

News Letter

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THIS ISSUE FEATURES: EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Guest writers address various issues:

- John Hamilton provides practical placement tips
- Larry Volin gives a national perspective
- Jan Jenkins reviews disincentives to work
- John Bjorklund reviews case histories
- Kurt Haglund on "Sheltered Employment Services"
- ALSO, An On-the-Job Training effort is illustrated

A VIEW OF PLACEMENT FROM THE PRACTITIONER

by John Hamilton, Director of Placement, Opportunity Workshop
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Not everybody can do job placement. There are certain characteristics that earmark a successful placement practitioner. However, one must first acknowledge that placement is the cornerstone of vocational rehabilitation. Once the importance of placement is recognized, one can devote greater energy and creative thought to performing placement tasks.

If one combines this attitude with the skills necessary to identify, emphasize and sell a client's abilities, then the ingredients for a successful placement practitioner will be present. Such a person will experience success which will contribute to a growing sense of confidence that will contribute to greater efforts. Persistence will be an additional hallmark of such a professional. This type of person will feel comfort-

able in taking risks so that clients are given a chance to overcome the shortsightedness of others—capabilities will be stressed.

A person is not necessarily born with all these ingredients mixed in the proper proportions. Experience shows that there are certain practices which will help to channel their creative enthusiasm in the right directions.

Since placement occurs away from the office, the practitioner must carefully manage time. Each day's activity must be planned one day in advance. Time and travel must be utilized efficiently by covering compact areas. Appointments must also be made whenever possible to minimize wasted time and travel. Time needs to be set aside for phone work. One should use the phone whenever possible to arrange and confirm travel schedules.

Another important activity for increasing efficiency is to know ahead of time whom to contact; that person can differ from business to business. In some firms, the personnel department will be the first stop. With others, it might be department heads or another level of management.

How does one know who is the right person to contact? There are certain research activities that are time consuming, but if carried out on a regular basis, they can make the "who to approach" question almost routine. One should have a concept of how businesses are structured. Management textbooks might give an inexperienced person a good start in understanding how businesses are organized. Text books can help in understanding business structure and decision-makers to initially contact. Local business information can be easily gathered by scanning trade newspapers, suburban newspapers, business sections of daily papers, Chamber of Commerce employment sheets, and the regional Wall Street Journal.

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Hamilton

EMPLOYMENT OF HANDICAPPED PEOPLE

— a quiet revolution

by Larry Volin, State Relations Staff,
President's Committee on Employment
of the Handicapped Washington, D.C.

For a number of years, a quiet revolution has been in progress. It is opening the doors wider to employment opportunities and full participation in society for America's handicapped citizens.

This is a quiet revolution because most of the change has occurred with a minimum of noise or fanfare. Space-age technology, new medicines, therapies, a new view of handicapped people, new methods of rehabilitation and placement, enable many disabled individuals to function on the job and in a wide range of community activities.

When did the revolution occur? It began during World War II. To be sure, employers hired job-ready disabled people before that time. But, with so many able-bodied individuals in military service, the job left had to be done by those who did not go off to fight. Consequently, many handicapped individuals had the opportunity to prove themselves as skilled workers.

And, remembering their positive experiences during the war, many companies decided to continue employing job-ready disabled individuals.

Who were the leaders? The honor role of employers is sizable. Most of America's big firms - and many medium and small firms for that matter - had and still have handicapped people on their payrolls. These people handle a variety of jobs from entry level all the way up to the executive suite.

What about the safety record and insurance compensation costs? How well do these workers perform? Do they stay on the job or are they excessive job hoppers? And, what about time and attendance?

Not to make handicapped workers out as "superhuman" beings, their records in all of these areas check out very favorably with those of their able-bodied colleagues.

In fact, studies show that people with disabilities have a safety record (on and off the job) that is slightly better than that of their able-bodied peers.

The DuPont Company in Wilmington, Delaware did a study of over 1,400 disabled persons on its payroll recently. This is what the study revealed.

Safety - 96% of the disabled employees rated average or better on and off the job. More than half of the disabled employees rated above average.



Insurance - no increase in compensation cost and no lost-time injuries.

Job Performance - 91 % of the disabled employees rated average or better than average.

Job Stability - 93% of the disabled employees rated average or better than the group at large.

Time and attendance - 79% of the disabled workers rated average or better than the company's work force.

The study shows something else. These workers all said they are much like their able-bodied co-workers. And, they would like to be treated like them.

How has the acceptance of disabled people in the work force come about? For the most part,

quietly through a number of channels. First, as we indicated earlier, many employers had positive experiences during World War II. Second, through years of employer education carried on by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, State Committees and the more than 1,400 local committees across the country.

How do companies increase the number of handicapped people they hire?

Some firms examine worker-supervisor relationships regarding handicapped employees when they evaluate a supervisors' job performance. They look at their supervisors' success in dealing with workers with disabilities.

