



THE FOCUS

September 2016 Vol. 4 No. 6

Hot Topic

Towards Greater Dimensions of Growth— Moving from a Simple Definition to Sustainability

Definition 1 - Capacity

- the ability to hold or contain people or things
- the largest amount or number that can be held or contained
- the ability to do something: a mental, emotional, or physical ability

~Webster Dictionary 2016

Over the past four years, there has been exciting and hopeful change in simple numbers in Oregon –

- ⇒ An increase in people passing the CESP exam;
- ⇒ More organizations committing to change through the Transformation Project; and
- ⇒ A rise in the number of Oregonians with intellectual/developmental disabilities in integrated employment.

For long term change in the number of people in integrated employment, the next shift needs to be structural. Many providers in the process of change are still depending on only a few employment specialists who wear many hats and serve more than the one function. These key staff have individually demonstrated competence increasing their professional best practice knowledge and thus increasing supported employment capacity; however, these specialists are often operating in isolation within their own organizations.

Organizations still have backlogs of people waiting to be considered for job placement with not enough employment specialists to meet the need. Because many providers have only one or two Employment [Continued on page 2](#)

About Oregon APSE

Our mission is to promote equitable, integrated employment of people with disabilities that recognizes their contributions as community members.

We represent the Oregon chapter of the national Association of Persons Supporting EmploymentFirst. [APSE](#) is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

As of August 2016, we have 104 members!

[Join Oregon APSE](#)

We look forward to joining with like-minded Oregonians! To become a member click on “Join” link or email:

oregonapse@gmail.com



Website coming soon

www.oregonapse.org

Hot Topic continued...

Specialists, things can come to a halt with just one new job – as the employment specialist who has been the job developer moves into the job coaching role. This further exacerbates the wait for others.

Some specialists are embedded in organizations in which the greater business of day services, crews, and employment path activities dominate their personnel and monetary resources, without management reallocating funding and actively restructuring.

Not only, do we need to increase the knowledge base but also the numbers of employment specialists in each organization who can be freed up to act upon their knowledge. Organizations need to think bigger than one or two individuals who are responsible for Discovery and job placement. They must develop whole teams and departments that can effectively meet the rising demand of empowered job seekers. In addition, the critical partners - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors, Services Coordinators, Personal Agents, educators and their managers need to play a greater role in this large societal shift.

Oregon needs to consider capacity, not just as the largest number that can be contained within the context of the existing systems, but as a new configuration of entities and resources. And to embrace not just the concept of increased capacity but the concept of community capacity building as follows:

Definition 2 - Community capacity building (CCB)

..also referred to as ***capacity development***, is a conceptual approach to social or personal development that focuses on understanding the obstacles that inhibit people, governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations from realizing their development goals while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results.
~Wikipedia 2016

*Written by Debra McLean, Oregon APSE
Board Member, September 2016*

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If you have thoughts regarding capacity, Lane v. Brown, or any other HOT Topics, please send them to oregonapse@gmail.com with the Subject: Hot Topic.

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A Cool Life

~The **Cool Life** column showcases stories that demonstrate individuals with disabilities successfully employed by community businesses. Have a story? Send an email to: oregonapse@gmail.com

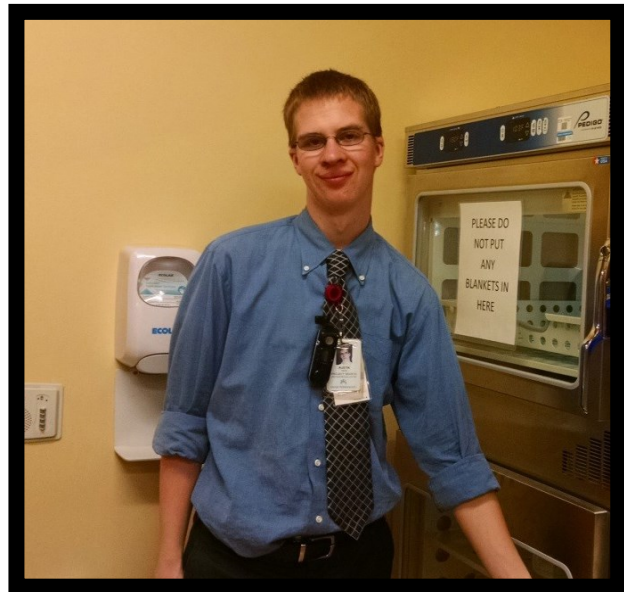
Austin lands dream job on the Intel campus

Austin Harris, 25, came into services with [Albertina Kerr](#) in 2015. At the time, he was working as a bottle room clerk. He was unhappy with this employment. Austin, who lives in Forest Grove, decided to take a leap of faith by beginning a new program in the state of Oregon called [Project SEARCH](#).

