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Winter 2014

Helping Paws – Animals as Accommodations

Centers are receiving an increasing number of applicant/student requests to have service or comfort animals while enrolled in the Job Corps program. Students who require a service or comfort animal should make this request via the reasonable accommodation request process outlined in Appendix 605. Requests for service or comfort animals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the center’s reasonable accommodation committee (RAC). Consideration will be given to the type of animal and the functions it performs.



Center staff who need assistance with requests for service or comfort animals should use the Animals as Accommodations in the Job Corps Program Guide (released as Program Instruction 14-04, August 4, 2014) as a reference and contact their Regional Disability Coordinator. This guide is available on the Job Corps Disability website and provides guidance about many common question such as:

- What are service and comfort animals?
- What are some tasks that service animals may perform for a person with a disability?
- What kind of documentation can be requested related to a service or comfort animal?
- Can a center recommend the denial of a request for a service or comfort animal?
- Who is responsible for taking care of and monitoring the service or comfort animal?
- What questions should be considered during the RAC?
- What if other students or center staff are allergic to the service or comfort animal?
- Is there information/training available to teach staff/students about interacting appropriately with service or comfort animals?

A common misconception is that animals are not feasible accommodations on a Job Corps center; however, there are several centers currently providing animals as accommodations.

Helping Paws – Animals as Accommodations (cont'd)

Phoenix Job Corps Center

Phoenix currently has two service dogs as accommodations on their center; one for a staff member, and the other for a student. Bear is an 8-year-old black standard poodle and is student Teresa Petrich's service dog. Teresa has been enrolled at the Phoenix JCC since October 2013. Teresa initially entered the program without the service dog and used a wheelchair. However, in March, Teresa was placed on a MSWR. Prior to her return, she requested the use of her service dog as an accommodation. A RAC meeting was set up to discuss details related to care and monitoring of the dog. Teresa returned to the center in September with her service dog. Teresa volunteered to provide training for staff and students on the dos and do not's relating to her service dog and service dogs generally.



Teresa and her service dog, Bear

Teresa has had Bear for 7 years. Prior to having a service dog, she was a wheelchair user and depended on others for assistance. Bear has significantly improved Teresa's independence. He is also a seizure alert dog and is trained to provide assistance in emergencies relating to her condition. Several of his unique skills include: activating Teresa's cell phone by pawing the phone button and connecting to emergency services, getting Teresa's inhaler if she is in respiratory distress, assisting in opening doors, assisting if Teresa falls, and alerting Teresa of an emergency situation such as a fire alarm.

Since returning from her MSWR and having Bear, life on center has become easier for Teresa and she feels both supported and empowered. Teresa feels safe, better able to ambulate, and is comforted knowing that Bear will get her emergency help if a medical emergency occurs while she is asleep. Teresa plans on going to college to become a paralegal and then into law and Bear will go with her until he is retired and then she will train with another service animal.

Ms. Lara Koontz, CTT Counselor and former Disability Coordinator at the Phoenix JCC, also benefits from an animal as an accommodation. She has had Maya, her service dog, for 11 years. Maya is trained to assist Lara by opening doors, assisting in mobility tasks, as well as alerting others if Lara falls. Maya arrives to the Phoenix JCC in Lara's carry case and is busy throughout the day attending meetings and events on center with Lara. Both service animals are accepted by staff and students on the Phoenix JCC and have contributed to a culture of inclusion on the center.



Lara with her service dog, Maya

- Contributed by Nancy Dean, Health and Wellness Manager/Disability Coordinator, Phoenix JCC

Los Angeles Job Corps Center

At the Los Angeles JCC, a student with a hearing impairment uses a hearing dog. The dog is trained to perform tasks such as alerting the student when there is a knock at the door, howling when there is an alarm to inform the student that there is an emergency nearby, and alerting the student of noises from behind such as when someone is trying to gain his attention or is approaching him.

Helping Paws – Animals as Accommodations (cont'd)

The student requested the use of his service animal as an accommodation prior to arrival to the center and the center went through the reasonable accommodation process. The center required the student to provide vaccine records for the dog. Initially, staff had some concerns, such as allergies and fear of dogs. These concerns were addressed during the RAC and the dog is well received by nearly all staff and students. Additionally, the center partnered with a local organization called the Sam Simon Foundation in Malibu, CA who provided training and support to staff and students.

