



# The OVR Review

"To assist Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve suitable employment and independence"

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Fall 2009

Volume 3, Issue 2

Article submitted by Dave Matheis

## Employer Spotlight

### ACS is a True Statewide Partner

Affiliated Computer Services, Inc. (ACS) was one of four employers recognized by the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) at its annual Employer Recognition Luncheon in Lexington on September 14<sup>th</sup> for its exemplary practices in hiring individuals with disabilities. ACS has truly been a statewide partner with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, working with job placement and counseling staff in a number of offices to fill its vacancies.

ACS is a FORTUNE 500 company with 74,000 employees supporting thousands of multinational corporations and government agencies in over 100 countries from 500 locations. ACS has more than 3,000 employees working throughout Kentucky, with large facilities in Lexington, London, Pikeville and Richmond and smaller sites elsewhere. The largest concentration of employees is in Lexington with almost 2,000 employees at four sites, serving both government and commercial clients.

In Louisville, in addition to working closely with Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf Holly Evans to accommodate two deaf KYOVR consumers, ACS has met with local job placement staff and provided tours of their facility. In Lexington, ACS is the lead employer for both the Bluegrass Chapter and state chapter of the Kentucky Business Leadership Network and is involved with the Mayor's Council on Disabilities. The recruiters there host trainings and forums for the public and other businesses dealing with subjects ranging from disability etiquette to dealing with post traumatic stress syndrome in returning veterans.

Carla Joseph, OVR counselor in Corbin, reports that "ACS has become a valuable community partner for our office. With facilities in both London and Monticello, we have found them to be a geographically accessible job option for our consumers. Our consumers are able to

come into their local VR office for assistance with the ACS application, and can also take the timed typing test in a familiar, lower stress environment."

According to Todd Hines, job placement specialist in Richmond: "Working with ACS here has been great".



Affiliated Computer Services (ACS) AbilityTeam accepts a 2009 Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Employer Recognition Award from OVR Job Placement Coordinator Robin Ritter, (pictured left to right) Ritter, Carla Webster and Tammie Geis of ACS, Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Co-Chair Nancy Hunter, SCVR Chairman Lee Gordon, Sheila Sears and Michelle Connor of ACS.

Carla Webster has been tireless in assisting us. Carla has helped me with several consumers and with navigating ACS requirements by site. She worked with me in helping their office hire their first deaf individual.."

Robin Ritter, the statewide coordinator of job placement services for OVR says: "We appreciate that ACS has recognized the extraordinary pool of talent that workers with disabilities represent.

The partnership the company has developed with

our job placement staff has allowed us both to hear and respond to one another's needs."

Carla Webster, Senior Recruiting Manager at ACS, spoke on behalf of the company at the SCVR Awards Luncheon. She

reported that the company has hired more than 100 individuals with disabilities in the state. She expressed gratitude for the valuable partnership with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and said: "We at ACS, like you, believe all people with disabilities should be able to work."

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## Message from Executive Director, Beth Smith



First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to say how wonderful it was to see you all at the National Rehabilitation Conference in Louisville last month. I am told it was one of the highest attended conferences ever for NRA. I hope everyone who attended learned a lot and enjoyed catching up with old friends and making new ones. Kentucky put on a wonderful conference and it was an honor to spotlight our state nationally. My thanks to KRA President Jonathan White and his team for all their efforts.

There is so much going on around the state; I'm not sure where to start. We are still waiting to get final approval to split the Northern Kentucky district into two separate districts, similar to how we divided up Louisville and Lexington. When the reorganization is approved, we will have both a Florence and Covington district. We are functioning that way now. Carol Leonhart is on special assignment as the Covington branch manager and Ryan Henson was recently hired as the Florence branch manager. We are still in the process of hiring

someone to fill the Owensboro position. We hope to have someone in place by the time this newsletter goes to print.

We did receive word that we will receive an additional four percent budget cut to the cuts we have already received. Luckily, we have the stimulus funds for this year and next year, but things will be very tight for a long time. We have trimmed everything possible, but have spared consumer services so far. Unfortunately, we may have to go up in order of selection to categories one and two by the end of the year to offset the large budget deficit we will experience in FY 2011. I understand that a great deal of you are being asked to do more with less resources than before. I also know that we could use many more staff members. We are doing everything possible to address these and all the other issues that are a result of budget cuts. I just want to again say thank you for all you continue to do amidst these difficult times. Things will get better. We just have a little more storm to weather.

Finally, we are still awaiting the final report from our RSA monitoring visit. RSA asked for an extension at the end of July. So, we expect to have the report soon. We will let everyone know the results as soon as possible.