Project SEARCH is an internship program for young adults who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities that teaches real-life job skills. The host business for the Project SEARCH site that Austin attended was Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Before attending Project SEARCH, Austin's ideal job was working in a kitchen. To help gain the required skills needed for this position, the Project SEARCH team placed him in the kitchen at Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center for one of his job rotations. In this role, he learned how to do dishes, put together orders for patients, bus tables, and handle the cash register.

After Austin graduated from Project SEARCH, he began applying for jobs with the assistance of one of Albertina Kerr's job developers. One of the jobs Austin applied for was for a dishwashing position with the company Eurest, which runs the cafeteria located on the Intel campus in Hillsboro.



Austin works at the Intel campus in Hillsboro.
(Photo: contributed)

After his interviewing process, Mike Radford of Eurest was so impressed by Austin that he hired him to work in the cafeteria full time.

While working in the café at Intel, Austin was paired with a job coach. In the beginning, Austin received job coaching for every shift he had. As Austin began advancing in his skills in the kitchen, he began his journey of being independent and the job coaching slowly faded.

After working at Intel for approximately five months, Austin currently works 37.5 hours per week and makes \$10.71 per hour. He has decided he wants to transition to no longer receiving Social Security benefits (or long term coaching supports offered through this benefit).

Austin was supported in his career goals by job developer [Continued on page 13](#)

[Follow the discussion on the Oregon APSE Facebook page!](#)

Did you know?

Oregon APSE continues to follow the data being provided by Oregon's Employment First team. In the most recent report ([September 2016](#)), from September 2015 to March 2016, there was a 13% increase in the number of people receiving supports for individualized employment from 743 to 841. During this same time period, the average number of hours worked per week increased by 7%, from 11.6 hours per week to 12.4 hrs./wk. However, coupled with these increases in the number of employees and the number of hours per week, there was a 6% decrease in wages from \$10.24 per hour to \$9.69/ hour. As the minimum wage increases, beginning July 1, 2016, it will be interesting to see this statistic in the next data report.

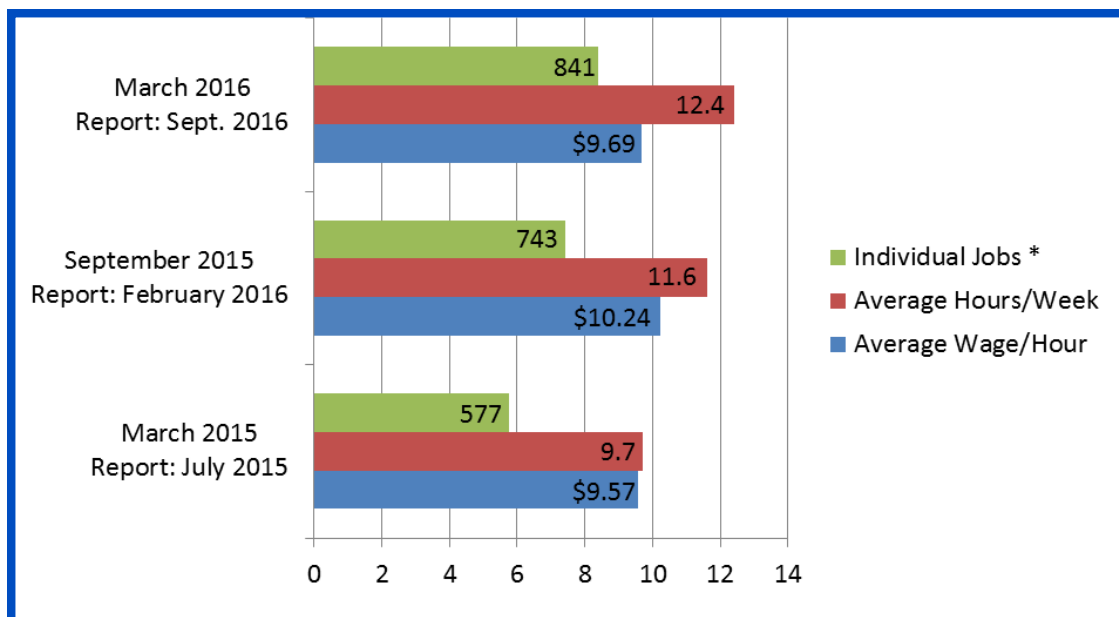
Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS) Individual Jobs*

Guess... Who is our Mystery Member?

