



THE FOCUS

October 2018 Vol. 7 No. 10

Hot Topic

State Review of Sheltered Workshops Reaffirms What Advocates Have Known All Along...

Vocational Rehabilitation's Ann Balzell knew the writing was on the wall for segregated workshops when she explained the basis for Subminimum Wage Counseling and WIOA saying, "...people would become interested in competitive, integrated employment over time, and it seems to be true."

Looking at the numbers from last year's efforts to provide career counseling, only about 60% of people earning subminimum wage reported wanting a community job. Earlier this spring, the nearly 800 Oregonians, interviewed by my colleagues and me, who were still making less than minimum wage, easily defied this margin.

As I interviewed my first 20 people, I realized something had changed; only one person wanted to remain at their current worksite. Over the next several weeks of interviews, the numbers continued showing a dramatic increase in affinity for competitive work. For every 100 people we interviewed, only a few people declined these opportunities, with many of those individuals planning to retire.

Why did we see such a dramatic change? In some cases, providers were already phasing out sheltered work while simultaneously developing or growing supported employment services. Meanwhile, other providers were preparing to close altogether. Either way, many workers seemed to know that times were a-changing and had already spent time thinking about [Continued on page 2](#)

About Oregon APSE

Our mission is to promote equitable, integrated employment of people with disabilities that recognizes their contributions as community members.

We represent the Oregon chapter of the national Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst. [APSE](#) is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

As of October 2018, we have 104 members!

[Join Oregon APSE](#)

We look forward to joining with like-minded Oregonians!

To become a member, click on the "Join" link or email:



oregonapse@gmail.com

Check out our website
www.oregonapse.org

Hot Topic continued...

their futures.

Close scrutiny also revealed that with increased exposure to new businesses through community-based activities, individuals began to envision themselves as future employees at these companies. One young man even showed me a job application he had started filling out from an outing that day! Others shared beaming stories of peers already employed in the community, while pictures documenting such stories seemed to inspire similar interest.

Traveling all over the state to interview almost 800 people was exhausting, but every day it reminded me why I do this work. Certainly, we heard from individuals with support teams, parents, and guardians who discouraged them from joining the workforce; they were afraid of making changes and taking risks.

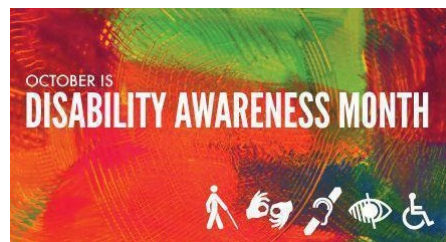
However, the people I met were always enthusiastic, optimistic, and capable. They had ideas of where to put their talents, they were open to new experiences, and they knew that a fair wage was possible. From the moment each person said, “Yes, I want a job.” I had no doubt they could make a meaningful impact in their community. They just needed someone to get the process started.

And happily, there is more demand for this process now than ever before. It’s a sign that our efforts to transform employment services are in line with the people we support. Our core belief that

everyone can work, and that there is a job for everyone, means we provide quality services, education, and advocacy as we continue breaking barriers and building bridges.

Written by: Nicholas Von Pless, President of Oregon APSE, Employment First Consultant, Living Opportunities

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October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), and there are many events around the state and nation occurring throughout October.

Stories inside The FOCUS

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A Cool Life

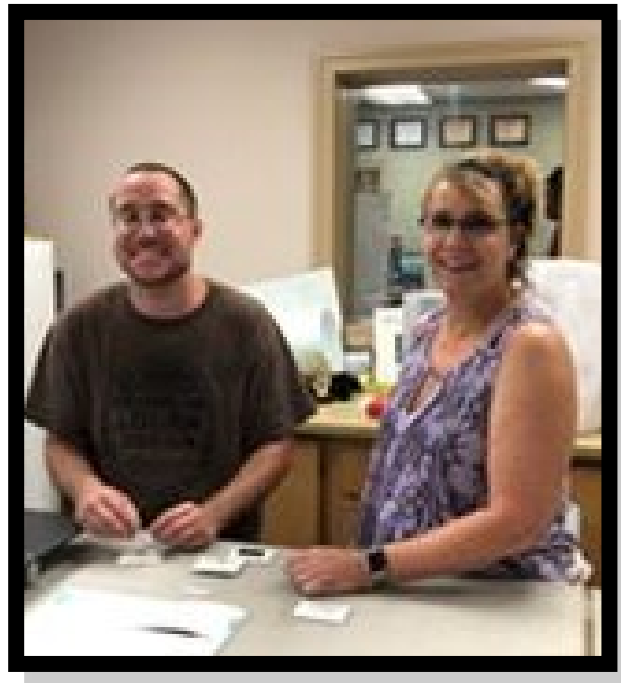
~The **Cool Life** column showcases stories that demonstrate individuals with disabilities successfully employed by community businesses. Have a story? Send an email to: oregonapse@gmail.com

LIVE, WORK, THRIVE! The ability to live your life the way you desire, to work at a place of employment that is of your own choosing, and to not just simply exist, but to THRIVE in all aspects of life is something we all strive for. What does it really mean to THRIVE in your employment? It is far more than a paycheck; it means doing a job you like, for an employer you love, and having work that brings personal fulfillment. Thriving in employment includes opportunities for growth, personal development and the opportunity to be promoted into new roles. This is something we all aspire to do on a daily basis...and all means everyone.

