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## Model Partnerships

Limited center staff resources or a lack of community resources may make it challenging for many centers to develop resources or partnerships with outside agencies or programs that will assist the center in serving students with disabilities. Despite these challenges, some centers have created model partnerships that benefit their students with disabilities during and after Job Corps. The stories of three Job Corps centers—Clearfield, St. Louis and Weber Basin—who have been successful at creating partnerships are being shared to encourage other centers to continue working to develop partnerships and to share ideas.

### Evolving Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership at Clearfield JCC

*-Contributed by Danielle Pedersen, Academic Manager/Disability Coordinator, Clearfield JCC*

The Clearfield Job Corps Center has developed a dynamic and evolving partnership with their local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency—a full-time, on-center counselor from the local VR agency who serves only Job Corps students. The VR counselor also assists in reasonable accommodation committee meetings (as appropriate), serves as a staff resource, provides presentations about VR to staff and students, and teaches a career transition readiness class. The VR counselor is planning to provide staff training and introduce center staff to other resources in the community.

The VR counselor provides students with an introduction to VR services during the fourth week of Career Preparation and again during Career Concepts. Students can self refer or staff can refer students to the VR counselor.

“VR and the Clearfield Job Corps Center have strived to make access to this resource easy for the students through constant coordination and communication between career counselors, VR, instructors/teachers, transition counselors, and management.”

*- Danielle Pedersen*

Students who co-enroll in VR while in Job Corps can receive a variety of services, including vocational counseling, job placement and development services, and assistance with medication, transportation, and transition activities. This partnership also provides VR-enrolled students access to evaluation/testing if a disability is suspected, but is not documented. The VR counselor continues to support students, post-Job Corps until the student has obtained and maintained a job for 3 months, regardless of their location or residence.



**Rich Mackay, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, working with CJCC students.**

### Community Partnership Brings Multiple Disability Resources to the St. Louis Job Corps Center

*-Contributed by Jeffrey Taylor, the Business Community Liaison, St. Louis JCC*

The St. Louis Job Corps Center has opened the doors to accessibility by partnering with a host of community service providers, which are coordinated through the St. Louis Area Transition Team (SLATT). SLATT was organized through a partnership between the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Transition Coalition; it is one of sixteen Community Transition Teams (CTT) across Missouri. The CTT project provides team training and technical assistance to enhance a public education agency’s ability to provide comprehensive transition programs for youth with disabilities, including facilitating a seamless transition

*Model Partnerships continued on page 2*

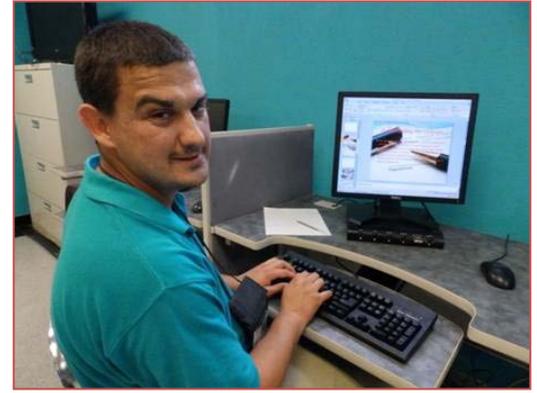
# Model Partnerships (cont'd)

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to full community participation for every student, regardless of his/her disability, upon exit from high school. SLATT provides information about transition planning, services and research-based effective practices for team members who are comprised of educators, students, families, administrators, interagency personnel, community partners, and employers. SLATT's vision and mission is to provide a web of transition support for St. Louis public school students by offering access and exposure to careers, education, training, and daily living skills through numerous transition experiences. The St. Louis Job Corps center is one of those strands in the web of community support.

