

## THE SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

VR<sup>3</sup> Ready...Reliable...Results

July 2012

## Creative thinking leads to creative opportunity

In this challenging economy it often takes team work and creativity to assist SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) clients to find opportunities. Just ask Frank Gilg.

Frank has been an SCVRD client since 2009. Through the guidance of his counselor, Dana Hazel of the Charleston area office, Frank enrolled at the Information Technology Training Center (ITTC) in West Columbia. While there, he realized he had a love of computers and a passion for photography and graphics.



Jim Williams of Client Services, former ITTC Director, learned two key things from his time working with Frank: how much Frank enjoys helping others and how much he relishes opportunities to improve how things get done.

After successfully completing the Business Applications Plus (BAP) and Business-Oriented Applications (BOA) programs in March, 2011, Frank returned to his home in Mount Pleasant. With Dana, he began searching for a rewarding career opportunity.

Facing the inevitable challenge in today's economy of finding that ideal career, Frank decided to "think outside the box," taking Jim Williams' advice to utilize volunteer opportunities to enhance his employability.

"I followed [Jim's] advice...and found a career path that I think I will like," Frank explains.

"Before Mother's Day, my girl friend complained about needing help [where she works at a local florist], but her boss was unwilling to pay anyone. I told her I'll [volunteer]."

"So the Tuesday before Mothers Day I went in and convinced him to let me work. By Saturday night I had worked 56 hours and the guy said he was "blown away" by my work ethic and good nature and offered to pay me retroactively. He hired me as an independent agent for the rest of the year.

"I drive the orders, chop flowers and perform general shop duties. I found out that I am really good at the creative side of arranging [flowers], and actually better than most of his designers!"

Frank is also using what he learned at the ITTC.

"The floral business has become highly computerized and I am one of the few there that can handle learning the wire services and so forth," he says. "Vocational Rehabilitation put me in that position. I would have

missed the whole computer age without the program at ITTC."

He has even developed a marketing brochure for the floral business.

Expressing her commitment to making sure Frank has a long-term career, his counselor, Dana, focuses "on providing Frank with the quality service he deserves. He always



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service he deserves. He always puts his best foot forward, and with him, the sky is the limit."

But for now Frank has found a good opportunity to gain income and useful experience.

"The work is also good for me mentally as it feels like I am in the game, and the computer work is a 100% transferable skill," he said.

"Thanks to you all!" says Frank.



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## Governor's Committee Winners

The SC Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities works with state and local agencies and mayors' committees to bring greater public awareness to the many talents and qualifications of workers with disabilities and their positive impact on the workforce and our state's economy.

Each year one small, medium and large SC business is recognized for their exemplary practices in hiring and providing leadership in utilizing the abilities that people with disabilities have to offer.

Each of these businesses are partners with SCVRD, proven leaders in their communities and committed to hiring and promoting people with disabilities. And through valuable partnerships with businesses such as these our clients achieve success.



Zaxby's of John White Blvd in Spartanburg received the 2012 Small Employer of the Year Award. From left: Laronda Frye, SCVRD; DeCole Gallman, SCVRD and Spartanburg Mayor's Committee; Eric Alverson, Zaxby's employee, former VR client; Stewart Coates, franchise owner; his wife, Lori Coates; Timothy Geter, SCVRD.



North American Rescue, LLC (NAR) of Greenville received the 2012 Medium Employer of the Year Award. From left: Mark Wade, SCVRD; James Carino, VP of Operations at NAR; Peter Foley, SCVRD.



Action Staffing of Anderson received the 2012 Large Employer of the Year Award. From left: Jim Ward, President of American Services; Debby Cabel, Anderson Action Staffing Office Manager; Laurel Stephens, Action Staffing District Manager; Lisa Gillespie, SCVRD and Anderson Mayor's Committee.

## Around the state

### DDS shows its PRIDE



Disability Determination Services (DDS) held its annual PRIDE banquet on March 29. DDS staff from around the state were recognized for their outstanding achievements over the past year.