I was in the Army for seven (7) years starting as a Medic. Currently, I am the Employment Services Trainer & Certification Director for a large non-profit in the Willamette Valley. I enjoy teaching and challenging people to push boundaries and overcome barriers to meet our company's mission to *"Expand the horizons and enhance the quality of life of those we support"* to help people reach their employment goals. I incorporate person-centered concepts into my mentoring of Employment Specialists on Discovery, Systematic Instruction, and Vocational Rehabilitation processes. My biggest passions are my son, family, and horse. I love living in Oregon because of all the outdoor activities and endless possibilities for weekend road trips. I even love the rain!



([Go to page 13](#) to reveal the Mystery Member's identity.)



Board Talk



Dan Peccia

Dan Peccia is Vice President of the Oregon APSE chapter, and is the Executive Director of Self-Determination Resources Inc., a Support Services Brokerage in Portland, Oregon.

He has been an APSE Board member for 4 years.

Provider Capacity... at a glance

Each month at our staff meeting, we start the long and trying morning of reviewing transmittals and subsequent policy/ process changes. Happily, each meeting includes at least one and sometimes several stories of customers getting community jobs. We then discuss what made that happen. All too often the Personal Agents (PAs) praise a specific developer and then add that they are currently full and have a long waitlist. This pattern has repeated itself for years.

Emerging Themes

First is the difficulty in **finding providers to do Discovery**. Agencies that we have been working with for many years are simply full. To get a provider that has been successful in the past, PAs need to ask individual job seekers to wait.

Next is the **wait for a VR intake**. Right now, 2-3 months is the norm for the Washington County branch. Patrick Foster, VR Branch Manager, says his are the highest caseloads in the state. This past year, he brought on five (5) new VR Counselors (VRCs) out of a total of 15. This exacerbates wait time. In addition, due to federal regulations, getting VR on board early isn't always an option. [Continued on page 12](#)

Oregon APSE Governing Board

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Get Involved!

To volunteer for the APSE 2017 National Conference, Board Sub-committees, or to be considered for the Board of Directors, contact

oregonapse@gmail.com

Our elections for new Board members will occur after the Annual Meeting.

Please keep your information [up to date](#).

Newsletter Editors

Tara Asai, Paula Johnson,
Dan Peccia, Annabel Nickles,
and CJ Webb

Upcoming Events

4th Annual Pacific NW Employment Forum

Olympia, WA 98502

September 27-28, 2016



**This is an opportunity to
learn and connect with
others working towards
employment for all!**

**Sponsored by the Oregon &
Washington APSE Chapters**

**If you have not registered,
go to**

[Pacific NW Emp Forum](#)

Oregon APSE ANNUAL Meeting

Olympia Red Lion Hotel
2300 Evergreen Park Dr. SW

Olympia, WA 98502

September 27, 2016

4:25-5:25 PM

**All members are welcome and
encouraged to attend.**

Around the State

— A Fledgling Organization—Success of Collaborative Employment Innovations —

Collaborative Employment Innovations is a small supported employment organization nestled in the heart of downtown Corvallis, Oregon. Known locally as CEI, the young, four-year-old organization has already begun to make a large positive impact on the community, and the customers that it serves.

Founded on the core principles of power, choice, and prosperity, CEI's mission is to promote the social and economic empowerment of people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) by helping them to gain competitive employment with equal pay. The staff at CEI operates on the belief that job seekers of all abilities can (and do) make meaningful contributions to the creation of a rich and diverse workforce. Thus, CEI strives in order to provide each customer with employment services that will promote their individuality, equality, and self-determination, all while maintaining the same rights and responsibilities as the general workforce.

Since its launch in August 2012, CEI has worked closely with its customers in order to match them up with local businesses based on their unique needs, interests, and talents. In doing so, CEI has helped to foster many professional and mutually beneficial relationships between employers and employees across Linn and Benton counties.

But it has not always been this way.

