



Disability Employment Awareness Month Activities and Ideas



October 21, 2020

*Presented by Stephanie Lipe and Sherry Sparks, Division of Rehabilitation Services –Workforce Development Unit
Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, Council of State Administrators of Voc Rehab, & Pamela Creager
Director of Human Resources at Peoria Production Shop.*



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What partner do you best represent?



Presenters: Workforce Development Unit



Stephanie Lipe, Employment Resource Specialist, Workforce Development Unit – DHS/DRS

MS in Special Education; BA in Speech Communications

Instructional Assistant Professor at Illinois State University

Former VR Counselor (1999-2001)

Certified Windmills Trainer

Member of various WIOA committees



Sherry Sparks, Workforce Development Unit Manager – DHS/DRS

MS Rehabilitation Services Administration; BS Journalism/Public Relations

Former Quincy/Macomb Office supervisor/VR counselor

Held various positions within IDES and former Director of Continuing & Community Education for John Wood Community College

National Trainer for YMCA of the USA and Quincy Area Safety Council

Presenter: Peoria Production Shop



Pamela K. Creager is Director of Human Resources at Peoria Production Shop, with responsibility for assuring compliance with Human Resource practices and assuring commitment to the PPS Mission of hiring adults with disabilities. Prior to moving to Illinois in 1995, she lived in Boston, MA where she held human resource and management positions.

Pamela is an active volunteer in the Peoria community where she has served EP!C as Board Chair, Past President of Central Illinois Human Resource Council, Special Olympics Golf Coach, Illinois Imagines, CIBLN Past Chair, Camp Big Sky, State Rehabilitation Council and many other agencies and events that serve the community. She is involved with DRS and the local schools in preparing students and adults with disabilities for the world of work. She has received several awards from the community for her service including 2011 Peoria Women in Leadership award.

Presenter: Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation - NET



Kathy West-Evans is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) who is fluent in American Sign Language. She has her MA in Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science. Kathy started in the field of rehabilitation in 1978. She worked in a community agency, for the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Region X office of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and now leads the National Employment Team (NET) at CSAVR (Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation). The NET is a cross state team of VR business specialists working through a dual customer approach to develop strategies with business to employ and retain the talents of individuals with disabilities across the company or organization.

Kathy is a member and past Chair of the Veterans Advisory Council on Rehabilitation and a former Commissioner on the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. She has co-authored articles focused on the employment of people with disabilities.

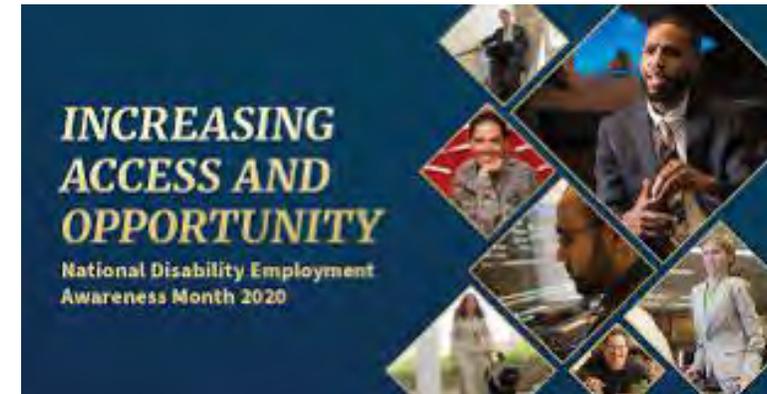
Objectives:



- ✓ Celebrating and recognizing America's workers with disabilities and to promote awareness to various employers about disability inclusion.
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month
 - Virtual Employer Recognition Event
 - Employer activities/events
 - National Employment Team
 - Disability training programs

NDEAM 2020: Increasing Access and Opportunity

- National campaign to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many America's workers with disabilities.
- This year marks not only the 75th observance of NDEAM but also the 30th anniversary of the ADA.
- 31 days of NDEAM ideas for employers, state government, federal agencies, disability related organizations.