Other firms use management and supervisory meetings to spell out the intent of federal law as well as what the company policy is to reasonably accommodate workers with disabilities. Other firms use training courses to make sure that managers and supervisors get the word.

To assure integration of people with disabilities in the work force, many companies are taking a very close look at their facilities, equipment, tools and work space. In the past these were designed for the so-called average worker.

Now the trend is away from the average worker concept. By using a process called "ergonomics," a term which means applying biological, physiological and engineering data to the design of machines, job sites are changed to accommodate workers and increase productivity. It also cuts costs of doing business, especially those relating to sickness and accidents, worker's compensation claims, absenteeism and involuntary turnover.

A leader in this concept is General Motors. GMC has successfully applied ergonomics in

several of its divisions working with hourly rate employees. They feel this concept has potential application throughout the corporation and will aid in the hiring of qualified, job-ready handicapped individuals.

GMC has a coordinator in most of its plants. This person's job is to assure effective placement of qualified job-ready disabled individuals. However, the plant coordinator should go beyond assuring that disabled individuals are properly placed. It is that person's responsibility to follow-up on handicapped employees to see if their assignments are commensurate with their abilities not only for the worker's sake, but for the sake of co-workers as well.

That's the voluntary picture. On balance it has worked fairly well. Under it, some handicapped people were hired while others were left at the gates or employment office. In fact, people with certain disabling conditions were considered to be more acceptable than individuals with others. For example, blind people and people in wheelchairs were hired before people with epilepsy or other developmental disabilities.

Then in 1973, there was another occurrence in the quiet revolution. A new Rehabilitation Act became law and it came in two sections -

Sections 503 and 504

What is Section 503 and 504?

Section 503 requires that Federal Contractors with contracts in excess of \$2500 that provide goods and services to the Federal Government, take affirmative action to hire and promote job-ready disabled persons. This meant a whole new ball game because a contractor could no longer refuse to hire someone just

because they had a disability. Now, disabled applicants must be considered on their merits. Reasonable accommodations, such as a ramp, a lowered desk, a reader for a blind applicant, must be provided.

Moreover, employers covered under Section 503 are required to reevaluate employment policies and procedures to ensure that ability is screened in - not out. They were also required to examine physical and mental job requirements to assure they are related.

Are the accommodations required under 503 costly?

Experience indicates they are not costly. This is borne out by the DuPont study mentioned earlier. The company found out that work adjustments consist mainly of minor changes such as raising or lowering a bench or desk or construction of a ramp.

Section 504, applies to operators of federal or federally assisted programs such as a public school system. Programs operators may not deny disabled persons access to and benefits of the program.

To make employers and program operators aware of the regulations covering Sections 503 and 504, many businesses have been in the forefront of efforts to build understanding through direct participation in seminars, meetings and workshops nationwide.

Here again the list of leaders among firms reads like the "Fortune's 500" roster.

If one looks behind this revolution will they spot other trends that have moved this quiet revolution forward?

The fact that disabled individuals have become articulate spokesmen in their own behalf - fighting City Hall if necessary and winning - adds much fuel to the revolution. Today, disabled people are not begging for their rights, they are demanding them.

There is greater accessibility. Many cities and towns now have curb cuts enabling people with mobility limitations to go from one side of the street to the other. More buildings are accessible as are facilities within buildings - water fountains, public telephones, restrooms, elevators, etc.

Though there have been some debates and court battles, public intra-city transport is becoming more accessible so that people with mobility problems can go downtown and across town independently; so that they can go to and from work.

People with disabilities can now go across the country thanks to accessible airports and the enlightened policies of some airlines.

Increased visibility of disabled people, realistically portrayed on television, in films and in advertisements in magazine and newspaper is contributing to greater opportunities in our society.

Accessibility is important because it is causing attitudes toward disabled persons to change. Why?

With greater freedom of mobility, disabled people are going places, seeing things, being seen and doing things. They are in the open showing their peers demonstrations do much to build acceptance; an acceptance coming as a result of the quiet revolution.



BUILDING CAREERS FROM THE SCHOOL SETTING

—a review of two rehabilitation files

by John (Gus) Bjorklund, Rehabilitation
Consultant, St. Paul Public Schools

This author has worked during the past eleven years assisting school-aged severely handicapped students with their vocational plans. These students came not only from St. Paul but from outlying areas to take advantage of the special education and vocational rehabilitation services. The objective in each case was a suitable job.

Donald Schilling and Charles Engleking are two persons whose story, in many ways, explains what vocational rehabilitation is about. They have agreed to let their story be told.

Donald and Charles came to Minnesota in 1957 from rural Wisconsin, from differing backgrounds and circumstances. They first met when they were placed in a foster home in the frog-town section of St. Paul. They were about nine years old at the time.

With fondness they speak of their foster mother, "Grandma Ferlas," now deceased who cared for them until they reached the age of authority and were somewhat prepared to go it on their own.