Five years ago, CEI was only a dream in the mind of founder and CEO, Robin de La Mora. As the older sister of a sibling with a developmental disability, Robin grew up in a household where she and her younger sister were held to all of the same expectations by their parents. Despite her sister's disability related struggles, she was always able to meet the high standards placed upon both of them,

Around the State continued...

thus teaching Robin at a young age that there was no such thing as “can’t.” Robin watched things change for her sister after she graduated from school and struggled to find employment due to her disability.

“I experienced my sister change from a healthy, happy person to someone who seemed to have lost a sense of purpose in the first year she aged out of school.” Robin said. “But then she found Vocational Rehabilitation and was referred to a supported employment provider that helped her gain employment.”

It was her sister’s story that initially inspired Robin to pursue a career in supportive employment. She began her career in 1995 after landing a job as a High School Transition Project Specialist in Benton County.

After six years with the Benton County High School Transition Project, she took a position at Integrated Services Network (ISN) Adult Support Services Brokerage as a Personal Agent/Supported Employment Specialist. In the ten years she worked there, Robin became even more familiar with the challenges the I/DD population faced in regards to seeking, obtaining, and maintaining employment. After struggling to find sufficient employment services for many of her customers, Robin came up with the business concept that would eventually become CEI.

“As a Personal Agent, I experienced first-hand the barriers to connecting adults with developmental disabilities to supported employment services. This, coupled with ongoing encouragement from the local county DD program and VR office, sparked an interest to explore the possibility of starting a supported employment agency.”

Armed with 16 years of experience, Robin set out to create the services that she wished customers had access to while working for ISN. She began her journey by utilizing the resources that were offered to aspiring small business entrepreneurs in Linn and Benton counties. Then, she started CEI.

[Continued on page 8](#)

Upcoming Events

2017 National APSE Conference will be in ...

Portland, Oregon

on June 20-22, 2017. Stay tuned for volunteer opportunities and other information.

APSE CESP™ Exam

[For Exam Application and
upcoming Exam Opportunities](#)

Monmouth, Oregon

Applications due by 10/21/16
November 4, 2016 (9a-12p)

Salem, Oregon

Applications due by 11/2/16
November 16, 2016 (9a-12p)

Disability Employment Awareness Month

[Click here for information](#)

October
2016

NW Conference on Professional Development in Disability Services

[Click for registration](#)

Bend, Oregon
November 1-3, 2016

Bottom Dollars (screening)

Watch for announcements
Portland, Oregon
Date: Coming soon

Around the state continued...

"The start was slow and steady," Robin reported. "CEI began with a staff of one, me, working as an independent contractor with Vocational Rehabilitation providing job placement services. As an independent

order to identify applicants who are driven, self-starting, ambitious, confident, and creative."

Robin's hiring strategy has proven to be a



contractor, my days consisted of job developing and job coaching. On nights and weekends, my focus was on the steps needed to become a qualified provider of employment services for Oregon Developmental Disability Services." Robin's hard work as the sole employee of CEI eventually paid off.

Today, CEI has grown into a team of 14 employees with over seventy-five years of collective experience in supported employment. The CEI team was built through strong community connections, networking, and partnerships, with many of the upper level employees beginning in entry-level positions, and seizing opportunities to advance to positions more in line their unique skillsets.

"When looking to hire applicants, CEI uses a somewhat non-traditional interviewing process," Robin reported. "This is done in

winning one for CEI, as its team has already supported over 60 job seekers to gain competitive employment in Benton and Linn counties. Job locations, to name a few, include Kohl's, Lowe's Home Improvement, Good Samaritan Hospital, Benton County Parks, and The Community Before & After-school Program.

Written by Nicki Bezanson, CEI Discovery Coordinator

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~THE FOCUS ***Around the State*** column features stories from Oregon APSE members and friends that illustrate Oregon's pioneering spirit from various regions of the state.

If you have a story, please contact us at: oregonapse@gmail.com.

Systematic Instruction: The Key to Successful Employment

Written by Paula Johnson and Teri Johnson

In the late 1960's into the 1970's, emerging leaders in the disability field combined research and values in developing teaching strategies for individuals with significant disabilities. Among these leaders were Marc Gold at the University of Illinois, Paul Wehman at Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Lou Brown at the University of Wisconsin, and Tom Bellamy at the University of Oregon, Specialized Training Program. Each of these pioneers believed that:

- People with developmental disabilities had much more potential than anyone realized.
- All people with disabilities should have the opportunity to live their lives much like everyone else.
- Everyone can learn if we can figure out how to teach them.
- A lack of learning should first be interpreted as insufficient use of teaching strategies rather than inability of the learner.