Kyle is a motivated and hardworking young man. He worked for many years within the sheltered workshop and on small work crews with Aspire before he decided he was ready to pursue getting jobs “in the community.” He now has two jobs, one at Brookdale Retirement Community, and a second at Logan Design, a local sign shop. Kyle has been doing these jobs for a while and is good at what he does. He is one of those “steady workers” that can be relied upon and in rehabilitation lingo has definitely reached “stabilization.”

It was easy to approach a state of complacency and consider this a successful “placement.” Kyle’s job at

Logan Design was janitorial work and additional tasks as requested by the owner, such as weeding and curb appeal of the outside of the building. Lisa, the owner, saw more. She saw Kyle’s interest in the sign shop, and also knew she really could use his help in production with the right supports. The idea of continuous growth and development made sense to and for Kyle at this [Continued on page 10](#)



**Kyle Eichner at
Logan Design, Grants Pass**

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Oregon APSE Facebook page!](#)**

Pacific NW Employment Forum

Rejuvenating, Inspiring, and Fun!

The 2018 Pacific NW Employment Forum brought together over 280 people in Seaside, Oregon for two packed days of information sharing and networking. Keynotes, breakout sessions, Students for APSE, and the beach were given rave reviews.

Congratulations to the Award winners!

Professional Employment Services Award

⇒ Chris Mortensen

Employment Mentor Award

⇒ Paula Johnson

Employee Advocate Awards

⇒ Anthony Nash (WA) and
⇒ Eric Thompson (OR)

Community Partner Awards

⇒ Thane Doyle (WA) and
⇒ Lizzie Juaniza-Saso (OR)

Employer Awards

⇒ Silver City Brewery and Taproom
⇒ Salishan Resort and
⇒ USHIO America, Inc.

Rainier High School
Students for APSE

Guess... Who is our Mystery Member?

This mystery member is a strong voice for employment and has been instrumental in the transition and closure of two sheltered workshops. As his employer is a leader for Employment First, he recently presented at the 2018 Pacific NW Employment Forum . He is experienced in corporate retail management, including Staples and Fred Meyer. He has always believed in hiring a diverse workforce. He is a father of five, and grandfather of 10. This mystery member is changing the world for his grandchildren and their future families.



Can you guess who?

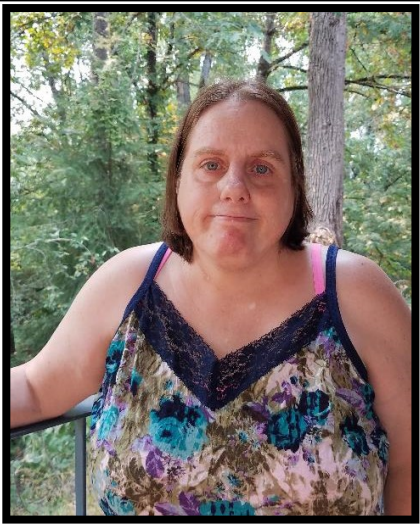
*(Go to page 8 to reveal the
Mystery Member's identity.)*

Check out Oregon APSE's website

www.oregonapse.org



Board Talk



Selena Mitchell

Selena is a member At Large on the Oregon APSE chapter Board of Directors and works at Create a Memory in Salem. *She has been an APSE Board member for one and a half years.*

Thoughts on Working in a Sheltered Workshop and Making Sub-minimum Wages

I attended the 2016 Pacific NW Employment Forum in Olympia where I received the Employee Advocate Award. A few months later, I was interviewed and appointed to the Oregon APSE Board. I had been working at Create a Memory for over a year and wanted to let others know how important my job was. I also wanted to help others to achieve their employment goals. Since that time, I have attended two national APSE conferences and have been an active Board member. When asked to share my thoughts about sub-minimum wages and working in a sheltered workshop, I gladly agreed. Here is my story:

I worked most of my life in sheltered workshops. I did many jobs such as sorting, recycling, packaging, assembly, and janitorial. The last job I had was on a janitorial crew. I worked over 5 hours a day, 5 days a week. I usually only got paid for 2 to 3 hours of the 5-hour work day. I did not get paid for travel between job sites or any down time. While I was at work, I was not able to use the restroom without asking permission or talking with my peers. If I tried to have a friendly conversation with a co-worker while working, staff would yell at us to “stay on task” or [Continued on page 8](#)

Oregon APSE Governing Board

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Michelle Furman, Vice-President
C.J Webb, Secretary
Paula Johnson, Treasurer
Emily Harris, Social Media Coordinator
Tara Asai, At Large
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Debra McLean, At Large
Selena Mitchell, At Large
Dan Peccia, At Large
Ryley Newport, At Large
Toni Smith, At Large

A huge THANK YOU to Annabel Nickles and Roger Hassenpflug for their years of services on the Board.