- Contributed by Cheryl Bowman, Health and Wellness Administrator/Co-Disability Coordinator, Los Angeles JCC

Summing It All Up

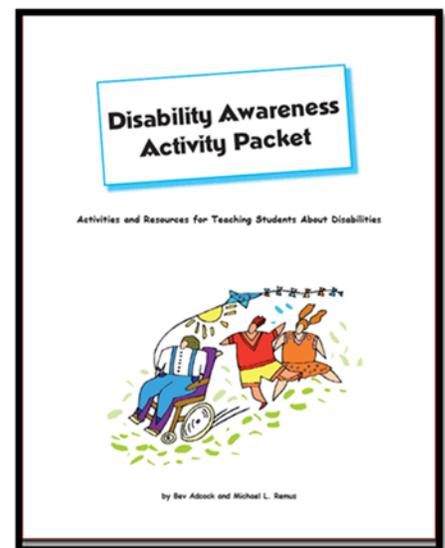
Because a service or comfort animal will likely impact all areas of the center, managers from most areas of the center should attend the RAC meeting and the applicant/student is always required to be part of the meeting. When the request is made during the admissions process, it is critically important that this meeting take place prior to the applicant's arrival on center to ensure all necessary accommodations are in place and the center and student have the same expectations for the care and management of the animal in the Job Corps environment. This will allow for a smooth transition and help to avoid any unexpected issues. The center may want to develop a plan outlining what was agreed to as far as care, behavior, and monitoring related to the animal. Sample plans are available from your Regional Disability Coordinator. This will help ensure center staff and the student are clear about the expectations and responsibilities of everyone and allow for focused discussion should any issues arise.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Each year in October the contributions of workers with disabilities in our workforce are highlighted during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Several Job Corps staff shared how they celebrated NDEAM on their centers.

Flatwoods Job Corps Center

Building disability awareness occurs year round at Flatwoods JCC. The center has incorporated activities available from the from the NDEAM website into part of their regular Career Preparation Period (CPP) training for all students. Adrienne Murray Tarter, the center's High School Diploma Teacher/Disability Coordinator, conducts a one hour training session during the third week of CPP on disability awareness. Training topics include person first language, obvious vs. hidden disabilities, and three exercises from the Disability Awareness Activity Packet to help students understand how it feels to have a communication, learning, or physical disability. Flatwoods JCC has also been using these activities to train staff and build disability awareness center-wide.



Flatwoods JCC Disability Awareness Packet

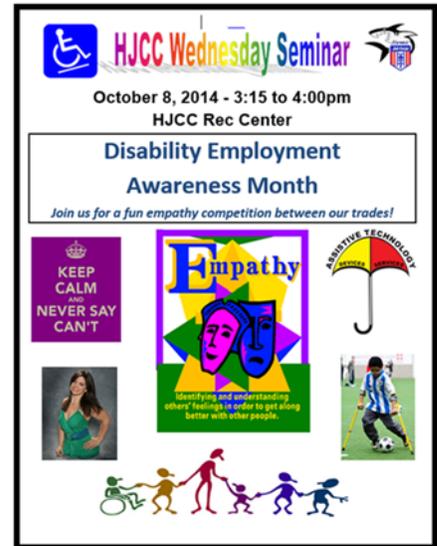
National Disability Employment Awareness Month (cont'd)

Grafton Job Corps Center

During NDEAM, the Social Development Director at Grafton JCC ran an essay contest for students entitled “Attitude.” The purpose of the contest was to encourage an awareness among students about how the attitudes of individuals towards people with disabilities can serve as barriers to achievement and well-being. The center staff selected Maksim Benoit as the winner. Hats off to Maksim for his winning article and other students who participated in the contest.

Hawaii Job Corps Center

The Hawaii-Oahu JCC celebrated NDEAM with a variety of activities to engage students. Ferna Idica, the center’s Health and Wellness Manager/ Disability Coordinator, kicked off the NDEAM activities by speaking about the centers atmosphere of inclusion and accommodation. Next, a short video about the life of Jennifer Bricker, an individual born without legs who becomes a successful gymnast, was presented. The center then held empathy competitions. Representatives from each trade were engaged in challenges to experience the functional limitation of several disabilities such as having one hand, having a “hidden” print disability, or being blind.



Flyer from HJCC Disability Seminar

Maui Job Corps Center

The Hawaii-Maui JCC celebrated Disability Awareness Day on Oct. 24, 2014. Students participated in disability awareness activities to experience some of the functional limitations of a specific disability. For example, a student spent the day pretending he had a physical disability by only using one of his arms to complete activities. This student had the accommodation of a buddy to assist him during lunch and throughout the day when needed. The Disability Coordinators showed videos and YouTube clips on disability topics such as dyslexia and of famous people with disabilities such as Helen Keller. They also showed the video, *Life Without Limbs*, the story of Nick Vujicic, a man who was born without arms or legs.

