



Partnership

October—2008

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A Message from Chris Brandt, CEO

Almost 22 million Americans of working age have a disability, representing one-eighth of all working-age Americans. They are only half as likely as Americans without disabilities to be employed (38 percent compared with 78 percent), with an especially low employment rate among those who have more severe disabilities (17 percent among those who have difficulty with self-care and those who have difficulty going outside the home alone) (Cornell RRTC 2006). That's a lot of productivity being ignored and wasted.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The US Department of Labor has announced that "America's People, America's Talent... America's Strength!" is the official 2008 theme for NDEAM. We have been celebrating NDEAM since 1945.

If you are born with a disability you are likely to experience poverty throughout most of your life, unless you are one of the lucky few who get a job. Most Americans who work earn more than a paycheck. They earn respect, acceptance, friendship, the opportunity to grow and thrive, a place to express their gifts. When we deny people with disabilities the opportunity to work because of our own fears and

misconceptions, we rob them of many of the advantages Americans take for granted.

Having a disability that impacts how you participate in the activities of daily living does not mean that your thoughts, feelings, emotions and dreams are disabled. It does not mean that you relinquish your right to opportunity and to gainful employment. People with disabilities have talents and the desire to contribute.

"It is important to note that having people with disabilities in the workplace is valuable to the individual and to businesses," said Neil Romano, assistant secretary for the Labor Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy. "People with disabilities are the next great wave of diversity, and diversity fosters innovation to drive our economy and our nation into the future."

What is preventing more people with disabilities from working? Not enough of us believe that they can. Not enough of us believe that they should. It is not a shortage of work or of talent. A few months ago, many companies were scrambling to find employees. Even in tighter times, business owners talk about the dearth of good job candidates. AtWork! helps people with disabilities find jobs and provides training



CEO Chris Brandt

and support so that people with disabilities can be successful in the workplace. We are part of a nation-wide movement to "change the face of employment".

We see lives transformed; we see businesses thrive when people with disabilities are integrated into the workforce. Our nation faces a workforce shortage as baby boomers retire and our birth rate continues to decline. Rather than sending jobs overseas, restricting the growth of business, or importing workers...be aware of this largely untapped workforce eagerly awaiting opportunity. All it takes is a greater awareness of the capabilities and talents of all citizens and the will to do something about it.

AtWork! Board Elects New Leadership

The AtWork! Board of Directors installed **Bob Strayhan** as its new Chair effective October 1st, 2008. Joining Strayhan on the Executive Committee are **Gary Bodenstab** of Johnson Barrow as Vice-Chair, **John Hemion** of Columbia Bank as Secretary/Treasurer and **Sherri Bealkowski** of Callidus Consulting as Immediate Past Chair.

Strayhan is the owner and President of Athena Development, LLC, a real estate development and consulting company. He has a significant background in leadership development of large organizations as well as general management. Strayhan retired from the Xerox Corporation in 2001 where he was the Vice President of Client Operations for Xerox Business Services, supporting over 400 clients on the West Coast with over 1000 employees. Previous to this role he was the VP General Manager for all of Xerox in the Northwest. Strayhan has

a rich background in the field of Total Quality Management, having led the Portland, Oregon office of Xerox to the U.S. Quality award in 1989. He served as Interim CEO prior to Chris Brandt's appointment. In addition to his work with AtWork! he is the past chair for the March of Dimes, Greater Puget Sound chapter and has held board memberships with Junior Achievement and the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. Strayhan holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics from California State University at Long Beach as well as graduate work with Columbia University.

Board of Directors Members At Large include **William Anspach**, of Seattle Watch Company **Ann Chamberlin** of Pacific Real Estate Partners, **Mike Northcott** of Genie Industries, **Russ Keithly**

of Langly Properties, **Cas Sherwood**, **Traci Shipley** of The Boeing Company, **Paul Egly** of Lindley Properties, **Sheridan Jones** of Microsoft, **Greg Russell** of Peterson Russell Kelly PLLC and **Ellie Gates** of Microsoft.

The AtWork! Board meets nine times per year. In addition each member serves on one or more committees including Executive, Finance, Audit, Fundraising, Business Development, Marketing, Volunteer Programs, Board Enrichment, and Facilities.

Executive Committee:

Strayhan
Bodenstab
Hemion
Bealkowski



Gifts That Give Back

A primary estate-planning objective for most of us is to ensure the financial security of our loved ones. Rightly, we do not feel quite comfortable addressing other goals until we are satisfied that their standards of living will not be impaired.

Fortunately, although this objective sometimes seems to conflict with significant charitable objectives, there are a number of ways you can protect your loved ones' security and plan to support those charitable organizations that are important to you.

There are many methods available to make charitable gifts during your lifetime or through your will. Instruments like Charitable Remainder Unitrusts and Annuity Trusts, Bequests through a Will and Charitable Lead Trusts give donors the ability to provide for loved ones and at the same time benefit the charity they wish to support.