In closing, by the time you read this, FY 2009 will be in the books. No matter what the numbers tell us, I just want you all to know that I am so proud of you for the perseverance you have shown over the past year. It has been a tough year. However, your dedication to finding employment for people with disabilities has not wavered. I am continually humbled by your dedication and service to the people of Kentucky. Best of luck in 2010!

Article submitted by Nanci Soard

## Kentucky APSE Conference

### *Supported Employment Works*

The Kentucky APSE Conference will be held on November 4-5, 2009 at the Lexington Holiday Inn North. The Conference will feature such topics as, 'Working Effectively with Employers', 'Serving Individuals with Vision Impairments', 'Self Employment—How to Write a Business Plan', 'Ethics', 'Autism Spectrum Disorder and Employment', and much more! Register today as early bird registration fees apply if received by October 16, 2009. Kentucky APSE, the Association for Persons in Supported Employment, is a chapter of APSE: The Network on Employment [www.apse.org](http://www.apse.org). For more information please contact Katie Wolf Smith at 859-977-4050 x229 or at [kwolf@uky.edu](mailto:kwolf@uky.edu).



## Program Services Report

### *Statewide Job Placement Meeting Held*



OVR Job Placement Staff

Job Placement Specialists, Branch Managers and Central Office staff met Thursday, August 6 at the Charles McDowell Center in Louisville for a statewide job placement meeting. Robin Ritter, Program Administrator, facilitated the meeting, which covered a wide-range of topics.

Director of Program Services Pam Jarboe talked about the strategic plan and the future of job placement services in Kentucky. HRD Coordinator Susie Edwards discussed the web based job placement training program which will soon be available for staff. The program was developed by Dr Jackie Rogers at UK in response to the needs of job placement staff.

Director of Community Relations Jason Jones introduced a new power point presentation available for marketing to business. He developed the presentation, entitled *Dispelling the Myths*, as a way to break down common misconceptions business owners have about hiring someone with a disability. The presentation is available online for all staff to use at [ovr.ky.gov](http://ovr.ky.gov).

Diane Hargrove discussed CMS usage for job placement staff and how it could help them in placing consumers

Social Security Coordinator Donna Osburn discussed using employers as Employment Networks in the Ticket to Work Program and how our job placement staff can help educate employers.

Carla Webster and Tammy Geis from Affiliated Computer Services' (ACS) Ability Team discussed employment at ACS and how to work with employers.

About 30 OVR staff members were in attendance at the one-day training. Ritter says there are several new Job Placement Specialists around the state and this was a great opportunity for them to meet and network with their peers.

She ended the training with a discussion about a mentoring program for job placement staff. The next statewide training is tentatively scheduled for February 11, 2010.

Article submitted by Susie Edwards

## HRD Report

### *New Employee Orientation*

New Employee Orientation was held at the Hampton Inn in Frankfort on August 24 – 26<sup>th</sup> with 16 employees attending. New employee orientation provides training on mandatory programs such as Sexual Harassment and Workplace Violence Prevention, Customer Service and Teams. This program offers an opportunity for employees to meet members of the Executive Leadership Team, learn more about training and professional development initiatives as well as gaining information on how to complete travel vouchers.

All of our new employee training programs are made possible because of the dedication of cabinet and agency employees who provide the presentations necessary to make these programs a success. Skills Enhancement Training I (SET I) is a mandatory training for all new counselors and is scheduled to take place at the Holiday Inn in downtown Frankfort October 7th – 9th.



## CDPVTC Report



Summertime at the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) has been a time of activity and excitement. A lot of good things are happening that will help embrace the center's vision that all persons served will achieve employment and independence. In July, the Food Service/Vocational Training area kicked off the "Coffee Cup Café". Students in the Food Service program assist in the preparation of food items including flavored coffees, breakfast and lunch items. They also get the "hands on" experience of taking orders, collecting money, and making change.

Also the CDPVTC "Growing Together Child Care Center" received a three STAR rating from the STARS for KIDS NOW voluntary rating system for licensed and certified child care programs. A Three STAR rating indicates that the program is seeking quality standards beyond the requirements for facility licensure. The child care center also allows students in the Child Care Training program to get "hands on" experience in caring for children.

Finally in July, a new cosmetology instructor joined the staff of CDPVTC allowing the center to begin offering an afternoon Cosmetology training class. Ms. Sue Reynolds' class meets from 1 - 7 p.m. each weekday. Students gain "hands on" experience by providing cosmetology services to students and members of the community.

In August, residential students who are enrolled in the ALPHA program and attend classes on the campus of Big Sandy Community Technical College returned in early August. This semester saw an increased number of students in this program; thus, requiring CDPVTC to adjust staffing schedules to assist with the ALPHA program.

