

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

March 20, 2015

The mission of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes.

OhioHealth MedCentral Hospitals Champion of Opportunity



From left to right: OhioHealth MedCentral Hospitals Director of Linen and Environmental Services Tom Fesler, OhioHealth MedCentral Hospitals President Jean Halpin, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) Executive Director Kevin Miller, and OhioHealth MedCentral Hospitals Director of Food and Nutrition Services Greg Brandes.

**“This is the start of
a journey.”**

– OhioHealth MedCentral President
Jean Halpin

On Wednesday, we visited Mansfield to present the Champion of Opportunity Award to OhioHealth MedCentral Hospitals. It was a great opportunity to speak with a number of the individuals who have been hired by the hospital as part of the Project SEARCH program.

Talking to hospital staff, it was clear how much they enjoy working with the Project SEARCH students, and how they look to hire those same students because of their work ethic, job skills, and positive attitude. Seeing the smiles on the faces of the students, and hearing employees talking about how much they enjoy working at the hospital, also brought home the importance of employment and independence. At times, many take for granted the means of having a job or obtaining independence, but to employees with disabilities this is a tremendous accomplishment.

As I noted at the award presentation, inclusion and opportunity is part of the culture at OhioHealth MedCentral. Their Project SEARCH Program is currently in its ninth year and has produced some remarkable results:

- 99 students have participated in the program
- 63 participants have graduated from the program
- 52 of the 63 (83%) have secured employment
- 33 of the 52 have been hired by OhioHealth MedCentral

OhioHealth has three Project SEARCH sites and is adding a fourth in the Fall. They are a member of the Ohio Business Leadership Network (OHBLN) and have been a great partner for many years.

Congratulations to OhioHealth MedCentral for this well-deserved recognition and thanks again for all you do. You are a true business leader and serve as a great example of the benefits of recruiting, hiring, and retaining individuals with disabilities.

Congratulations to Dylan Withrow on his recent promotion!



From left to right: OOD Executive Director Kevin L. Miller, Project SEARCH Graduate and recently promoted OhioHealth MedCentral Supervisor Dylan Withrow, and OhioHealth MedCentral President Jean Halpin.

From Graduate to Supervisor

On Wednesday, I met Dylan Withrow, a project SEARCH graduate and Washer Operator/Delivery Associate at the hospital who has also worked in both the food and nutrition and environmental services departments. Dylan received a surprise at the award presentation when OhioHealth MedCentral President Jean Halpin announced that he was being promoted to a supervisor role in environmental services! President Halpin praised Dylan's hard work and professionalism and noted that he had recently begun attending North Central State College.

What a great example of the benefits of a program like Project SEARCH, but also of how an employment opportunity can lead to bigger and better things. Dylan simply needed an opportunity to show what he could accomplish and when he was given the opportunity, he made the most of it. This process plays out in companies across Ohio as individuals with disabilities get the chance to showcase their talents and abilities. Companies are finding out just how valuable these individuals are and how beneficial they can be to their workforce.

Congratulations again to Dylan on his promotion! We wish him continued success in his career.

"This is a part of their culture. They didn't do this for an award, they did it because they believe in it."

– Executive Director Kevin Miller



OOD Northwest Area Manager Curt Morman, OOD Rehabilitation Program Specialist-Contracts Michelle Caswell, Richland Newhope Contract Supervisor Larry McCorkle.

LeanOhio Honors OOD Green Belt Recipients

On Thursday, several OOD employees reported out on their Lean projects, received their official Green Belts, and were recognized for their leadership and project accomplishments by LeanOhio. The OOD staff that participated on these Lean work teams played a key role in making this recognition possible.



From left to right: OOD DDD Area Manager Michelle Cunningham, OOD DDD Supervisor Dara Turner, Ohio Lottery Commission Senior Strategic Planner Mary Kotynski, OOD DDD Area Manager Heather Graham, and OOD HR Manager Lori Carter.

Members of the Disability Determination Hearings team who received their Green Belt:

- Heather Graham, DDD Area Manager
- Lori Carter, HR Manager
- Michelle Cunningham, DDD Supervisor
- Dara Turner, DDD Supervisor

Their project focused on improving the hearing unit processes, reducing time, and increasing productivity of completed hearings and the percentage of hearings kept. Cost savings were seen with a decrease in cost per case and diminished travel. Improvements identified include: Reduction of steps from 71 to 13 (82% reduction); Decision points reduced from 8 to 5 (38% reduction); and Reductions of handoffs from 11 to 3 (73% reduction).

Members of the VR Case Service Invoice team who received their Green Belt:

- Maria Seaman, Budget Manager
- Darin McCoy, VR Assistant Deputy Director
- Alissa Otani-Cole, VR Liaison Counselor
- Donna Rhoads, Account Examiner
- Vicki Smith, BE Supervisor



From left to right: Account Examiner Donna Rhoads, BE Supervisor Vicki Smith, Budget Manager Maria Seaman, VR Liaison Counselor Alissa Otani-Cole, and VR Assistant Deputy Director Darin McCoy.

This project sought to create a consistent, statewide process for processing, reviewing, and paying case service invoices. This helps providers (our customers) by having a centralized location to send information. In addition, a faster turnaround time will ensure better service provision to consumers, cleaner case service budgets, and better relationships with service providers. Improvements identified include: Reduction of steps from 40 to 19 (48% reduction) and Handoffs, loopbacks, approvals decreased with the creation of centralized fax queues.

Congratulations to all the team members for this recognition and thank you to all the staff involved for your hard work and dedication!

State of the State Video

We had a great time visiting Wilmington at the end of February as part of the events surrounding Governor John Kasich’s State of the State Address. We created a short video recapping the visit. We learned a lot and met some great people. You can watch the video at the following link: <https://vimeo.com/ood/sots2015>.

Individuals in Job Ready Status by County



Total Statewide:
3,653

* Job Ready Status Individuals have received Vocational Rehabilitation services and are ready and seeking employment.

For more information or questions on stories in this publication, please call the Office of Communications at 614.438.1474.

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