Get Involved!

To volunteer for sponsored training events, Board sub-committees or to be considered for the Board of Directors, contact oregonapse@gmail.com

Please keep your information [up to date.](#)

Newsletter Editors

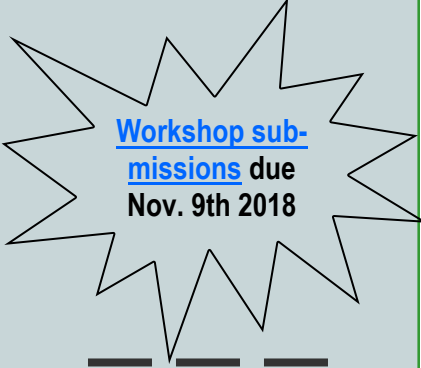
Tara Asai, Paula Johnson, Debra McLean, Selena Mitchell, Nicholas Von Pless and CJ Webb

Upcoming Events

Peerpocalypse

Salem, OR

May 20-23, 2019



Workshop sub-
missions due
Nov. 9th 2018

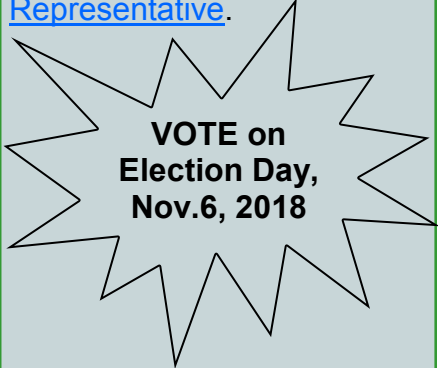
Support A Rich Life with Employment

San Jose, CA

October 23, 2018

California APSE

From Public Policy Chapter
Chair, Ryley Newport,
contact your [Oregon US
Senators](#). and/or [your
Representative](#).



**VOTE on
Election Day,
Nov.6, 2018**

Ideas for FOCUS articles

Please send them to:
oregonapse@gmail.com
with the Subject: FOCUS

Around the State

Community Embraced Student Workers

S.W.E.L.L. - Summer Work-based Experience Learning Lessons – is a program that was developed for the students (with disabilities) of Umatilla High School to have the opportunity to work and earn money. These students participated in an eight-week work experience and learning forum to provide skill building activities. These activities have led to an increase in job opportunities for the young people with disabilities in Umatilla.

S.W.E.L.L.'s goal was to develop a sustainable youth transitional program with optimum summer work experience opportunities. These opportunities would support students in employment or higher education preparation as well as building bridges and engaging community partners.

This summer, these students successfully completed this program with the support from 13 local community partners. Both McNary Market and TT's Stop in Shop secured employment for two students at each business. The students learned to prepare food, stock shelves and provide customer service. Big River Golf Course and Kik's Golf Center employed two students each who learned ground maintenance skills. A few students worked with Java Junkies and the Fruiteria, and these students learned how to count change back, prepare drinks and food, and stock inventory. Alanis, an auto detail shop, taught a student how to wash, wax and interior detail clean vehicles. Alanis also focused on team work and team building.

A few more partnerships with S.W.E.L.L. were: City Hall and Umatilla Police department. They worked with one student interested in law, and the student had an inside view of some operations and demonstrated the importance of confidentiality. Umatilla Drug provided an experience for retail business and customer services skills. Head Start provided an opportunity to learn the importance of early childhood education. Lastly, S.W.E.L.L. partnered with Umatilla County Fair

Around the State continued...

where students worked alongside the Director of the Fair, and with that connection, all sixteen students received a free fair band to ride rides. It's all about relationships!

Over the summer, the students worked a total of 374.5 hours and earned over \$1500 in wages. When this was over, two students secured full-time employment and other students put in applications. This was truly a S.W.E.L.L. experience.

By Chelsea Kik-Whitbeck, Transition Specialist

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Students working at Umatilla Drug, Kik's Golf Course and McNary Market

Upcoming Events

National TASH Conference

Portland, Oregon

November 28-30, 2018

[To register, go to 2018 TASH](#)

APSE CESP™ Exam

[Find out about the exam process for certification](#)

Don't forget about re-certification and those requirements.