Based on these beliefs, teaching strategies were developed such as Marc Gold's "Try Another Way" and Tom Bellamy's "Systematic Instruction." In the early 1980's, considerable efforts were made to train direct service professionals on how to best use these techniques, particularly for individuals who were exiting state institutions and for those with greater

Employment Specialist Corner

challenges in learning new and complex tasks. Over time, systematic instruction became somewhat of a lost art. In today's environment of Employment First and full participation, it has become even more important to provide good training for individuals in order for them to access good paying jobs in the community.

A systematic instruction approach allows for consideration of tasks/jobs that may have been perceived as too complex or technical for supported employment candidates in the past. It may be needed when a) "loose" teaching is not getting the person where they want or need to be, b) a person's learning style is best accommodated by a more structured and systematic instruction approach, and c) an activity or task has an element of risk if not done correctly.

Important Components

There are three important components to systematic instruction: 1) Preparing to teach, 2) Teaching, and 3) Assessment.

Preparing to Teach includes task design or standardizing the work, and task analysis.

Task Design involves determining the "best" method for completing a task so there is consistency among all workers. Strategies include: [Continued on page 10](#)

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Systematic Instruction: The Key to Successful Employment

1. What do you see that would make this task/job easier to learn? (Natural cues within the job or task that you will teach to.)
2. The natural, existing cues that exist in a task are the "clues" about what step is next. We need to be prepared to teach to the cues in the task from the first time through or we run the risk of becoming the "cue."
3. What do you learn about this task/job that would make it easier to do? (physical demands of the job or task: lifting, fine motor, difficult manipulations)
4. What might you add to make it easier to remember? (adding or highlighting cues, self-management strategies)
5. Is there an opportunity to design the task so that the possibility of errors would be eliminated or minimized?

Task Analysis

The outcome of task design is a simple written description of the safest, highest quality and most efficient way known to perform a particular process or task. This is referred to as a task analysis. It is a useful tool when the complexity of the task is presenting challenges to the learner or trainer.

A written task analysis focuses the trainer attention on the specific demands of the task and cues within the task. It breaks the task into discreet, observable steps and lists them in order. It provides useful data and is an

efficient method to track skill acquisition, productivity, and safety. It is also sensitive to small gains and highlights the steps that are difficult, which may need a change in design or teaching strategy.

Teaching

After task design and task analysis have been completed, the teaching begins. The trainer will be delivering and fading assistance or prompts, identifying and teaching to cues of the task, correcting errors, assessing progress, and addressing difficult steps.

Prompts or Methods of Assistance

The purpose of prompts or assistance is to bring the learner's attention to cues within the task when additional information is needed to perform the task correctly. There are several ways to provide this information:

- Verbal – this method can be effective when the learner receives information well verbally. Keep in mind verbal prompts are often ineffective when a learner has difficulty with auditory processing. Any verbal instruction should be brief and specific to the task.
- Written and visual (picture) lists – these can often remain as tools to self-manage movement through a task.
- Modeling – "showing how"; can range from single steps to whole task.
- Visual Prompts – gestures showing movement expected.
- Physical Guidance – also referred to as manual guidance or hand-over-hand. Physical guidance can range from very light touch to full physical guidance to complete a step or steps. As with all forms of assistance, the decision to use

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Systematic Instruction: The Key to Successful Employment

physical guidance should be based on the need of the learner and faded to the least amount necessary to successfully complete the task. Physical guidance should never be used to force movement or compliance.

The big questions include which teaching method to use, how much assistance to provide and when to provide it. Some helpful tips include:

1. Take your cue from the learner; learner performance (learning style) will guide you.
2. When providing assistance, give no more than necessary to get a correct response.
3. “Tie” your assistance to the cues in the task and not to you!
4. Fade your assistance as the learner performs steps accurately. This will include moving away from the learner as s/he becomes more proficient.
5. Delay your prompts to see if the learner can perform the steps without your assistance.

