

# WEEKLY FOCUS

**Ohio** | Opportunities for Ohioans  
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

October 24, 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.*

## Collaboration Leads to Employment



*From left to right: Assistant Executive Director Bill Bishilany, Executive Director Kevin Miller, Southeast Area Manager Bob Nicholson, and General Manager for the Office Depot distribution center (Blue Oxford) Ken Roman.*

I was privileged to join Office Depot, Inc., ViaQuest Employment Services, and the Kessler Foundation this week in celebrating the success of a collaborative job training and employment program for adults with disabilities.

The Office Depot disabilities hiring program is being facilitated through a two-year grant from the Kessler Foundation to help expand employment for adults with disabilities. The project was designed to assist Office Depot in developing local and national partnerships within the disability community to create career training programs aimed at increasing its hiring of people with disabilities. Ohio, along with three other states, is participating in this pilot program.

Office Depot, a leading global provider of office products, services and solutions, worked with ViaQuest and OOD to implement a job training program for adults with disabilities at Office Depot's distribution

center in Southwest Columbus. Office Depot has gone on to provide full-time and part-time employment to many of the individuals with disabilities who have completed the job training program. OOD was a partner in planning and implementing the pilot project and currently works to identify potential participants for the training program.

This week the individuals who had completed the training program, and who are now employed at the distribution center, were recognized by Ken Roman, General Manager for the Office Depot distribution center in Southwest Columbus. Program partners spoke to the collaborative nature of the project, and the dedication of everyone involved, which led to its initial success. The ceremony included Marilyn Brown, Franklin County Commissioner, Rich Johnson, ViaQuest President and CEO, Larry Worth, ViaQuest executive director of Employment Services, and Brad Seigfried, Senior Manager, Workforce Diversity and Inclusion at Office Depot.

After the recognition ceremony, I along with Assistant Executive Director Bill Bishilany, Southeast Area Manager Bob Nicholson, Business Relations Manager Jon Hackathorn, and other OOD staff were able to tour the facility with Ken Roman and better understand how



*Ken Roman, General Manager for the Office Depot distribution center, speaks about a pilot training program that integrates individuals with disabilities into their workforce.*

Office Depot is integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce.

It was exciting to see how this innovative collaboration is positively impacting lives, and explore the business and discuss how individuals with disabilities could help meet their workforce needs.



*Director Miller welcomes new counselors, coordinators, and caseload assistants to the agency.*

## **Welcoming New Counselors, Coordinators and Caseload Assistants**

It was great to be able to welcome a new group of counselors, coordinators and caseload assistants to OOD this week. These new staff members were participating in a seven day Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Training Class at the 400 building. I, along with the executive team and contracts staff, welcomed them to OOD and introduced ourselves before they dove into the VR process. I always enjoy meeting new staff and gaining a better understanding of their background and perspective as they start their new career here.

## **Workforce Integration Task Force**

The Workforce Integration Task Force, co-chaired by myself and Director Cynthia Dungey of the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS), met this week at OOD's Central Office. We continued to make progress in delineating and prioritizing specific recommendations for better integrating individuals who are deaf and/or blind into Ohio's workforce. There was a lively and well-informed discussion about what barriers to focus on and how best to prioritize our recommendations including both "big picture" goals as well as smaller scale actions that can be implemented more quickly. I was once again thankful for the knowledge and experience of the task force members. I also appreciate the hard work of the staff from both agencies in supporting the task force in their work. We will be meeting again in the coming weeks to pull together the final report which is due January 1, 2015.

## **CCC Coming to a Close**

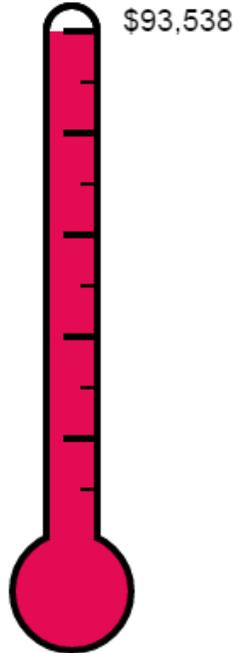
The statewide Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC) is wrapping up at OOD and we have experienced tremendous support from staff. Co-Chairs Andrew Meador and Brad Reynolds report that online pledges have remained strong and special events continue to be successful. We are on track to surpass the goal set for OOD from the CCC Statewide Steering Committee.

As of Thursday afternoon, we have secured payroll pledges of \$93,538.20 (our goal is \$93,750) and 379 payroll pledge deductions (our goal was 309). CCC was extended this week by the Steering Committee and will now officially conclude on November 14, 2014. This will allow staff to continue to use the online donation portal ([www.ohio.gov/ohioccc](http://www.ohio.gov/ohioccc)) to make online payroll deductions if they have not already done so.

OOD has been a leader in CCC in the past and this year will not be an exception. As we track toward meeting and surpassing our goal, please know that I give all of the credit to the wonderful OOD staff. Your compassion and commitment to the many charitable causes supported in the CCC are noteworthy and commendable. Thank you to those who have already donated as well as to those who will take a moment in the next few days to pledge.

If you have any questions about CCC, please contact Andrew Meador (614.438.1237) or Brad Reynolds (614.438.1499).

Target: \$93,750



*The Jack-O-Latern cake was created by Abbie Frase, HR Training Officer. The CCC Cake Auction and Sale raised a total of \$224.00.*

## Individuals in Job Ready Status by County