SLATT has been instrumental in connecting the center to:

- The Metropolitan Employment and Rehabilitation Services (MERS) and Missouri Goodwill Industries and their shared mission "to provide opportunities for persons with barriers to employment to work and live more independently in the community."
- WorkNet of St. Louis designed to help clients of Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance programs connect to Missouri job training/related VR services. WorkNet's "Ticket to Work" program partnership with the St. Louis Job Corps center was established to provide a transitional work program for students with disabilities.
- Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Missouri Department of Social Services.



**St. Louis JCC student, Meho Bektic, completing a presentation on applying for real estate loans for his Office Assistant program.**

These connections will not only help Job Corps students with disabilities, but will also improve the employment opportunities for all Job Corps graduates.

The St Louis JCC linkage with Rehabilitation Services for the Blind has already paid off for Meho Bektic, 26-year-old immigrant from Bosnia. Meho had been working with Penny Perr, a senior VR Counselor with the rehabilitation agency, for several years looking for the best training program to help him achieve his career goals and surmount his current barriers to success, which included low vision and limited English proficiency. During a private tour of the St Louis center, Meho, accompanied by Ms. Perr, and Sharon Silverstein, an agency Job Development Specialist, learned about not only the program offerings, but also about how the center could assist Meho by developing an accommodation plan that would help him achieve success.

Meho entered the program in January 2013 and is very close to completing the office assistant career technical training program. He is preparing to enter a work-based learning program with St. Louis Community Credit Union as a bank teller. The Rehabilitation Services for the Blind will be providing the specialized computer resources needed for Meho to perform the duties at the credit union. Upon completion of Job Corps, WorkNet has volunteered to help connect Meho to other job opportunities in his chosen vocation and assist him in the Social Security documentation required to keep his benefits as he enters the workforce.

## **Weber Basin's Partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation**

*-Contributed by Donica Bigelow, Education Director/Disability Coordinator, Weber Basin JCC*

Weber Basin Job Corps Center has an outstanding partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. This partnership provides an on-center VR counselor two days per week who works in concert with the counselors, Education Director/Disability Coordinator, and Special Education Instructor to provide many resources that benefit students with disabilities on center. VR services include career counseling, evaluations, technical assistance, transition services and job placement assistance, and staff training.

The VR counselor assigned to the center provides an orientation to VR for all new students. Students who may qualify have the opportunity to set up an appointment to talk with the VR counselor.

*Model Partnerships continued on page 3*

# Model Partnerships (cont'd)

VR has assisted eligible students from Weber Basin with job coaches during transition phase, clothing for interviews, scrubs for the Certified Nurse Assistant Program, housing assistance, and disability determination testing. They also continue services for students after they leave the program. If a student moves back to another state or where a VR office is closer to where they will be living, the VR counselor then transfers their file to a VR office near their home.

\*\*\*Have a great community partnership or resource?\*\*\*  
Please share it with your Regional Disability Coordinator; we would love to feature your center in a future article.



Sheri Richardson, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor speaking to students at WBJCC

## Tips and Resources for Building Partnerships

### Tips: What to consider when looking for partners:

- ▶ Consider the resources or services that would be most beneficial for your students and the Disability Program, such as:
  - ✓ Assessment services
  - ✓ Assistive technology (AT)
  - ✓ Career transition assistance
  - ✓ Transportation services
  - ✓ Job development
  - ✓ Job placement and retention
  - ✓ Staff training
- ▶ Ask your Center Mental Health Consultant and other clinicians about community resources that may benefit students with disabilities.
- ▶ Do your homework on your potential partner:
  - ✓ Know what services they provide and if there are any requirements, waiting lists, or fees to accessing services.
  - ✓ Consider what you are going to ask for and what you can offer in a partnership.
  - ✓ Find out if they have other partners in the community. This may give you a better idea about how they have partnered in the past and provide you with additional potential partners of your own.
- ▶ Utilize your Customized Disability Partnership Tool! An updated tool will be distributed to centers soon, contact your Regional Disability Coordinator for more information.



*Tips and Resources continued on page 4*

# Tips and Resources for Building Partnerships

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## Resources: Lets start looking!

