



VR clients shine at Tyson



"You probably enjoy several of our products every week without realizing they come from Tyson," says Tiffaney Conrad, Human Resource Manager at Tyson Foods.

Tyson is the largest supplier of pepperoni and pizza toppings to the food service industry. "Our prepared foods products are found at retail grocers, restaurants and on-site food service establishments such as schools, universities, corporate cafeterias, hotel chains, and healthcare and military facilities," she adds.



*Tiffaney Conrad,
HR Manager at
Tyson Foods.*

Tyson is also a valued SCVRD partner, and since 2009 has hired more than 20 clients to be part of the Tyson family.

Louis Avant was one of the first.

"When Louis first entered the training center he was polite, with a good sense of humor," recalls Ike McAlhany, Richland Work Training Center Manager. "However, he needed self confidence."

Louis received preparation for employment through Job Readiness Training with SCVRD beginning in 2007.

At first he was assigned basic tasks, but was soon given responsibilities requiring independent thought and decision making, which allowed him to gain that self confidence. After a few months, Louis "was much more comfortable and felt a sense of accomplishment in completing his assignments," explains Ike. "We saw a total turnaround in Louis while he was in the training center. We felt confident he would be successful."

Louis has been so successful that a year after his hiring he was promoted to the skilled position of Grinder Operator.

Conrad commends Louis, along with former VR clients Christian Thompson and Arthur Dickey: "These employees are upbeat and positive. They are here every day, whether their start time is 5 a.m. or their shift doesn't end until 2 a.m."



Christian Thompson operates an oven at Tyson Foods.

"The Training Center at Vocational Rehabilitation got me back on track and kept me going after my mom passed away," shares Christian.

Not only does he like his new job, but he's excited about getting physically fit. "I've lost 30 pounds since I have been here," Christian says, grinning broadly.

William Turner, another employee referred by Vocational Rehabilitation, rode his bike to work every day. "He is excited," says Conrad, "because he recently purchased a scooter."

"Sometimes those you think will be successful, aren't, and those you think will struggle, succeed," she adds. "Goes to show that you should never judge a book by its cover."



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Conrad (right) signs with former VR client Arthur Dickey (left) as Christian Thompson looks on.

"SCVRD clients have impacted our plant," explains Conrad, "by helping to reduce turnover, working safely and producing quality products with their hard work, dedication and willingness to learn. We look forward to a continued partnership with South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation."

Tyson Foods, Inc. (NYSE: TSN), founded in 1935 with headquarters in Springdale, Arkansas, is one of the world's largest processors and marketers of chicken, beef and pork, as well as prepared foods. The company provides products and services to customers throughout the United States and more than 90 countries. Tyson employs 115,000 Team Members at more than 400 facilities and offices in the U.S. and around the world.

The Columbia, SC facility is part of the Prepared Foods division, producing beef and pork pizza toppings and taco filling for local food chains.

Customized service boosts Freightliner's efficiency



"You have to be able to think outside the box and not be afraid to do so," says Steve Cain, Materials and Logistics Manager at Freightliner Custom Chassis in Gaffney.

Thinking out of the box brought Freightliner and SCVRD together. Freightliner builds custom chassis for large recreational vehicles and school buses. Because each chassis is customized, there may be 90-100 different chassis with differing combinations of parts needing to be pulled together each day.

"Our appeal to Freightliner is that instead of having their salaried and hourly employees run all over their plant to try to find parts for a particular chassis, we can do that much more cost-effectively," explains DeCole Gallman, SCVRD Spartanburg Area Supervisor.

The Gaffney Work Training Center warehouses chassis parts and creates the assembly kits used in Freightliner's production line. For each individual chassis order that comes in, VR clients gather, label, kit and rack the appropriate components including radiator shrouds and fans; air conditioner hoses and hydraulic hoses; positive and negative battery cables; air dryers; and engine baffles. They also do engine trim, such as starters and alternators, and repackaging.



SCVRD trucks make 8-10 trips back and forth to Freightliner's plant each day to keep up with demand, delivering completed orders and bringing back new materials to warehouse.



warehouse.

A VR client racks automotive parts at the Gaffney Work Training Center.

In the process, VR clients gain shipping and receiving, warehousing, forklift, and assembly experience they can utilize when entering the job market.

Over the past six years, the Gaffney center has grown from warehousing and managing 7,000 square feet of parts and components for Freightliner to more than 32,000 square feet, and continues to expand. The partnership has helped Freightliner lower their costs, improve quality, increase throughput and utilize their resources more efficiently.

