



Business Partnership Network NEWS

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Attitude, skills open doors for VR client

Who says video games are a waste of time? Vocational Rehabilitation client Robert Berry started playing Atari when he was 4 or 5 and built his computer skills from there.



Robert Berry checks a shipping order

But he didn't realize how far they would take him until he was assigned to the North American Rescue Products warehouse to sharpen his work skills.

Clients at the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department's work training center on Pelham Road in Greenville assemble and pack combat medical supplies for Unconventional Medic, a division of NARP. The center also provides adjacent warehouse space for the company.

Berry previously had worked in a pizza parlor and a grocery store bakery, both minimum wage jobs.

"I liked making pizza, but you can't go very far on \$5.75 an hour," he said. "I came to VR to get marketable skills."

He worked in the warehouse from October of 2006 until June of this year and "was able to pick up everything," said Larry Giddings, warehouse supervisor. "He became

indispensable to me."

The majority of NARP's products go to combat units in Iraq and Afghanistan. International shipping has become a much more complicated process than it used to be. Good computer skills are essential.

Giddings said when his mother died and he had to go to California for a week, Berry and another VR client managed the warehouse.

"The place ran pretty smoothly," Giddings said.

Then Berry left to take a warehouse job at Span-America, which makes polyurethane foam products in Greenville.

"When he left, things didn't go as well," Giddings said. "It's hard to find a client with the skills that he has. And he has a good attitude and a good attendance record."

He said NARP also is moving into a new phase, which will require that he have reliable backup.

Giddings wanted Berry back and made him an offer. He accepted.

"When I'm gone, he can take care of all my responsibilities," Giddings said.

Berry also is happy with his new job as warehouse receiving/shipping clerk.

"I enjoy shipping. I think it's neat to take an order, pack it up and send it overseas," he said.

Jim Carino, NARP chief operating officer, said, "Robert is an example of how well the SCVRD system can work, and we are delighted to have him with us."

Disability Awareness CD available at training

The Business Partnership Network now has a "Disability & Sensitivity Awareness" CD/DVD available for BPN members.

The CD contains valuable interaction and etiquette tips that are useful when working with employees or customers who have disabilities.

BPN members who send employees to the Disability Awareness Trainings will receive a copy of the CD.

The next planned training will be open to all BPN members on October 25, 2007, as we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

This year's theme is "Workers with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team."

Call (803) 896-6582 to reserve your seats now. The meeting is open to BPN members and SCVRD staff. It will be held from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at SCVRD's Human Resource Development Center at the State Office campus in West Columbia.

Welcome new members

Administrative Solutions, LLC, and Agil Staff, both of Columbia, are the newest members of the Business Partnership Network.

Administrative Solutions is a small, woman-owned, administrative staffing company, while Agil Staff connects employers to bilingual professionals and the Hispanic workforce.

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Commissioner—Larry C. Bryant
Editor—Sharon H. Kelly



The Diamond Hill Plywood warehouse team includes, from left, Richard Turner, Jimmy Caulder, Jim Maynard, Lee Rivers and Joseph Keith. At right are John Ramsey, CEO, and Jim Ramsey, president. Turner, Rivers and Keith are former VR clients.

Diamond Hill, VR have long history

Diamond Hill Plywood has been working with the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department since the 1980s when the Florence SCVRD office collated price books and product catalogs for the Darlington-based company's sales and marketing department.

The relationship has continued and several VR clients from the Hartsville office have been hired.

"The working relationship could not be better," said Ronnie Calcutt, Diamond Hill branch manager.

"SCVRD provides well trained, qualified employees with great work ethics," he said.

Diamond Hill is a major wholesale distributor of building material and construction products. The company serves a customer base in 11 Southeastern states.

Video, skits highlight disability etiquette

BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina human resources staff members from Columbia, Myrtle Beach, Augusta, Ga. and Timonium, Md., learned about disability awareness Aug. 8 as part of an annual team building and information sharing event.

SCVRD staff presented the topic "Disability Awareness and Etiquette: Building Blocks to Employment."

The presentation included a video entitled "Employing Abilities: Disability Awareness for Employers" and several skits highlighting the do's and don'ts of wheelchair and hearing disability etiquette.

The presentation is being considered for inclusion in BlueCross' activities for National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.