### ► Information and Resources

- ✓ **Business Leadership Network:** The US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) is a national non-profit currently representing over 50 BLN affiliates across the United State and more than 5,000 employers using a “business to business” strategy to promote the business imperative of including people with disabilities in the workforce. (<http://www.usbln.org>)
- ✓ **Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center:** The Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center is a national network of 10 regional centers that provide training, information, and materials related to the Americans with Disabilities Act. (<http://www.adata.org/>)
- ✓ **LD Online:** Provides information about Learning Disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; as well as state by state resources from the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities that provides lists or resources in each state with contact information. <http://www.ldonline.org/ldresources/links/state>
- ✓ **Learning Disabilities Association of America:** The Learning Disability Association of America provides information and resources on learning disabilities. ([http://www.ldanatl.org/state\\_chapters/index.asp](http://www.ldanatl.org/state_chapters/index.asp))
- ✓ **National Alliance on Mental Illness:** The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation’s largest grassroots organization for people with mental illness and their families. NAMI provides support, education, and advocacy. ([http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=Your\\_Local\\_Nami](http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=Your_Local_Nami))
- ✓ **Office of Disability Employment Policy/State Liasons:** The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) provides national leadership by developing and influencing disability-related employment policy and practice affecting the employment of people with disabilities. (<http://www.dol.gov/odep/contact/state.htm>)

### ► Transition, Training, and Employment

**Disability Employment Initiative:** The Disability Employment Initiative is collaboration between ODEP and the Employment and Training Administration to improve employment and training services through local and state programs. (<http://www.dei-ideas.org>)

- ✓ **Easter Seals Disability Services:** Easter Seals offers employment and training by providing an individualized approach to identify goals, objectives, and planning needs. They also provide assistance with AT and job accommodations. (<http://www.easterseals.com/our-programs/employment-training/>)
- ✓ **State Vocational Rehabilitation:** VR assists individuals with disabilities in preparing for and engaging in gainful employment. VR has a number of resources beneficial for Job Corps students with disabilities during and after completion of the program. ([http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_cd=SVR](http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=SVR))

### ► Assistive Technology

- ✓ **State AT Act Programs:** State AT Act Programs work to improve the provision of AT to individuals with disabilities of all ages through comprehensive statewide programs of technology-related assistance. (<http://www.resnaprojects.org/allcontacts/statewidecontacts.html>)

- ✓ **Bookshare®:** Bookshare® is the largest online library of copyrighted content. Bookshare will digitize needed textbooks if not available in their library. Bookshare® is free to all centers and students. (<https://bookshare.org/>)

Job Corps has an established partnership with Bookshare®, please visit <http://jweb.jobcorps.org/Disability/Pages/Bookshare.aspx> for more information.

### ► Independent Living Supports

- ✓ **Centers for Independent Living:** Centers for Independent Living assist people with disabilities in becoming independent within their community. Their services include, but are not limited to housing, accessibility issues, support groups, and training. (<http://www.virtualcil.net/cils/>)

# Spotlight on Assistive Technology

Under the 2004 Assistive Technology Act (AT Act), every state and US territory has a State AT Act program. State AT Act programs work to improve the provision of AT to individuals with disabilities of all ages through comprehensive statewide programs of technology-related assistance. The programs offer training, outreach, education, and professional development; as well as reassignment of previously used AT, instruction and demonstration of how to use the AT, and AT loan programs.

ATs can be a great asset to individuals with disabilities; however, it can be a daunting task to find the AT that best meets one's needs. State AT Act programs can provide assistance in navigating the sometimes complicated world of AT. Below is information about two State AT Act programs.