NDEAM Ideas for Employers and Employees

- Create displays throughout break areas or different locations that employees frequent by posting positive messages about a disability inclusive workforce.
- Train line leaders, supervisors, managers, etc. to ensure they understand their role in fostering an inclusive workplace culture.
- Feature Disability Awareness events and activities using social media within company's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.
- Participate by having a Disability Mentoring Day to bring in youth with disabilities to understand what the company does.
- Bring a guest speaker to present about Disability Awareness topics such as Disability Etiquette, or offer workplace training programs.
- Establish a diversity committee within the company to ensure employees have an opportunity to connect and receive support from others.



NDEAM Ideas

- Virtual Employer Recognition Event
- Employer activities
- Ideas from other states
- National Employment Team
- Disability training programs



Employer Recognition Activity

Workforce Development is a new Unit within DRS and wanted to celebrate and recognize employers during the month of October. COVID necessitated the event to move to a virtual format.

Steps to creating our recognition event:

1. Team chairperson Stephanie Lipe reviewed past efforts and decided to list three award categories: Employer of the Year, Employer Partnership and Extra Mile awards
2. Criteria were developed for the awards and a Microsoft Form document was created so that nominations would go directly from nominators to the organizers.

Employer Recognition Activity continued

3. Decided to keep nominations internal to DRS the first year and planned to make awards in each of the five regions for DRS
4. Advertised on One Net (our intranet site) plus shared via staff and emails to the local offices and counselors
5. Once deadline arrived, grouped nominations into categories by category and region. Worked with members of the Workforce Development Unit to select final winners.
6. Certificates were created and mailed to winners along with a letter and media release. Winners were asked to take a photo of their business holding the certificate and send back to DRS so we could post on One Net.
7. Drafted press releases for local papers/publications that could be sent to the media in their area. Final approval issued by the communications department of IDHS.

Employer of the Year Recipients

- Alta Staff (Region 1)
- Maximus (Region 1)
- VALID – Lisle (Region 2)
- Federal Express – Champaign (Region 3)



Employer Partnership Award Recipients

- Advocate Aurora Health (Region 1)
- American College of Surgeons (Region 1)
- Blue Cross Blue Shield (Region 1)
- DriV (Region 1)
- Lawson Products/Kent Automotive (Region 1)
- Monterrey Security (Region 1)
- Amazon (Region 2)
- CNH Industrial (Region 2)
- Northwestern Medicine Geneva (Region 2)
- Tyson Foods (Region 2)
- Spoon River Outreach Center (Region 3)
- HomeGoods Bloomington (Region 3)
- Peoria Production Shop (Region 3)



Extra Mile Award Recipients

- The Bazaar Inc./Bargains in a Box (Region 1)
- RBG Services (Region 2)
- Hy-Vee Bloomington (Region 3)
- Personal Mobility (Region 3)





Bazaar and Bargains in a Box Video

[#NationalDisabilityEmploymentAwarenessMonth](#)

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6717859499769704448/>

Plan of Action

- What's Next
 - Winners featured on One Net
- Releases sent to local area newspapers
 - Questions?

Employer Partnership Award Recipient 2020: Peoria Production Shop

- Long time partner with DHS/DRS
- Received several awards in the past such as Employer of the Year, Extra Mile Award, Employer Partnership Award, etc.
- Pamela Creager, Director of HR served on our DHS/DRS State Rehabilitation Council for few years.
- Peoria Production Shop is celebrating Disability Employment Awareness Month