During those foster home years they attended Crowley School which was the original special school established by the St. Paul Schools for students with mental retardation and related limitations.* The school day at Crowley provided training in basic academic skills and social habits.

*Crowley School, located on the West Side of St. Paul, (Delos and Livingston Streets) was a forerunner to the present Bridgeview School adjacent to the Administration Bldg. It has since been razed.



Longtime friends:
Engleking and Schilling

"A good education," Don and Charlie happily describe Crowley.

This good education had a vocational ingredient. While in their upper class years, they were assigned to the school kitchen for work experience. The training they received, although casual, was real. The waters were being tested.

In this vocational beginning Donald and Charlie, now close and heading for a long friendship, displayed enthusiasm and delight for food service chores. But the school cafeteria setting came up short in providing the solid training needed to become serious workers. They were not yet employable, but certainly they were interested.

In 1967 these engaging young men were referred to the school vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, a cooperative agreement between the state DVR agency and the St. Paul Schools. At that

time the office was located at the Horace Mann Elementary School on Eleanor Avenue near Highland Park I and the other five staff were called vocational adjustment counselors (VAC's).

We received working age students with disabilities which posed real handicaps to work. We would process the referral, talk with school staff, interview the young person, consult with physicians and psychological staff, share with concerned family, work out a vocational "diagnosis," complete a plan of action and, in a mutual effort with the "client," proceed to reach a job goal.

In the cases of Donald and Charlie the plan called first for work adjustment training. Such training seeks to nurture good work habits - like being on time, getting along with co-workers, listening to instructions, using the time clock and so on. It was provided in a work-like setting with a work-like routine. Don and Charlie showed a strong desire to work and adapt and they completed this training stint in good fashion. It was at that point that I was assigned their files. I have watched their progress ever since.

It was evident to me in our first meeting that both Don and Charlie were ready for what we call an OJT - On-The-Job-Training.

OJT's are agreements between an employer and VR to share training costs until the trainee is either employable or until further training is unwarranted for some reason. In some cases the employer hires the trainee; conversely, the trainee may wash out and another course of action is explored.

It is up to the VR counselors to make frequent contact by phone and in person to monitor performance. The employer likes to zero in on work skills and production, but will also lend a sympathetic ear if the trainee and counselor have been open.

I chose the St. Paul Hilton Hotel for Donald and Charlie. It was a proven site for an effective OJT. It could lead to permanent employment.

The Hilton's food service management had found through experience that kitchen workers who stayed on the longest were those with mental retardation.

Using the DVR OJT funds, we initiated the agreements with the hotel and Don and Charlie went to a real job for pay for the first time in their lives.

My job was to follow along on their program by stopping by frequently during the initial training and less frequently as time passed, but always at an important crossroad.

After several months, Charlie was hired full-time by the Hilton as a food service worker. He would do the scrubbing of pots and pans, operate a commercial dishwasher, stack dishes, platters and do general kitchen cleanup. Eventually, he was promoted to busboy. He became efficient and was comfortable in his work. I witnessed him in action. It was obvious that he took pleasure in being in the public eye and mingling with customers. But it was not all the bright side.

Charlie had his bad times just like the rest of us. He agreed to share an unfortunate event - perhaps it will be instructive to others.

Charlie had acquaintances on the job as we all have. Some of them evidently did closed door planning not known to Charlie, yet involving him. They approached and convinced him to "borrow"

some blank payroll checks and give them to the group. They then typed in Charlie's name and dollar amounts. Charlie was instructed to endorse the checks and cash them at his bank. Not realizing the problem and being a willing fellow, he complied.

The hotel management soon discovered the fraud and immediately contacted the local police. They in turn invited Charlie to police headquarters, and saw fit to consult with "Grandma" Ferlas, the hotel management, the caseworker, and this counselor. After prolonged consultation, confirmations and visits (also with the instigators) the charges were dropped. To say the least, I considered this fortunate and just. But Charlie did lose his job.

Charlie learned much from this event and from other experiences at the Hilton. He was given a favorable work reference. He had been an outstanding employee with a near perfect attendance and punctuality record. That kind of record is not that common.

Immediately Charlie took another busboy job at a top St. Paul restaurant where he worked five years. Presently he is employed in a well established food service setting in St. Paul, and after three years as a busboy he is doing just fine.

Don, in the meanwhile had gone off on a slightly different occupational trail yet continued on as Charlie's roommate. After his OJT at the Hilton, he finished a second one at the Capp Towers Fire House Restaurant in St. Paul. At that time its owner also owned the Mickey's Diners around town. Successful in his OJT as a dishwasher and all-around kitchen hand, Don signed on permanent with Mickey's and has been under their employ since 1967.

Don also faced situations which posed problems. One such occurrence - brief as it was - illustrates the everyday language obstacles

persons with Don's verbal limitations face.

I had been visiting with Don on the job site. We were chatting about his work. We stood near the kitchen area underneath a sign which read. "This restaurant is a union house."