"We don't come in and tell you how to do things," states Gallman. "We find out what your needs are and provide a customized solution."

The result, says Cain, is that Freightliner "gets exactly the services we need."

Around the state



October is National Disability Employment Awareness (NDEA) Month

The theme for this year's NDEA Month is **A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?**

People with disabilities are vastly underutilized in our nation's workforce, even though employers often say they have a difficult time

workforce, even though employers often say they have a difficult time finding qualified workers. People with disabilities have many talents and abilities to offer, and employers throughout our state are finding well-prepared, qualified workers through SCVRD.

We are celebrating NDEA Month with open houses, participation in Disability Mentoring Day and other activities throughout October. Find out more in Events.

Get [more information about NDEA Month 2012](#).

Wounded Warrior Claims Assistance

The Ft. Jackson Soldier Family Assistance Center (SFAC) collaborated with the Social Security Administration (SSA) and Disability Determination Services (DDS) in October 2008 to develop a procedure to expedite processing disability applications for soldiers assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit. The SFAC holds monthly briefings for the soldiers, conducted by SSA and DDS representatives, providing an in depth overview of the Wounded Warrior disability process, disability eligibility and application processing information.

The partnership between SSA, DDS and the Ft Jackson SFAC has been recognized by the US Army as a "best practice" for Army Community Service. In the last four years, hundreds of Wounded Warrior disability applications have been processed. DDS is proud to be able to provide assistance to these Wounded Warriors.

Did you know...

...that the Information Technology Training Center (ITTC) on the West Columbia campus was born through a partnership with IBM Corporation?

In the early 1980s IBM launched an Initiative to train people with disabilities for IT jobs. The ITTC began in 1984 with SCVRD and a group of prominent South Carolina business advisors developing the curriculum. There was one instructor and eleven students, all of whom were trained in mainframe programming.



ITTC graduates proudly display their Certificates of Achievement.

More than 400 VR clients with physical disabilities have since completed the program and landed excellent entry-level positions in the technology field. The program has expanded to include courses in Business Applications; Computer-Aided Drafting and Design and Geographic Information Systems; Computer Technology and Programming; and Information Systems Support and Networking.

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) remains a driving force, working closely with SCVRD staff to keep the curricula current, selecting candidates and provide mentoring.

Events

Columbia Disability Determination Services

– For more information, call 803-896-0449 or 803-896-4521

- October 16, 12pm-2pm Annual DDS Council **Soup Cook-off!**
Competitors are dusting off favorite family recipes and preparing to fight for the coveted title of **Soup Cook-off Champion**.

Greenville Disability Determination Services

– For more information, call 864 282-4001

- October 17 **Staff luncheon (BBQ)**, celebrating accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2012 and recognizing the first anniversary of **Greenville DDS Day** (established as October 7, following their clearing of 1,000 cases in the first week of this fiscal year).

Richland

– For more information, call 866-206-5280

- Starting September 14 **Work Ready Workshop Series**. Workshops meet once a week for 4 to 6 weeks.
- October 18, 11am-2pm **Disability Mentoring Day/Open House**.

Charleston

– For more information, call 843-740-1600

- October 16, 9am-11am **Open House**.

Gaffney

– For more information, call 866-451-1481

- October 16, 12pm-1pm **Open House**.

Berkeley Dorchester

– For more information, call 866-297-6808

- October 17, 9am-10am **Open House**.

Orangeburg

– For more information, call 803-534-4939

- October 17, 11am-2pm **Open House**.

Spartanburg

– For more information, call 866-451-1480

- October 18, 12pm-1pm **Open House**.

Bryant Center

– For more information, call 888-322-9391

For more information, call 803-522-2521

- October 23, 12pm-1:20pm **Open House.**

Beaufort

– For more information, call 843-522-1010

- October 29, 12pm-1:30pm **Open House.**

Oconee-Pickens

– Call 866-313-0082 for more information

- October 1, 6:30 pm, Golden Corner Commerce Park. Second annual **Steak in Oconee Dinner** celebrating achievements for men and women who produce agricultural products in the county. Speakers include Richard Blackwell, Director of Oconee County Economic Development and Jack Shuler, President of Palmetto Agribusiness Council.
- October 17 **Disability Mentoring Day/Open House.** Job shadowing for students in the morning and brunch for school district staff, business leaders, other invited guests, and legislators.

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

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