## The Georgia State AT Program

Georgia's State AT Act Program, *Tools for Life*, has created an AT application (App) finder. This searchable database helps users find appropriate Apps for their living, learning, working, and other needs and life activities. The Apps in the Tools for Life database have been verified by the Tools for Life team and their associates. Users can search for Apps by disability category or sub-category, and browse by price range or device type. Users that already have an App in mind can search by name for that specific App. Additionally, the Tools for Life hosts links to how-to videos, App reviews, and potential funding sources through the "Helpful Links" section. The Tools for Life program also provides links to other databases that may be useful in the search for the right AT. Georgia's program has provided training for Job Corps staff on disability awareness and AT options.



Tools for Life App Finder

## The Illinois State AT Program

### Opened Ended Loan Program

The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) has partnered with the Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to create the Opened Ended Loan Program. This program was created to enable individuals with disabilities, who work with the DRS, easier access to AT. The IATP and the DRS has made this possible by utilizing their internal resources well. The AT Specialist Program housed within the IATP provides evaluations of AT that the DRS counselors are able to use when making their request for AT. The end result this partnership hopes to accomplish is to make the needed AT more affordable by purchasing AT devices in bulk and getting the AT to individuals faster with an approximate turnaround time of two weeks post request.

### Device Loan Program

Additionally, the IATP has a device loan program that provides an AT device on a temporary basis for 5 weeks. This is a free program that affords individuals in need of AT the opportunity to try out devices before purchasing to ensure the device meets their needs, or have a back up device available while waiting for their device to be delivered or repaired.

To find out more about Assistive Technology Programs and Projects in your state, visit <http://www.atconnects.com>.

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Regional Disability Coordinators by Region			
<b>Boston</b> Kristen Philbrook 301-608-3290 ext. 602 <a href="mailto:kristen.philbrook@humanitas.com">kristen.philbrook@humanitas.com</a>	<b>Philadelphia and Atlanta</b> Nikki Jackson 301-608-3290 ext. 603 <a href="mailto:nikki.jackson@humanitas.com">nikki.jackson@humanitas.com</a>	<b>Dallas</b> Laura Kuhn 602-403-9998 <a href="mailto:laura.kuhn@humanitas.com">laura.kuhn@humanitas.com</a>	<b>Chicago and San Francisco</b> Kimberly Jones 301-608-3290 ext. 607 <a href="mailto:kim.jones@humanitas.com">kim.jones@humanitas.com</a>

# Disability Resources

## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

- ▶ 2013 NDEAM theme “Because We are EQUAL to the Task.” <http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/blog/index.php/ndeam/>
- ▶ ODEP offers a 2013 NDEAM resource toolbox with posters, sample content for social media, NDEAM drop-in articles, etc. <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>
- ▶ Diversity Inc. provides facts and statistics on disability and employment. <http://www.diversityinc.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/DisabilityFF.pdf>



2013 NDEAM Sample Poster

## Resources for Disability Mentoring Day October 16<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ ODEP provides background on the history and purpose of Disability Mentoring Day. <http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/dmd.htm>
- ▶ American Association of People with Disabilities provides links to a Disability Mentoring Day toolkit and resources. <http://www.aapd.com/what-we-do/employment/disability-mentoring-day/>

## Affordable Care Act

- ▶ Program Instruction 13-06, *Outreach Strategies to Promote Health-Care Coverage for All Job Corps Participants*, released August 26, 2013, provides information on the Affordable Care Act, efforts to expand awareness of health-insurance coverage opportunities, and Job Corps’ responsibility to initiate activities that educate prospective, current, and transitioning students about these opportunities.

UPCOMING JOB CORPS DISABILITY WEBINARS		
Webinar	Date	Time (ET)
Regional File Review	September 5 September 18	11 am 4 pm
RAC Guidance	September 10 September 17	4 pm 11 am
Developing Partnerships	September 25 October 1	11 am 4 pm
Disability Coordinator Orientation	October 8 October 10	11 am 4 pm
Learning Disabilities 200	October 16	11 am 4 pm

E-mail your comments or suggestions to  
Carol Abnathy, National Health and Wellness Manager,  
[abnathy.carol@dol.gov](mailto:abnathy.carol@dol.gov).