AtWork! is always willing to work with you and your financial advisor. Please call Jane Kuechle, Chief Development Officer at (425) 274-4030.

Recycle Center Begins Aluminum Buy Back Program

AtWork! will pay you to recycle your aluminum cans with us! Minimum amount accepted is 20 pounds, and we pay 17¢ cents per pound for 20-49 pounds, 19¢ per pound for 50-99 pounds, and 21¢ per pound for over 100 pounds. Our recycling center can take your aluminum for payment from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. We can take your donated cans anytime at our 24 hour recycle center.



What A Wonderful Whirl

Issaquah's Salmon Days Grande Parade was a wet one this year. The AtWork! team marched in the parade with Mr. Green (Ted Stamper) in the lead, publicizing our Recycle Center on 7th Avenue and helping to promote the theme of recycling. The AtWork! team was small but mighty and received lots of cheers and thumbs up from the crowd as they marched along the route.

Salmon Days is Issaquah's yearly celebration of the return of salmon to Issaquah Creek and the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery each October. On Monday morning a group of seven



clients and two staff were a part of the city's volunteer force of trash busters, patrolling the festival grounds and cleaning up all visible trash. The group worked hard for about three hours and filled two garbage bags with the smallest debris, endeavoring to leave the downtown

part of Issaquah cleaner than it was before the festival.

Huge thanks goes to Ted Stamper, Recycling Supervisor, who coordinated the whole effort. It was a great day for visibility and inclusion.

Chelsea Howe Memorial

The AtWork! family was very saddened by the passing of Chelsea Howe who died suddenly on August 8th of this year the result of a tragic accident. She was an Employment Consultant and had been with AtWork! for two years, first serving as our receptionist in Bellevue before beginning her work to help people with disabilities get jobs.

Chelsea will always be with us in the transformed lives of the people with disabilities she helped and in the compassion and dynamic spirit she brought to her team and AtWork!. She saw potential in all people. It's one of the reasons you always felt good when you were with her. She never stopped working hard and she never stopped believing. Through all the bumps in the

pathways and all of the remarkable successes, Chelsea's cheerful spirit and creativity were apparent. She was loyal to her clients and never gave up. Her clients want you to know that Chelsea is AWESOME. They say: "She found us the perfect jobs."

Chelsea's family requested that memorial gifts be given to AtWork! Many have honored her memory and our Chelsea Howe Memorial Fund is \$8,790 at this writing. These memorial gifts will be used to equip the Client Resource Room at our newly remodeled Bellevue facility. We are naming the room "Chelsea's Office" and will hang a plaque on the wall dedicating the room to her memory. There will be an open house and dedication in January and we hope everyone will join us for a celebration of Chelsea's work on behalf of people with disabilities.



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**This is why I do
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is why I like my
job.**

Finding her own place.

I've been working with Susan (not her real name) for 18 months. She is a woman with a very challenging life history that includes 45 years in an institution.

We started by volunteering twice a week for 2 hour shifts at a thrift store near her home. She collected hangers from the racks and organized different sections of the store. She attempted a variety of different tasks all of which required constant one on one, hand over hand, verbal and visual prompts. She exhibited an array of negative behaviors that were constant, greatly interfered with her work and prevented her from gaining any respect or gratitude from the manager or any of the staff. Susan was unable to work longer than 3 minutes without, crying, screaming, or clapping.

After four months it was clear that this was not the right environment for Susan. The General Manager said she would never hire her because her behavior scared the customers and believed that she would never be able to complete any task fast enough.

After talking with Susan and realizing that her contribution was not appreciated we decided to look for work experience elsewhere. She did some recovery, folding and re-hanging at a variety store. She worked on beautification and straightening of trim and fabric rolls at a fabric store. All of the negative behavior was present in

these environments as well. Even in these more positive settings the longest Susan would work without a behavioral upset was ten minutes.

Her care giver told me that she used to take Susan to get her nails done at a small salon and she would remain still and quiet for the whole manicure. I just had to see this for myself.

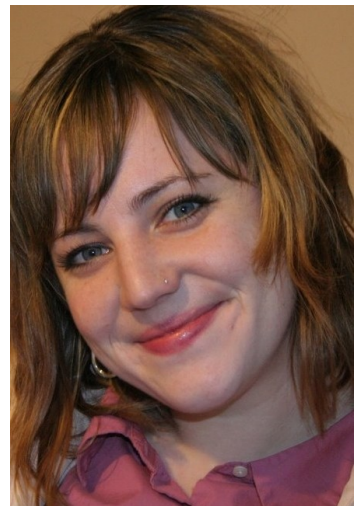
I took her and bought her a manicure. She smiled and laughed when she saw the owner who was excited to see her. The whole time her nails were being painted Susan stayed still without displaying any negative behaviors. We left and went on to her job trial. Once again she did very little work and agitated herself and those around her. The following week I took her back to the salon for another manicure. While the owner was painting Susan's nails I asked if there were any tasks that she might help with around the salon. After Susan's nails were dry, the owner worked with her, training her to fold towels. I was amazed. Susan worked for 35 minutes without stopping, smiling and laughing the whole time. I stood back and watched the interaction of this perfect natural support scene with awe.