Los Angeles Job Corps Center

Promoting this year’s national theme, “Expect, Employ, Empower,” Los Angeles JCC held its 9th annual DisABILITY Fair. The fair included several local resources and agencies that support individuals with disabilities. For example, The Braille Institute, gave a braille demonstration in which they taught students how to read and write in braille. Office Administration Technical Training students provided a Q&A session with employability facts and statistics about workers with disabilities.



Students spinning a prize wheel at LAJCC DisABILITY Fair

Spotlight on Assistive Technology: Reading Resources

Read2Go App?

Bookshare is the world's largest online accessible library of copyrighted content for people with print disabilities. It provides free access to academic, career technical textbooks, fiction, nonfiction, periodicals, and more to Job Corps students with print disabilities. In addition to being accessed on the computer, Bookshare materials can now be accessed as eBooks on tablets, smartphones, and MP3 players through an app called Read2Go!

Read2Go is a mobile app for Apple iOS products that enables individuals with print disabilities to download Bookshare materials. By downloading this app, students with print disabilities can access Bookshare materials anytime and anywhere on center! Read2Go helps promote accessibility to print materials for students with various print functional limitations. Downloading books on Read2Go is simple! It is available for purchase for \$19.99 in the iTunes App store, where it is featured in the Special Education section.



Colored Overlays



Colored overlays are an example of a low-technology to improve reading outcomes for students with print disabilities and visual perception disabilities. Simply put, it is a piece of colored plastic that is placed over a text to highlight it in that particular color. Colored overlays can help improve print clarity and stability, tracking and keeping place while reading, and reduce strain and fatigue, reading comprehension, and reading fluency. For students in the Job Corps program, colored overlays can be used to highlight or clarify any print text such as a career technical textbook or an academic textbook. Colored overlays can be purchased on Amazon.com for under \$20.

eReaders

eReaders, such as the Nook, iPad, and Kindle Fire, provide many benefits to students with print disabilities. Students using eReaders have the ability to adapt the text to suit their needs. For example a student with a visual impairment can change the font to enlarge the print or highlight text. Most eReaders have the ability to convert text to speech; therefore, students with print disabilities can listen to text while reading which helps to improve reading comprehension. eReaders also provide incentive to students with reading difficulties to read because it allows them the opportunity to access print materials in a non-traditional format. Although eReaders can be costly, it is great investment because of the functions that can be used to assist students with print disabilities with reading.



Disability Resources

Disability Employment Initiative

The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is a collaboration between the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Employment Training Administration to build community partnerships with local and state agencies that utilize public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes. Furthermore, state projects funded by DEI have allowed individuals with disabilities the opportunity to receive assistance with job placement, job coaching, and securing housing. As of September 2014, DEI is currently available in 26 states: Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, California, Hawaii, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington, Wisconsin, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Alabama, Connecticut and Idaho.

DEI is listed on the Disability Partnership Tool as a suggested partner. Some Job Corps centers, like Maui, have established an effective partnership with their local DEI project. Their partnership allows students to receive assistance with job placement and transition support while in the transition phase of the Job Corps program. Visit <http://www.dei-ideas.org/> for more information and to learn more about your local DEI project!

Upcoming Job Corps Disability Webinars		
Webinar	Date	Time (EST)
Reasonable Accommodation 101	December 3, 2014	11 AM EST and 4 PM EST
Animals As Accommodations	December 11, 2014 December 18, 2014	4 PM EST 11 AM EST
Transition Services for Students with Health or Disability Concerns	January 13, 2015 January 20, 2015	4 PM EST 4 PM EST
Disability Coordinator Orientation	January 14, 2015	11 AM EST 4 PM EST

Regional Disability Coordinators by Region			
Boston and Philadelphia	Atlanta	Dallas	Chicago and San Francisco
Kristen Philbrook 301-608-3290 ext. 602 kristen.philbrook@humanitas.com	Jasmin Merritt 301-608-3290 ext. 603 jasmin.merritt@humanitas.com	Laura Kuhn 602-403-9998 laura.kuhn@humanitas.com	Kimberly Knodel 301-608-3290 ext. kimberly.knodel@humanitas.com

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