

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

October 10, 2014

The mission of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.

Ohio Business Leadership Network Named Affiliate of the Year



The Ohio Business Leadership Network (OHBLN) was named the US Business Leadership Network's (USBLN) 2014 Affiliate of the Year at this year's USBLN Conference (September 29-October 2, 2014) in Orlando, Florida.

The USBLN describes its Affiliate of the Year award, winner as having, "demonstrated exemplary efforts in promoting the vision, mission and spirit of the USBLN. As a result of their efforts, employers and their communities, understand, utilize, and benefit from the valuable resources that people with disabilities present in the workplace, supply chain and marketplace."

The OHBLN is an affiliate of the USBLN, a national organization that promotes the business initiative to include people with disabilities in the workforce using a business-to-business model. The USBLN represents 51 chapters and more than 5,000 employers across the U.S.

This well-deserved recognition is a testament to the leadership at OHBLN and reflects OOD's renewed effort to building relationships and partnerships with the business community. Just a few years ago, there were only a handful of OHBLN members. Today there are more than 40 corporate members. Our single point of contact for businesses (Business Relations Manager Jon Hackathorn) and regional Business Sourcing Analysts, work directly with the business community. The mission

is to educate businesses on how individuals with disabilities can help them meet their workforce needs. These efforts and our renewed focus have led to 4,576 job placements, the highest since 2011.

Congratulations to OHBLN President Chris Moranda, Disability Services Manager at OhioHealth, and OHBLN Consultant Leslie Wilson, Jon Hackathorn, and everyone who contributed to this recognition. I know this is just the beginning to even greater success for OHBLN.

VR Success Story Highlights Importance of Job Development and Business Engagement

Sherry Marshall faced many challenges during her four years in job development. Sherry has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Business Administration and Business Forensics, an A.A.S. in Accounting, and a strong work history in the accounting field.

Like most job seekers, those with a disability and those without, Sherry needed to find a manner in which to express her confidence and strong communication skills in today's competitive job market. Her worries about needed accommodations and a lack of disability awareness from employers added to her concerns.

In consultation with, and guidance from her counselor Jennifer Bonenfant, she began to work with a bilingual job developer, utilize job coaching services, and attends seminars to improve her confidence and develop stronger interview and communication skills.

This summer she had the opportunity to put her newly developed skills to the test. A full-time Tax Examiner position at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office in Cincinnati was distributed to Central Office personnel and then was broadcast by the Business Sourcing Analyst for the Southwest area, Cynthia Crews. Jennifer encouraged Sherry to apply on-line and informed Cynthia that Sherry was availing herself of the opportunity. Sherry applied for the position, was offered

an interview, and shared that she felt the interview went well. In fact, she was offered the position! However, the efforts by OOD staff did not end there. She still had to work with the IRS Human Resources (HR) department, create an account, fill out the necessary paperwork, and complete the onboarding process involved in starting work with the federal government.

Jennifer worked with Cynthia to help Sherry maneuver through that process and connect her to the appropriate HR manager who could put her at ease about any needed accommodations (closed captioning phones, c-print during trainings and meetings, etc.). The IRS was willing and able to provide the reasonable accommodations needed for her to be successful in her new job.

This is a great opportunity for Sherry and a great fit for her career goals. It was also a great team effort. Sherry's success is an illustration of the importance of providing quality targeted services to individuals with disabilities in the job development process and the benefits of having business engagement professionals on the ground across Ohio. Sherry made the commitment to the process and to working with her counselor. Jennifer, along with key providers, helped Sherry develop the skills and confidence she needed to succeed, and to put that into practice, when an opportunity presented itself. Cynthia used her expertise to remove potential barriers, smoothed the onboarding process, and avoided any problems that might have undermined this opportunity.

Congratulations to Sherry for landing a great job! Also, thanks to Jennifer, Cynthia and everyone else involved for your hard work and dedication every day. This is an example of how our work makes an impact in people's lives and why we are constantly working to improve.

Workforce Integration Task Force Focused on Identifying Barriers, Drafting Recommendations



The Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT) collaborates on recommendations to better integrate individuals who are blind and/or deaf into the workforce.

The Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT), co-chaired by myself and Director Cynthia Dungey, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), held its second public meeting on Wednesday, October 8, here at OOD's Central Office. We made significant progress in outlining and categorizing potential barriers to employment and working toward specific recommendations for better integrating individuals who are deaf and/or blind into Ohio's workforce.

We will be meeting again this month to further refine our recommendations for the report due January 1, 2015. As a result, I am confident that the talents and experience of the Task Force members will allow us to succeed and produce a report that will help policy makers, the business community, and the general public, better understand the barriers these individuals face, and offer concrete steps toward removing those barriers.

CCC Update!

As of yesterday, OOD has raised \$75,351 for the Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC). OOD's goal is to raise \$93,750 and we keep getting closer as each week goes by. On Thursday, OOD held its Craft and Vendor Fair along with a Bake Sale in the 400 building. OOD employees had the opportunity to shop for upcoming holidays, birthdays, and special occasions with the wide selection of gifts and handmade products available.

If you have yet to complete an ePledge form, please visit www.ohio.gov/ohioccc to access the online donation portal or contact CCC Co-Chairs, Andrew Meador (614.438.1237) or Brad Reynolds (614.438.1499) for a paper pledge form. They are available to answer any questions you may have or help you with the donation process. Just a reminder, there is still one week left to get your pledges in. If you donate \$5 or more per pledge period, you can obtain a pass that entitles you to wear t-shirts, sports apparel, sweatshirts, and hoodies every Friday from now until August 2015.

Next Tuesday, October 14, is the Cornhole Tournament. If you'd like to watch, remember to request release time if

your work schedule permits. Also, next Friday, October 17, is the last day to sign up for the Ladder Golf Tournament. For questions or additional information please contact Mike Johnson at 614-438-1835 or Michael.w.johnson@ssa.gov or Mike DeNoble at 614-438-1381 or Michael.denoble@ssa.gov.

Thank you to all OOD staff who have volunteered, donated, contributed, and organized events. This has been a collective effort and your donations have and will make a difference.



Target: \$93,750

Raised: \$75,351