Another exciting thing that happened in August was State Auditor Crit Luallen's release of a series of performance audits on 29 adult education programs funded by the Council on Postsecondary Education. Of the 29 programs audited, auditors found that eight programs had no reportable exceptions. Among the eight programs was the Adult Education program at CDPVTC.

The Recreation Unit reports a record number of consumers participating in the afternoon archery activity. The Recreation Unit offers a wide range of well-rounded recreation programs designed to meet the needs of the center's consumers.

Average enrollment for the month of August increased to 173.

In September, the Vocational Training Unit welcomed another new face when Deborah Holbrook joined the staff of CDPVTC. Ms. Holbrook will provide training in our Auto Lube & Detail program.

One of the most talked about events of the semester is the new Driver's Education car. A new Chevrolet Impala was delivered to the Center on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Staff and students are excited to once again have the opportunity for 'behind the wheel' training.

September 22, 2009 saw the daily enrollment jump to 188.



CDPVTC Archery class



CDPVTC Archery class

## Employee Spotlight

*Follow the Money to Linda Weber*



Linda Weber is pictured here with her husband Earl and son, Justin.

Linda Weber has dedicated her professional life to assisting individuals with disabilities from behind the scenes...a place she feels completely in her comfort zone.

Born and raised on a farm in Frankfort, Weber was a member of a family of five and the daughter of parents who believed in teaching manners and being proud of where you come from. "I am so proud of where I come from," said Weber. "My parents taught us hard work and how to always do our best even if you don't have much. I give them a lot of credit for how I turned out. It was a great way to grow up."

The farm was never a place she really left. After meeting her husband, Earl, and getting married in 1991, the couple bought a farm of their own in Frankfort. "I've been in Frankfort all my life," Weber said. "I'm just a country girl at heart and I always will be."

Although Weber considers herself a country girl from the farm, her resume looks more like a person who is totally immersed in the political workings of state government and public service. She has been in state government for 23 years, all with the same agency.

After graduating from Western Hills High School, Weber took a co-op position with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in 1986, a job that paid \$3.43 per hour at the time, but would turn into a lifelong commitment to people with disabilities. She started as a file clerk and is currently an Internal Policy Analyst or in her words: "I'm

a grant accountant."

"I follow the money," Weber said. "If it's purchased in this state, it goes through me and Mary Sue. I feel like we play a small role in almost everything we do for consumers."

The Mary Sue she is referring to is her assistant Mary Sue Goins. The two have worked together since 2002. "She is my right-hand man. I love her to death," says Weber.

She also says she truly believes in OVR's mission. "I have always loved what our agency does," Weber said. "I grew up here. I've been through several commissioners and supervisors. I give them a lot of credit for all their knowledge they passed on to me."

Joan White was her first supervisor and Don Fightmaster was the commissioner when she first started in 1986. Weber has been with OVR for so long, she says people come to her to answer history questions about the agency.

Weber also says that she hates change and doesn't mind being behind the scenes. Although she admits the few times she got up-close exposure to field staff, she felt a deeper sense of pride in what OVR does to change lives.

The first time was when she told her nephew and his parents about how OVR could help. "I sat in on his meetings with his counselor and I gained a huge amount of respect for what the field does," she said. "I really feel like my nephew would have been forgotten if it wasn't for the efforts of his counselor and their supporting staff."

Most recently, Weber was able to see close-up the fruit of her labor once again. OVR Consumer Jamie Osborne was recognized by the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) as the Entrepreneur of the Year. Weber met with Osborne, her counselor Julie McConnell and Employment Specialist Suzanne Isaacs to figure out the best way to help get an embroidery business off the ground. Weber was there to see Osborne receive her award. It was the first time she had attended a SCVR meeting in her entire time with the agency.

In addition to her full-time job, farm and husband, Weber found time to attend night school at Kentucky State University and get her degree in business administration in 1997. Weber says she couldn't have done any of it without all the support from her husband Earl. The two of them, along with their eight-year-old son Justyn Ty Weber, raise cattle and restore classic cars for show.

Weber says her dream is to work five more years, retire and go to school with Justyn like Flea Penn, a longtime co-worker did with her children. "I want to go on field trips and be involved with his school," she said.

Weber will hit her 23-year mark soon. For someone who hates change so much and enjoys being behind the scenes, she quite possibly may have seen more change than anyone at OVR. However, she may have the best advice for anyone who shares her fears. "I learned a long time ago you can't learn it overnight, it's a process."

## NEWS BITS

### **Sharon White Named Secretary of the National Black Deaf Advocates**



Sharon White

Sharon D. White was born and raised in Aurora, Illinois. Currently, she resides in Frankfort, Kentucky. She is employed with Kentucky's Education and Workforce Cabinet Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) as an Administrative Assistant to

the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Branch.