Peoria Production Shop Disability Awareness Events

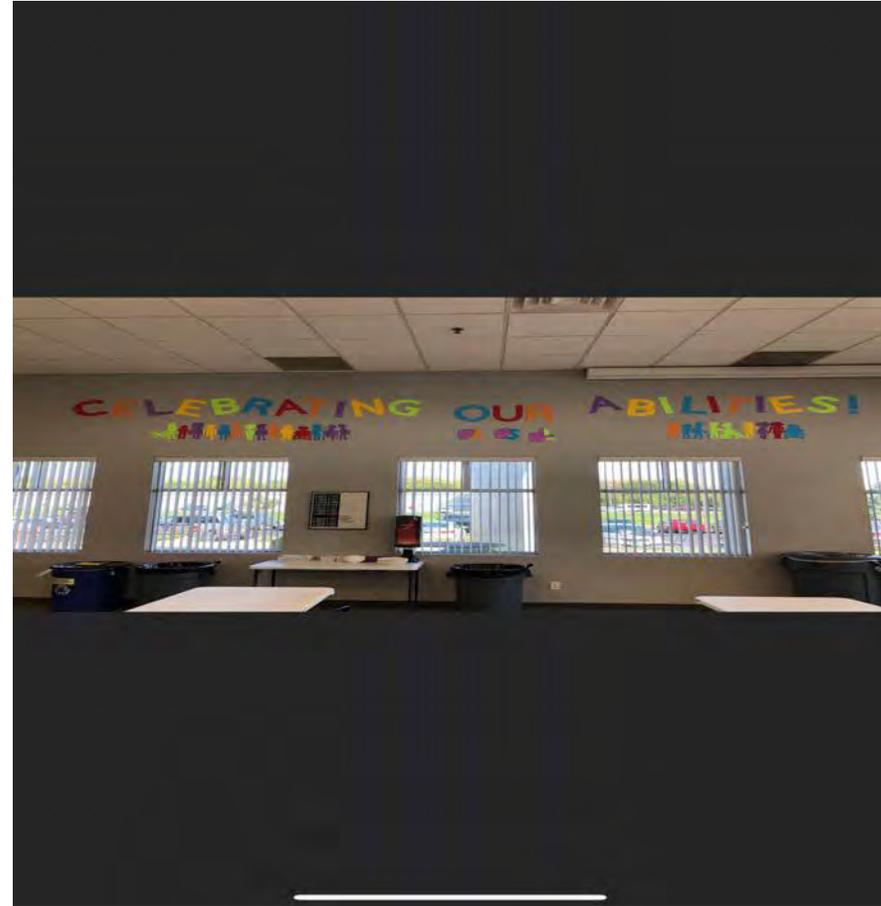
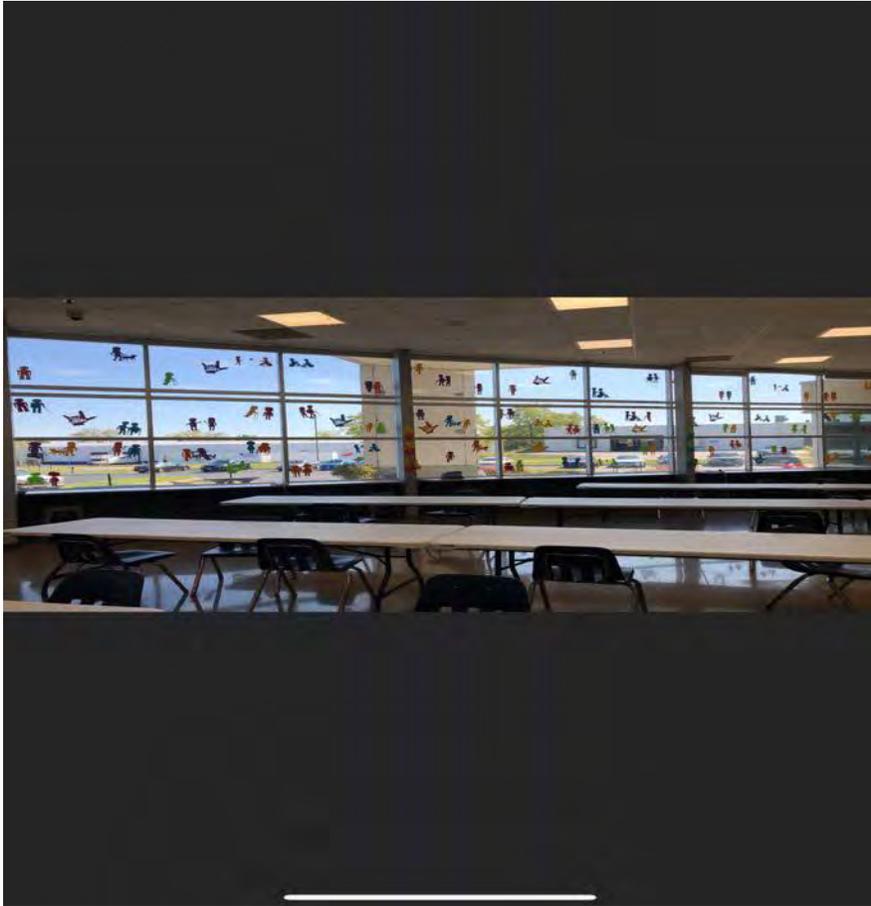
1. DECORATE THE LUNCH ROOM WITH CUTOUTS THAT REPRESENT THE DIVERSITY OF OUR TEAM
2. WE LET ALL OF OUR NEIGHBORS KNOW WE ARE CELEBRATING BY PUTTING SIGNS OUT FRONT SO ALL PASSERSBY CAN SEE WE ARE A COOL PLACE TO WORK
3. WHAT IS A CELEBRATION WITHOUT SWAG? WE HAVE PROVIDED ALL EMPLOYEES T-SHIRTS AND BAGS WITH OUR CELEBRATION TAG LINE: ***MAKING A DIFFERENCE SIDE BY SIDE.***