*Support Person of the Year*

*Thomas M. Leahy Creative*

Rogeria Settles

*Examiner of the Year*

Jaya Ratnam

*Medical Consultant of the Year*

Dr Elva Stinson

*Case Processing Supervisor of the Year*

Desiree Myers

*Staff Supervisor of the Year*

Christopher Porter

*Rookie Examiner of the Year*

Courtney Turner

*Staff Person of the Year*

Allison Toy

*Office of State Claims Excellence Award*

The Office Staff of OSC

*Robert R. Hinrichs Humanitarian Award (Carl*

*Fullbright Exemplary Service)*

Cassie Keeton

*Mary Simmons Special Acts of Service*

*Award*

Marvis Brown, Allison Tilton, Bryan Brown,

Gary McClure

*Achievement Award*

The Columbia Regional

Office TOSS Staff

Charity Boozer

Pamela Catoe

Jarva Crawford

Cory Davis

Jana Gunter

Kathy Humphrey

Georgianna Jackson

Mildred Leevy

Sharon Marks

Melissa Rivera

Maria Shull

Kathy Smith

Terrance Smith

Connie Thompson

Anita Tyndale

Brandi Waters

## Employee recognition celebrations

**Conway** and **Georgetown** participated in an ice-cream and cupcake break sponsored by supervisors and shared staff accomplishments.

**Charleston** celebrated with a pot luck breakfast and door prizes were given throughout the day and included water bottles, snacks, inflatable beach balls, pool floats.

**Berkeley-Dorchester** had a pizza party and recognized staff for their contributions; clients enjoyed being part of the event as well.

**Beaufort** celebrated all week long:

- Monday, staff received Employee Recognition Week buttons (made by area supervisor Gregg Gilbert and others)
- Tuesday, blue day: all staff wore blue
- Wednesday, Wacky Tie Wednesday with gift bags
- Thursday, holiday
- Friday, pot luck lunch

**Lexington-Richland** celebrated with a pot luck lunch and awards which included peer nominations for "best productivity", "most improved", and numerous ones such as "worst handwriting" and "funniest sneeze."

**Laurens** staff enjoyed pizza from Tony's Pizza.

**Newberry** staff started the day with Chick-Fil-A breakfast biscuits.

The **Bryant Center** held a pizza luncheon, recognized employees for their commitment to public service and had games and prizes based on True Colors Activities.

**Hartsville** had Krispy Kreme Doughnuts.

**Marlboro** celebrated with sub sandwiches from Subway.

**Camden** staff enjoyed an ice cream party and shared kudos written by their peers.

**Rock Hill** celebrated with lunch provided by staff followed by fun and games.

Food and other items for all celebrations were provided by supervisors, and in some cases, other members of the staff.

## Mother of the Year

Miriam Gulledge (right), mother of SCVRD Commissioner Barbara Hollis, was presented the SC Mother of the Year for 2012 plaque by Governor Nikki Haley on April 26.




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## Events

**Lexington** – Call 803-896-6333 for more information

- 7-19-2012 **MORE: Midlands Occupational Research Expo** at the Lexington office will give students the opportunity to develop positive attitudes, make informed career choices, form aspirations, increase motivation, consider higher education, and learn employability skills.
- 7-25-2012 **Job fair** at the Lexington Office for clients that are in planned status.

**Oconee-Pickens** – Call 864-885-0210 for more information

- 7-31-2012 Wal-Mart in Central, SC is hosting a **job fair** from 9 am to 3 pm. O/P job coach plans to meet clients at the location and offer help on how to complete the applications, etc.

**Rock Hill** – Call 803-327-7106 for more information

- 10-4-2012 **Information Career Fair**. Details TBA.

**Richland Area** – Call 803-896-6333 for more information

- Every Tuesday starting 6-19-2012, **Job skills classes** for ex-offenders. In partnership with Richland Probation Parole and Pardon.

**The Bryant Center** – Call 864-249-8030 for more information

- Second Tuesday of each month: **Brain Injury Support Group** meets at 6:30 pm.
- Third Tuesday of each month: **Autism Support Group** meets at 6:30 pm.
- July 12-13, 2012 **Brain Injury Conference** in Columbia. Janice Miller, Tanya Lambert and Jennie Thomas will present information about Comprehensive Services, Brain Injury programs, Nutrition and Brain Gym Exercises and Support Groups.

**Enabling eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment**

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