Since that day Susan has been able to work without stopping or displaying any negative behavior for up to 2 hours. The other day the owner gave her \$5. Susan was so proud, signing that it was her money. When asked what she wanted to spend it on she

signed candy, so we went to the store and she picked out all the candy she wanted and managed the money exchange with some encouragement. She put her receipt and money into her pocket. It was clear in that moment that she understood the reason for money. When she got home she showed her care givers her change and receipt and thought she had to give it to them. We explained that it was her money, that she had earned it and that she could keep it in her room.

This is why I do this work and this is why I like my job. Stories like Susan's show the world that people with disabilities are capable of being members of our community just like everyone else if given a chance to find their own place.

Philippa Casgrave is a Lead Employment Consultant with AtWork!



Legislators to consider important disabilities issues in January

AtWork! and many other organizations around the state will be active in Olympia this next legislative session. Working with Partnership 2020 (P2020) and Rehabilitation Enterprises of Washington (REW), two statewide associations to which AtWork! belongs, advocates will be asking our Representatives and Senators to address several areas.

- Move all persons with disabilities who are on state only funding to the federal waiver. As a result the State will be able to capture an additional \$4 million in federal funds.
- Preserve funding for clients who only have state funding because they are not on the federal waiver. In this time of belt tightening it is critical that this funding source is not threatened.

- Provide funding for employment services for 750 of the 1412 students with disabilities who will graduate in July of 2009. Although this does not secure funding for everyone, it is an expansion of existing funding.
- Provide funding for employment services for 450 of the adults who are on waiting lists throughout the state. It is estimated there are 4000 on that waiting list in King County alone. Again, although this does not secure funding for everyone, it is a good step forward.
- Request a 5% increase in the rate paid to vendors, organizations like AtWork!, who provide employment services throughout the state. This request will be for each year of the biennium.



As these issues move through the legislative process beginning in January, you can help by contacting those that represent you and make sure your views are known.

If you would like to receive periodic updates about progress via email, send us your email address at info@atworkwa.org. Put "Advocacy" in the subject line. We'll be sure you receive the very latest information. Together we can make a difference.

Be an Advocate for people with disabilities. Stay informed and receive updates from AtWork! as issues are considered in Olympia.

Bellevue remodel on track to be completed before year end.

AtWork! clients, volunteers and staff are excited to move out of their temporary quarters in downtown Bellevue and back into the newly remodeled Bel-Red Road building. Work is nearing completion on the six month project and moving day is expected by year end.

For the first time since AtWork! was created in 1998, all administrative



Forms are laid for the new entry and sidewalks. A new two story building next to Bel-Red Rd. is in the back ground.

staff will be in one location. The change will create more opportunities to streamline processes and coordinate the work of the organization. Employment consultants will all have one location and the new space will also house a Client Resource Room and meeting rooms. AtWork! will occupy approximately half the building and lease the other half, providing income to the organization.



Walls are up and doorways to offices are complete. Next comes the ceiling, paint and carpet installation.



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Bits & Pieces

Issaquah Funds Bathroom Remodel

AtWork! is grateful to the City of Issaquah for funding the remodel of our client bathrooms in the Issaquah production facility and recycle center. They now sport splash guards on the walls that extend up 4 ft., are newly painted and have all new fixtures and lighting. Clients and staff alike appreciate the bright, clean and fresh facilities.

May we have your email address?

We here at AtWork! are becoming more savvy about the value of communications using email. We have begun sending out notices of upcoming events and our newsletters electronically to email and are anxious

to continue to build our database with your email addresses. Please contact the office via email (info@atworkwa.org) with your email addresses or by telephone (425.274.4000). Addresses will not be shared.

ADA Amendments Act Signed Into Law

US President George W. Bush, with his father, ex-President Bush in attendance, signed the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 into law. In the 18 years since the passage of the ADA, decisions made by the Supreme Court so narrowed the definition of disability as to effectively disallow large numbers of people with a variety of disabilities from civil rights protections in the

workplace.

IRA Rollover Provision

When President Bush signed the \$700 billion economic bailout bill it included a two-year extension of the IRA Rollover provision, which exempts from taxable income any funds transferred (rolled over) from an IRA to a charitable organization. The donor must be 70½ or older, the cap is \$100K annually and the contribution must be a direct gift to a charity.

Seattle Foundation Supports AtWork!

We were excited to learn this month that the SF Board of Trustees authorized a grant of \$20K to AtWork! to support general operating expenses.