As we talked, the restaurant manager joined us and the message of the sign entered the conversation. The manager indicated to Don that he would be asked to join the union because he would be working in a union house.

Don stood his ground by replying that he was not interested in working at a union house - he wanted to continue working right there at the Capp Towers.

I found this type of language problem often in my observations of persons with mental retardation entering new work situations. In this instance it was briefly and easily solved, but that is not always the case. Arguments, confusion, even ridicule and termination from the job can result from isolated events such as the "union house" happening.

Nevertheless, Don learned what such a house was about and became an active, meeting-attending union member.

-Self dependence-

Charlie and Don not only settled reasonably well into their occupations, but in a harmonious fashion became enterprising in their independent living. Recall that as young boys they started together in the same foster home. They have stayed together since. They left the foster home near age 21 and took residence temporarily with friends. A better living arrangement was sought.

Help came from the Ramsey County Welfare Department. Again, as in employment matters, it was a three-way effort: Don and Charlie, caseworker, and myself.

Engleking and Schilling
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DISINCENTIVES TO WORK

Part One - The Problem! by Jan Jenkins, Minnesota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Schizophrenic is an apt description of provisions in the federal government's social security programs for handicapped people. Intended as social welfare-offering assistance, support, rehabilitation and encouraging employment, the result is too often the destruction of initiative and promotion of dependency.

A basic conflict of congressional intent has created a dichotomy between rehabilitation services and income support provisions of the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs.

Historically, SSDI and SSI were to provide a subsistence level of income for totally disabled persons who could not work. If capable of performing any substantial gainful activity (SGA), applicants were and are ineligible for benefits. While other disability assistance programs such as worker's compensation are based on the recipient's inability to engage in his or her usual occupations, Social Security has far more stringent requirements.

SGA is defined primarily in terms of earnings.* To be eligible a handicapped worker must be incapable of earning \$280 a month from any employment that exists in the national economy, regardless of whether such work is available in the immediate area in which the person lives, a specific job vacancy exists or if he or she has any chance at being hired.

Furthermore, once accepted into the programs, any "suppression" of earnings or refusal to accept a job paying at least \$280 a month is grounds for termination of benefits.

On the other hand the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has developed a holistic approach in services to handicapped individuals. The 1978 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act (reviewed in the spring issue-DD Newsletter) open the door to a comprehensive range of services to a population previously considered too severely disabled to qualify.

Given such a basic conflict in philosophy the rehabilitation community and Social Security are set upon a crash course. The client is caught in the "Catch 22" middle, and frustration for all concerned may be the outcome.

Having invested considerable time, effort and money in preparing for an employment goal, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and clients are dismayed to find that in certain cases the client literally cannot afford to work.

The all or nothing eligibility standards included in the definition of SGA present the major obstacle. A handicapped person is either incapable of attaining SGA and therefore "disabled" or capable and no longer eligible for the cash benefits or medical assistance of the SSDI and/or SSI programs. There is no middle ground.

We will not deal with the psychological impact and the battered self-image of such labeling in this article. Certainly, attitudinal behaviors are as great or greater an obstacle to employment for a person with a handicap as any disincentive within the system. Rather, we will address the demonstrable dollars and cents dilemma imposed by the SSDI and SSI regulations.

* Earnings are the significant factor looked to by the Social Security Administration in determining SGA. Yet, if evidence is properly presented other factors may be considered such as: time spent on the job, adequacy of performance and special considerations e.g. transportation.

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Production coordinator position
degree in pertinent field requiring
package including medical coverage

Dan Johnson wants the job. He has a
degree and is working on his Master's
hire him.

But Dan can't afford to take the
The problem? As the result of a
quadriplegic. But real independence
dant, a van, a home shared with two
well. "Independent living," we call
disability, the alternative is frequent

It is *not* the severity of Dan's disability
reaching his employment potential

If Dan earns \$280 a month or more
disabled by Social Security and has
only one month left of the nine month
income is allowed without loss of

Only simple math skills are needed
ford to work.

SSDI Plus Trial Work
\$262.88
+ 264.88
\$527.58

Take home SSDI benefit Total Income

(100.00) Paid by (800.00) Medicare
527.58

Medical expenses Attendant Net income food, shelter, clothing,
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Assuming medical assistance would pick up
creases in either benefits or pay scales,
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Dan: Dependent
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SSDI Cash Medical Tax SSI Tax Corporation Net Gross

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l to make it clear why Dan can't af-

	Full time Permanent Employment
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B	-800.00
r	\$21.00

the attendant care expenses and no in-
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	Dan: Independent
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to	
ent	81,152

DD News
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While loss of cash benefits can be economically disastrous, particularly in the case of a person who receives a substantial SSDI grant, other provisions in the regulations add to the problem.