When an Error Occurs

Learners are bound to have errors in their work and your teaching approach will differ between those who are “early” in learning and those who are “late” in learning. When an error occurs early in the training, interrupt the learner as soon as possible using a neutral and non-punishing tone of voice. Back up to the cue for that step and support the learner with assistance as needed to complete the step correctly. When error occurs “late” in the person’s training, wait to see if s/he self-corrects. You can give prompts with less information such

as “what comes next?” or “what did you forget?”

Strategies for Teaching Difficult Steps

When certain steps in a task are repeatedly incorrect or the learner is making little or no progress the following strategies may be helpful:

- Consider changes in the task design to facilitate learning and performance
- Modify the task and adjust your assistance from “easy to hard”
- Consider mass trials of the difficult step by removing it from the task sequence for repeated practice

Assessment

In the words of David Hingsburger, “The most important tool for teaching is the willingness to evaluate what you are doing on a moment by moment basis.” Task analysis provides an opportunity for formal assessment while informal assessment is ongoing throughout the teaching process. The trainer should always be looking for information from the learner’s behavior to make appropriate training decisions about what is causing a difficult step, what is needed for modifications in the task design, what are the social skill demands, and, is the reinforcement effective. Trainers will be more effective if they implement the teaching strategies described above. It is a true joy to see learners’ master difficult tasks that allow them to gain meaningful employment.

For more information, contact Teri Johnson at teri431@comcast.net.

Board Talk continued...

Although VR is required to have a customer “in plan” within 60 days of an intake meeting, when utilizing Discovery services, this timeline doesn’t work. If the intake meeting occurs before Discovery, the VR timeline is impossible to meet so often the VRC isn’t part of the team at the critical beginning of the process.

High turnover is a problem across the board. When a PA, employment specialist, or VRC leave for a different job, family leave or any reason, the Job Seeker can see a half a year go by without feeling anything meaningful is being done. Simply put, all agencies are staffed too thinly to shuffle workloads and not have slowdowns or significant breaks in services.

Timing can be tricky. When a Customer says, “Yes, I want a job,” the PA must juggle finding a Discovery provider with scheduling an intake meeting with VR. If everything works smoothly, the Discovery profiles are either done or nearly completed before the initial VR meeting. However, due to all the issues mentioned above, timing seldom works well and that causes the process to back up.

The Provider Perspective

I asked a few questions of the directors of employment organizations we use the most. The trends were clear. All either had 2 to 9 month waitlists to start Discovery or were simply turning folks away because they are at capacity. The reasons are similar across organizations. Although five of the six organizations reported that turnover was

somewhat of an issue, two organizations had turnover rates of at least 50% per year. In addition, the upfront costs for training and related expenses for new staff can be *as high as \$10,000 per employee*. It takes up to 6 months before new Employment Specialists gain the skills needed to make placements and generate income. Organizations would like to hire more staff but between turnover and the resources needed to get new Employment Specialists to a point where they are pulling in enough billing to cover their positions, bringing on new staff is challenging. In addition, required trainings are not occurring on a regular basis in all areas of the state. One provider that has hired two new staff is waiting for trainings to be scheduled so that these individuals can gain the credentials they need.

The Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) outcome based payment system shifts the financial risk in finding a job to the provider organizations. Providers must self-fund by using retained earnings, shifting dollars from other programs, or seeking outside grants. Not all agencies are willing or able to do this. Bearing this financial risk means some agencies are reluctant to serve individuals who are perceived to be difficult to place. For these customers, finding a provider becomes an even greater challenge.

What to do?

The State providing grants to help organizations transform is a welcome step. However, these grants cannot be a one or two time event. Until the payment and shared financial risk issues are addressed, these

Board Talk continued...

grants are needed to simply 'restock' the supply of employment professionals.

Determining ways to deal with turnover so that services don't suffer from abrupt interruptions is critical. In my agency, supervisors can cover when there is turnover. However, when we've had multiple PAs leave, this system only works so well.

Finally, as in everything we do, communication and relationship building within the system is key. Realistically, we will never have enough back-up support in all areas of our system. We need to work hard on building relationships so that when all the glitches that can happen, do happen and we can get them resolved quickly.

~

Cool Life continued...

Somerset Stevens and job coach, McKenna Davis, as well as VR counselor, Karen Burch, and his Services Coordinator, Jane Glancy, of the Washington County Community Developmental Disability Program.

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Contributed story from APSE Member, Erin Cochrun-Weston from Albertina Kerr

Meet Mystery APSE Member



Toni Smith

Toni Smith is a Manager at Partnerships for Community Living.