Sharon first became involved with the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) in 2003 working with an interest group on the establishment of a new chapter in Kentucky. Kentucky Black Deaf Advocates (KYBDA) became Chapter #31 in 2005 and Sharon was elected as the first president.

Since then, Sharon has volunteered her time with a variety of organizations and was recently elected as the President of Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD). She previously served as the Treasurer and as Secretary which is where she developed her secretarial skills. Prior to being elected NBDA Secretary Elect in 2009, she served two years as the Midwest Alternative Representative and a year as the Midwest Regional Representative. Sharon is a member of the local Kentucky Black Deaf Advocates (KYBDA) chapter.

As the new Secretary Elect of National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) Sharon's duties will include attending board meetings two times a year, taking minutes for meetings, sending out notices to officers and board members and keeping up with the organization correspondences.

Sharon will also be responsible for Miss Deaf America, Briana Johnson. This includes scheduling appearances for Miss Deaf America to provide presentations, platform presentation, storytelling or talent and performance.

Sharon is a woman of many talents doing all this in addition to her responsibilities for OVR. Also, Sharon is the mother of three children and a grandmother of three.

### **October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

Congress designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The Office of Disability Employment Policy has the lead in planning NDEAM activities and materials to increase the public's awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities. Various programs carried out throughout the month also highlight the specific employment barriers that still need to be addressed and removed.

This effort to educate the American public about issues related to disability and employment actually began in 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

Look for daily bits of information, including websites, news, Kentucky activities and interesting facts about employment for people with disabilities all month long from Jason Jones.

*Information from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)*

### **Kentucky Rehabilitation Award Winners**

**Ben Kaufman Award** - Keith Banks

**Wendell Taylor Memorial Award** - The Kentucky Association of Persons in Supported Employment

**Esther K. Taylor** - Carl Hall

**Personal Achievement Award** - Faryan Barati (Lexington consumer)

**KRA Staff Award** - Teresa Barnes

**Outstanding Employer of Persons with Disabilities Recognition Award** - B A's automotive services owned by Tony Hamilton

**JPD Janet B. Gold Award** - Anthony Simning

**KARSS Margaret T. Wilson Service Award** - Teresa Barney

**KRCA Counselor of the Year** - Norma McCormick

**KARL** - Cherilyn Kiser

## Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation

### Employer Recognition Awards

The Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation hosted its annual Employer Recognition Awards on September 14, 2009 at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort and Spa in Lexington, KY. In addition to recognizing employers who engaged in exemplary practices of hiring individuals with disabilities, the Council gave out an Entrepreneur of the Year Award for the first time. The award winners were:

**B A's Automotive, Paducah**  
**Scott County Board of Education, Georgetown**  
**Sandy Valley Fasteners, Paintsville**  
**Affiliated Computer Services, Inc.,**  
**various locations**

**Jamie Osborne, Owenton -**  
**Entrepreneur of the Year**



Jamie Osborne of Owenton, second from left, accepts the 2009 SCVR Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Co-Chair Nancy Hunter (left) and Chairman Lee Gordon OVR Counselor (second from right). Also pictured is Jamie's vocational rehabilitation counselor, Julie McConnell (far right). In her acceptance remarks, Jamie thanked OVR for "seeing past my physical limitations and providing me with the opportunity to once again feel productive. You are making a difference in the lives of not just your consumers, but also their families and all those individuals that come in contact with them."



Tony Hamilton, owner of B A's Automotive in Paducah (far right), accepts a 2009 SCVR Employer Recognition Award from Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Co-Chair Nancy Hunter and Chairman Lee Gordon (second and third from left). Also pictured is OVR Employment Specialist Cindy Ragland (far left), who works closely with Mr. Hamilton in placing OVR consumers. Tony, who has been receptive to hiring consumers with criminal records, said in his accepting remarks "I think everyone deserves a second chance. If they are ready to work, and they are willing to work, I'll give them the chance they need to make it."

## Save the Date

### Upcoming Council Meetings

#### Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) Meeting

Monday December 14, 2009

9:00am-3:30pm

Marriott Griffin Gate Resort and Spa

1800 Newtown Pike

Lexington, KY 40511

#### Next Meeting:

TBA

#### Interagency Coordinating Committee Meeting

January 12, 2010

10:00am - 12:00pm

Department for Protection and Advocacy

100 Fair Oaks Lane, 3rd Floor

Frankfort, KY 40601

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(Jason Jones - Content Editor, Nanci Soard - Layout Editor)

Printing costs paid using Office of Vocational Rehabilitation state funds