For someone who is unable to obtain equivalent coverage at an affordable rate, loss of Medicare or Medicaid is a catastrophe. Many group insurance plans will not cover medical expenses for pre-existing conditions, and the handicapped persons frequently have continuing medical problems associated with his or her physical disability. Attendant care for a quadriplegic, treatment for hemophilia, nephritis or seizure disorders is extremely expensive and beyond the means of those earning entry level or even high middle incomes.

TRIAL WORK PERIODS:

Trial work periods are allowed by SSDI as an incentive to employment. A recipient's benefits (including Medicare, Medicaid) will continue for nine months regardless of the earned income during that period.

Unfortunately, any month in which earnings exceed \$50 is counted as a month of trial work whether or not the months are consecutive. By the time most handicapped people have completed their training in a sheltered work or other job experience setting, they have exhausted the full nine month trial work period. From their first day on the job they are on their own, and fear of failure is added to the risk.

That fear is realistic. If for any reason the job does not work out - the handicapped person has a set-back - lay-offs - adjustment problems, the process of re-entry to the SSA system is fraught with risk.

Medicare eligibility cannot be re-instated for 24 months (Medicaid can be re-instated in a shorter period dependent upon a new review of disability, earnings and financial resources.) Re-establishment of eligibility-disability determination can be time consuming. What will he or she do without income or medical coverage in the interim? For a person with ongoing health problems the risk is particularly frightening.

In many cases, extraordinary work expenses are incurred by people with disabilities. Some require special equipment, services or attendant care in order to work. If these costs could be deducted from earnings in determining SGA, eligibility would continue and a serious work disincentive removed.

Developmentally disabled or mentally ill recipients of SSI, Minnesota Supplemental Aid or Medical Assistance, who reside in a nursing home or intermediate care facility are in an even more difficult situation. Regardless of earnings, residents may keep only \$50 as a personal needs (toiletries, pocket change, etc.) allowance. The balance of income and SSI benefits must be turned over to the county of responsibility as a contribution toward the cost of care. Under federal SSI provisions, recipients are allowed more: The first \$65 and 1/2 of the balance of earnings are disregarded in computing benefits and in determining SGA. For a person who has finally reached a point where living more independently is an attainable goal, saving enough from the \$50 allowance to pay damage deposits, first month's rent or to purchase apartment furnishings is almost impossible. What incentive does a sheltered workshop employee have to increase production or strive to achieve competitive employment?

In some instances, loss of SSI eligibility means Title XIX Medicaid reimbursement for the resident's care in the facility is terminated. The handicapped person may have to leave the group home or nursing facility for a board and care home where he or she will not have the necessary supervision or programming.

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Involved also were friends who became long-term contacts such as their co-workers, a former Crowley school teacher, current employer, family contacts, and so on.

The housing problem was thorny at first. Eventually a two-bedroom apartment at a reasonable rent became their home in a good neighborhood on the bus line. They settled in.

The apartment is furnished in a contemporary style. They have stereo equipment, TV, posters, knickknacks - even a disco lamp which bounces flashy colors off the walls as contemporary sounds are played.

They keep house, cook a little (take most meals out or at work), do shopping, pay the rent by money order (Don stressed, "Never missed a payment."), pay the utilities at the drug-store in cash and have no charge accounts.

"Worked our way off welfare," Charlie points out.

"You'd better believe it," Don adds.

There has and remains much for Don and Charlie to learn as independent adults: money management, leisure time, social life, personal needs - all of the regular business we face.

If there is business Don and Charlie can't handle, they get help from a counseling project called "Self Dependence" provided through Nekton, Inc. of St. Paul. Recently Charlie was able to complete a number of self-dependence tasks and graduated from the project. Donald will finish up soon and also graduate. What the special training does is teach Charlie and Don ways to deal with everyday practical matters, such as using money orders instead of checking accounts.

Since their files were first opened with DVR in 1967, Donald and Charles have come a long way. I sometimes wonder what kind of work they would be doing today considering new opportunities available through DVR and the schools for young people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.

Today's programs, like school curriculums, are greater in scope. There are more refined evaluation techniques, more work experiences, special job placement assistances such as tax credits to employers. Federal and state legislation calls for increased individualized educational and vocational planning. This requires expanded efforts from VR staff housed in school systems. Don

and Charlie are content to stay employed in the food service industry, but were they emerging today from St. Paul Schools their occupational choices may be greater.

In my mind Charles and Donald are succeeding and are on solid footing as their mutually helpful friendship grows. They are no longer dependent upon welfare, although their caseworker keeps in touch and is their guardian. Their VR file is now inactive, yet they contact me often and we maintain social contact such as Charlie's recent birthday.

The help they need now is less frequent and more specialized, i.e., income taxes. They do remarkably well. I am sure the unique long-term friendship since age nine accounts for their stability and resourcefulness. Add to this a reliable occupation and follow-up by the good friends they have and you have a well rounded lifestyle.

For me these are cases not easy to close - there seems to be no natural ending place. I conclude there is a lot more to their success stories than the vocational component - but without their steady jobs I wonder what ways they may have gone in life.

