures.* Each day of a job search, be positive and remind yourself of your accomplishments.

The Smart New Way to Get Hired is available at www.amazon.com, in major bookstores, and from the publisher (www.jist.com or phone 1-800-648-JIST). ■