[Recertification requirements](#)

Northwest Conference by ORA

October 23-25, 2018

Eugene, OR



Thank you

for a successful

Pacific NW Employment Forum

in Seaside, Oregon!

Board Talk wrap-up

“be quiet.” For over 20 years, I worked in sheltered workshops making sub-minimum wage. There were a lot of restrictions and boundaries, and I hated all of it.

At the end of 2013, I finished Discovery through Partnerships in Community Living, Inc. Shortly after that, I landed my first job at Create a Memory in Salem, Oregon. This was the first time in my life I got paid minimum wage. When I received the news that I was hired, I cried joyful tears. From the first day, I was treated with dignity and respect by the owners and my co-workers. I felt like a person who belonged.

Since I started working there over 3 years ago, I have grown in many ways and I have learned new things about myself and my job. My self-esteem has increased. I used to be afraid to speak up for myself; now I feel confident speaking and sharing my story. I am happy every time I go into work. The atmosphere is very friendly. I love working with customers, especially the kids. I like that I get treated like an equal by everyone I meet throughout the day. Most of all, I love that I get paid regular wages.

By Selena Mitchell



Follow the discussion on the [Oregon APSE Facebook page!](#)

Meet Mystery APSE Member



Michael Schmidt

Director of
Employment Services
MV Advancements



At home, his “man cave” is decorated to honor his love for the Green Bay Packers and Portland Trailblazers.

Reasonable Accommodations and the Law

Getting Reasonable Accommodations for Long-term Success

We all know, at least vaguely, that the people we support have rights under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). But what does that mean for supporting the person in employment?

The ADA protects a “qualified individual with a disability,” who meets the skill, experience, and education requirements of the job and can perform the “essential functions” of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. A **reasonable accommodation** is a change to a job or the work environment that enables the employee to perform essential job functions. A reasonable accommodation can take many different forms; a few examples are: reallocation of peripheral tasks to another employee, a modified work schedule or shift change, providing additional training, or getting modified equipment.

An employee may use “plain English” to make a request and need not mention the ADA or use the phrase “reasonable accommodation.” It’s not required to make a request for a reasonable accommodation in writing. But, the best practice is to make the request as clear as possible and in writing.

Many employees may have reasonable accommodations informally and are never labeled as “reasonable

Employment Specialist Corner

accommodations: or formally documented as such.

How many of you have come across managers who wait (with the person) for a person’s transportation to show up; help the person clock-in; or remind the person of tasks? Great! These kinds of organic accommodations are how we want the employment world to work. But, what happens when the manager quits, or a new policy is introduced...or after a Job Coach has faded? When those things happen, it would have been important to have documented the reasonable accommodations, even when developed naturally.

Part of ensuring a person’s long-term success is ensuring that the employer continues to provide accommodation and support into the future. Even if an employer offers an accommodation without any formal request for one, it’s helpful to document it as a reasonable accommodation. Think about anything the employer does differently to help your client. Write it down, or better, help the person write it down, in a letter or a memo to the manager or Human Resources department. That way, if something occurs, especially after you’re gone, there will be clear documentation of what’s expected from the employer. Finally, assure [Continued on page 10](#)

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Employment Corner continued

people understand how to request a reasonable accommodation on their own should one become needed after you're gone.

Guest contributor: Gordon Magella, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Oregon

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"A Legal Legend Who Never Gave Up or In!"



Bob Joondeph, the Executive Director of Disability Rights Oregon, is retiring after thirty years of unwavering leadership. He has led the charge with some very important landmark litigation which resulted in huge positive changes for Oregonians with disabilities seeking to live and work in their communities. Whether there has been inequity in classrooms, in adult services, in the work place, or even in accessing support at a sporting event, Bob and DRO have been there! As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice." Bob has lent his wit, intelligence and hard work to move that curve. We are all the better for it and will miss his tremendous contribution to immensely improving the collective lives of people with disability throughout our state and the nation.

Thank you Bob!

Cool Life continued...

job. Our team collaborated with the employer to identify the right Job Coach specifically to help with learning a new role as a production team member. Kyle now is working on the production floor with vinyl graphics, banners, and other promotion items, and he is thriving. Kyle loves what he does, and he is now part of the Logan Design production team.

Stories like Kyle's only reinforce the message that job development doesn't stop at a successful placement, and work development isn't something that is only in the employer's hands. Just because someone is "successfully placed" and the job coach has faded, does not mean that the development of the person stops. It is through the power of the team; a team that comes together, listens and respects each other, and fosters an environment of always looking for growth opportunities, which will ultimately build the foundation of growth. Perhaps it is best said by the late Nelson Mandela "*There is no passion to be found playing small—in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.*" We can, and should, help foster, encourage, and support the aspirations of those we support. It is not just our job, *it is our privilege* to create an environment where everyone has the opportunity to LIVE, WORK, and THRIVE!!!

Thank you for sharing Kyles' Cool Life!

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