INHERITANCE AND GIFT TAX DIVISION OFFERS OJT's

A direct On The Job Training (OJT) approach in a state agency leads to permanent jobs for young persons who are deaf or hearing impaired. John Zangs, Assistant Director, Inheritance and Gift Tax Division, State Department of Revenue, in cooperation with the department's personnel division, recruits and hires these students to work and learn in this office housed in the Centennial Bldg., St. Paul. Salary savings are used thus avoiding third party funding and state personnel system red tape. Trainees perform regular clerical tasks such as typing, fil-

ing, office machine operation, etc.

Zangs, with positive support from the department, took a genuine interest in reaching out to the trainees and completed sign language classes to enhance communication. Students come from St. Paul TVI, Faribault School for the Deaf, Highland and Alexander Ramsey High Schools. Some of the "OJTers" have had multiple disabilities, but staff do not refer to the disability, nor do they compromise job demands - unless the situation is obvious as with the telephone.

"They develop a work history, get used to routine, mature and build confidence," says Zangs. "Most, after six months or so, are ready to seek a permanent, full-time job."

It is estimated that the State of Minnesota employs nearly thirty-five thousand people in its executive operations statewide. What is taking place in the Department of Revenue is one good illustration of an unfettered, easily accessible effort to recruit, train, and hire trainees who have disabilities.

SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE OF THE WORKSHOP

by Kurt Haglund, Executive Director,
Sheltered Employment Services,
Brainerd, Minnesota

Sheltered Employment Services, Inc., (SES), Brainerd, Minnesota, is a non-profit corporation that employs job ready, sheltered level handicapped people in business and industry in Economic Region Five. Sheltered level work is based upon a percentage of production compared with competitive work of the same kind, and a handicapped person who is unable to function independently in employment is a candidate for sheltered level jobs.

The SES concept was authored by Andrew D. Selvo and William Niederloh, of the Minnesota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Grand Rapids and St. Paul Minnesota, respectively. Their vision of SES culminated in a Developmental Disabilities Grant for the period of July 1976, to June 1977. The total allocation was \$30,550, including the sponsoring agency's (DVR) portion of the funds.

The purpose of this project was to develop the mechanism and system for providing sheltered employment services to severely handicapped persons in Region Five. The long-term sheltered employment stations have been and are being established in the business and industrial community rather than in traditional sheltered workshop facilities. The SES Program was to be a model which would produce one specific outcome - long-term sheltered employment. SES does not intend to substitute for the variety of services often found in a sheltered workshop facility.

Handicapped people employed through SES are not employees of the program. They are employees of the hiring firm.

The SES program started in July 1976. It was one of the first efforts in placing sheltered level workers in jobs outside of workshops. As a result, the outcome could have a large impact on planning for sheltered employment services in geographical areas beyond Region Five.

Available information indicated it unfeasible to develop a traditional sheltered workshop program in Brainerd or in any Region Five communities. There is insufficient sub-contract work in the region, which sheltered workshops require for their program; also, capital resources are not forthcoming to develop an adequate sheltered workshop.

A steering committee for a sheltered workshop concept had identified 175 severely handicapped persons in need of services and residing in Crow Wing County. Conservatively, at least 50% would need long-term sheltered employment services.



To understand SES as it functions in Region Five, you must know something about the vicinity-

Region Five encompasses Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena Counties of North Central Minnesota. Only the southern half of Cass County is presently being served by the program.

Using the 1970 census, the Region's population was approximately 105,000 people. However, the total acreage is nearly three million. Each individual in Region Five theoretically could live on their own 30 acre parcel of land.

The area is predominantly associated with tourism, agriculture, service, and heavy industry, e.g., logging. There is not a large concentration of light manufacturing. Base pay for most positions is minimum wage (\$2.90), and much of the employment is seasonal.

In the program year ending September 30, 1978, SES assisted in employing 38 handicapped people. Prior to this time, the project was not in "full swing." It was still determining its ability to handle support services. On October 1, 1978, the pilot program was termed successful and SES was incorporated.

During the first quarter of 1978-1979, eight handicapped people gained employment through SES. By mid-year 27 people had been served. The year's objective for 1978-79 is 50 placements. The goal of 50 employment sites for this year does not include the follow-up being provided to over 40 previously employed clients.

A person must be eligible for State Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) services to qualify for SES. Over 95% of SES's referrals come from DVR Offices in Region Five, under the direction of George Kleinschmidt, supervisor. Other referral sources are: social services, developmental achievement centers, mental health center, CEP/CETA, clergy, and special education.

After DVR acceptance, a work evaluation occurs at its Regional Evaluation Center, which is supervised by Allan Jacobson. Counselors then make appropriate referrals to SES. The SES job developer then sets up interviews and designs a placement plan with the client. The developer seeks appropriate employment sites, and arranges interviews. If hired, the employee is placed into a support services status and follow-up is done as necessary. SES to p. 10

Support services includes completing sub-minimum wage forms and handling necessary paperwork.

Support decreases as the employer and the employee become comfortable in their roles. The main efforts of support should be establishment of a positive and trusting relationship between client and program, program and employer, and employer and employee. Other problems which may arise are adjustment with fellow workers, transportation, and money management.

The ultimate goal in Sheltered Employment Services is to help develop the client as far as possible towards competitive employment. Some will achieve this goal. And those who do not can feel joy and success in the employment they have.

The future of SES and the program concept is extremely optimistic. Inquiries regarding the program from other areas of Minnesota have increased.

The 1979-1980 fiscal year should be a model year for SES. Retaining and maintaining SES's innovative style will be the most challenging aspect of programming. Consideration is now being given to establishing a training program for the presently unserved transitional type sheltered level persons. Community-based training sites would be used for bridging the gap. This would add to the program, but not alter its purpose. The projected 1979-1980 goals for all types of programming is to serve 120 persons.

For further information or knowledge of the Sheltered Employment Services concept, please contact: Mr. Kurt, M. Haglund, Executive Director, Sheltered Employment Services, Inc., 1927 South Sixth Street, Brainerd, Minnesota 56401, or telephone 218/828-2530.

Bewildered by regulations, confused by the contradictions inherent in the situation, it is small wonder that handicapped people feel disillusioned. Gratitude for the government assistance that has brought them within reach of independence can turn to feelings of futility, bitterness and depression.

Changing federal or state programs and attitudes is difficult. The process is painfully slow. But it is not impossible! The Education for All Children Act and the 1978 amendments to the 1973 Rehabilitation Act were won after years of dedicated effort. What course of action for the future is underway?

Part Two - Legislative activity

This year a number of bills were introduced in the United States Congress and State Legislature that would alleviate the hardships imposed by the disincentives discussed here. All of them face an uphill battle. Elected officials responding to the "Proposition 13 Fever" are far more inclined to reduce costs and tighten eligibility for government programs.

Currently the following bills affecting the SSDI and SSI disincentive problem are pending action in Congress and in the Minnesota legislature.

**CONGRESS: SUPPLEMENTARY SECURITY INCOME/HR 3464,
CONGRESSMAN COELHO OF CALIFORNIA - SPONSOR**

SSI provisions are addressed in HR 3464 which was passed by the full House of Representatives, and referred to Senate Finance where it is yet to be scheduled for hearing. It includes these features:

- 1.SGA is raised to the "break-even point" by this legislation. "Break-even" is defined as the point at which the \$1.00 reduction in benefits for \$2.00 earnings resulted in zero payments.
- 2.It provides for a standard 20 percent of gross earnings exclusion (which is intended to cover work and impairment related expenses such as special adaptive devices) for purposes of the SGA limit.
- 3.Experimental or demonstration projects waiving provisions of SGA would be permitted.
- 4.A recipient who has been able to engage in SGA who reapplies for benefits within four (4) years will be automatically reentitled without additional determination.
- 5.More detailed notices for claimants are required from the Social Security Administration in HR 3464.

CONGRESS: S 591, SENATOR ROBERT DOLE OF KANSAS - SPONSOR

In the U.S. Senate, Senator Dole has introduced S 591, a bill with basically the same provisions proposed by former Congresswoman Keys of Kansas in the previous session.

- 1.S 591 addresses the problem of benefit loss through the present definition of SGA by allowing payment of a cash supplement equal to the SSI benefit. Source of funding for the supplement would be from the general fund rather than from Social Security monies.
- 2.Earnings from sheltered workshop employment would be considered as earned income for eligibility purposes.
- 3.Allows "Presumptive disability" in certain instances. Will facilitate re-instatement of social security benefits.
- 4.When earned income reaches the break-even point, a person would be allowed to maintain Medicaid benefits if it were determined that without medical coverage, the individual would be unable to work.
- 5.Costs of attendant care, medical devices, prostheses, etc., could be disregarded in computing net earned income for eligibility purposes.

MINNESOTA STATE LEGISLATURE: INCOME DISREGARD BILLS

-HF 160, Representative Linda Berglin of Minneapolis

-SF 723, Senator Emily Ann Staples of Plymouth

These companion bills, which bring the income disregards e.g. \$50 for personal needs for Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA) and Medical Assistance (MA) recipients into compliance with those in the Federal SSI standards, have each been heard by the Health, Welfare & Corrections Committees of the House and Senate. The 1979 session adjourned before the House Finance and Appropriation Committee consideration. Supporters will continue to push for passage by 1980 legislature.

Concerned citizens have an obligation to convince elected officials of the need and ultimate cost benefit of changes in the system that would allow severely handicapped people to take a chance on employment and independence.

Solutions to these and other problems will only be accomplished through the political involvement of handicapped people, professionals and advocates. Raymond Moley, noted journalist, wrote words to warn the politically timid about the political process:

"It is something to live with, to influence if we wish, and to control if we can. We must master its ways or we shall be mastered by those who do."

Practitioner from p. 1

Another excellent source of specific company information is the receptionist or switch-board operator. These people are often most willing to answer questions about the type of business, number of employees, names of important people within the company and other questions that are of interest to the placement practitioner. This type of research activity may provide a broad and in-depth view of the local labor market.

There are other important factors that facilitate placement. One of these is appropriate dress. It is important to recognize the impact that appearance has on another person's attitude. As a representative of clients, the rehabilitation community, and themselves, placement practitioners must be particularly concerned about making good impressions.

It is also important to show respect for the basic purpose of most businesses—to turn profits.

Business people are interested in productivity and lower costs. The placement practitioner should attempt to show similar concern.

There are two other sources to be researched: First, want ads should be read everyday, as they will give one a perspective on labor market trends. A want ad might actually turn up a unique possibility for a client which might not be considered otherwise. A second source of ideas is the yellow pages which typically lists companies by type and location. This might often be the most complete listing available.

Much of what has been discussed up to this point applies to those placement activities a practitioner would perform on behalf of specific clients and directed at particular employers. However, there are other things that can be done to improve the climate for achieving rehabilitation. This refers to public relations. Practitioners should take advantage of the marketing value of public relations.

There are three basic groups that deserve special public relations efforts. These include the community, other professionals and employers. The community can be developed through radio and television spots and features.

Newspapers can also be used to highlight public interest stories on behalf of rehabilitation. Other professionals can be reached through their association meetings and newsletters, as well as through community service organizations. Employers can be similarly informed through association meetings and publications. The placement practitioner should seriously consider joining such organizations to promote rehabilitation on a personal level.

Close, personal contact with such people can be particularly helpful by giving the placement practitioner firsthand knowledge of local economic conditions. Chamber of Commerce and trade and business associations are most meaningful in this regard.

Other public relations work can be directed at labor unions. This is one resource, in particular, which the field of rehabilitation has not fully tapped. A proper place to begin is union headquarters. Here information can be obtained which is useful for predicting trends, finding training possibilities and recognizing the benefits of union employment. Industry management is often willing to direct a placement person to the appropriate union.

Because placement practitioners have close contact with labor markets, they are in an opportune situation to provide input from this sector to rehabilitation. This input can be used to guide job placement planning.

Practitioners can be instrumental in suggesting which training programs will lead to solid placements. Their contacts with employers can be used to develop training programs in industry which can reduce rehabilitation training costs and provide employers with a recruitment source backed-up by rehabilitation resources.

Practitioner to p. 12

Practitioner from p. 11

Any training programs that are developed with employers should first be surveyed to determine need and potential costs. Once these are understood and training is judged feasible, written contracts should be developed to include responsibilities of all involved. Trainees and supervisors should be designated and type and length of training, financial obligations and other pertinent factors should be outlined. This training can be developed in conjunction with rehabilitation facilities.

In a similar manner, on-the-job programs can also be contracted with industry. Such evaluation can help determine whether a client has potential or interest in employment. On-site experience is a valid source of occupational information for client plans.

In an on-the-job training program, an additional contractual component may occur: the company providing training plans to hire the trainee. This usually requires that the trainee receive a wage. Salary arrangements can also include financial support from the state rehabilitation agency and the firm.

Services that accompany such training and evaluation agreements can be of value to clients and employers alike. These include job modification and restructurings. Jobs and work stations can be changed to better accommodate the skills of a person with a disability. Such findings increase the competitive potential of workers and can benefit other employees.

The placement practitioner is important in implementing or providing job-seeking skills training. Practitioners should be interested in developing clients who are well qualified to find placement. This will ease the placement task. However, not all clients can achieve a high level of job-seeking skills.

During the development of job seeking skills, clients should be taught how to recognize want ads that advertise a real position. Clients should be taught to use public or private employment agencies. Completing an application is essential training, especially in dealing with difficult questions about disability or experience. Mock interviews with video tape feedback are excellent. Interview training should include how to present one's self, how to ask as well as answer questions.

Following-up on interviews should also be a part of job-seeking skills training. This includes instruction on how to use the telephone. Some time should also be spent on adjusting to work after placement. Problems should be anticipated, expectations brought in line and potential solutions and resources identified in case a problem occurs.

This naturally leads to another important service offered by the placement practitioner - post-placement follow-up. Work adjustment in the long run is more important than placement. It is a service extended to clients and also employers. This dual follow-up approach is often overlooked.

Placement can be exciting and rewarding when it is energetically and expertly pursued. Placement technology is accessible for all practitioners. Examples of important tasks and activities have been presented here to illustrate how the placement service can be organized. Likewise, an efficient and organized approach can have important implications for the entire rehabilitation process. The placement practitioner has direct links with the labor market from which valuable information can be obtained for directing rehabilitation plans and programs. Placement practitioners need to recognize the value they have for the entire rehabilitation community and actively pursue the fulfillment of this exciting role.

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