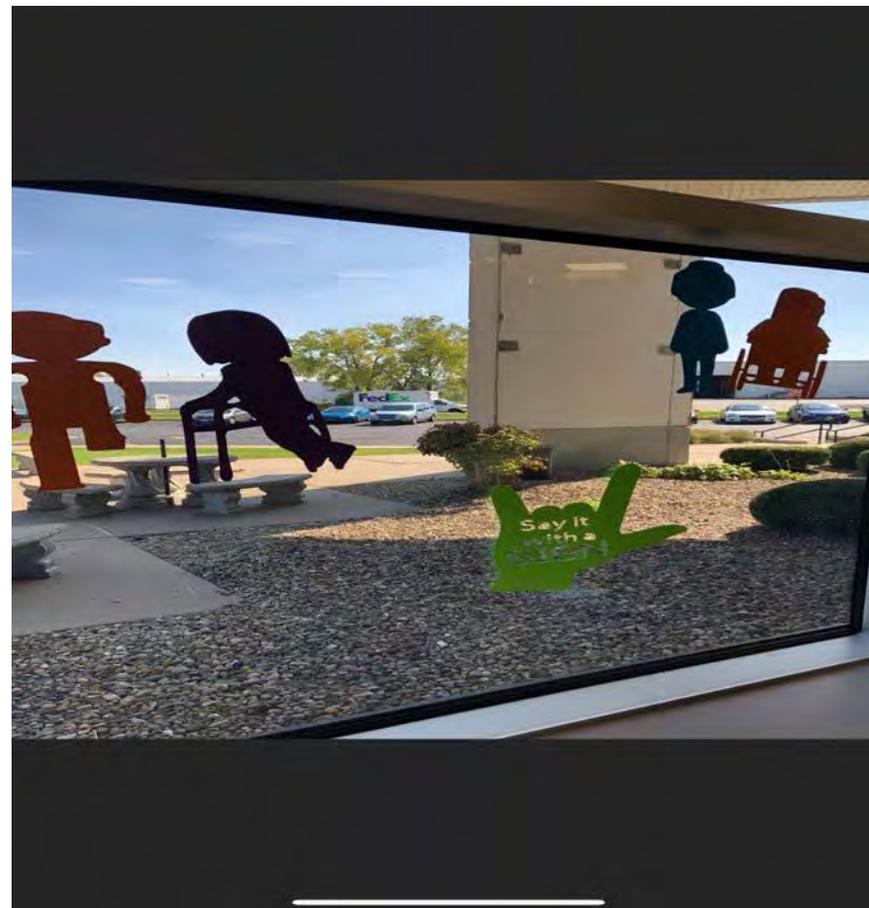
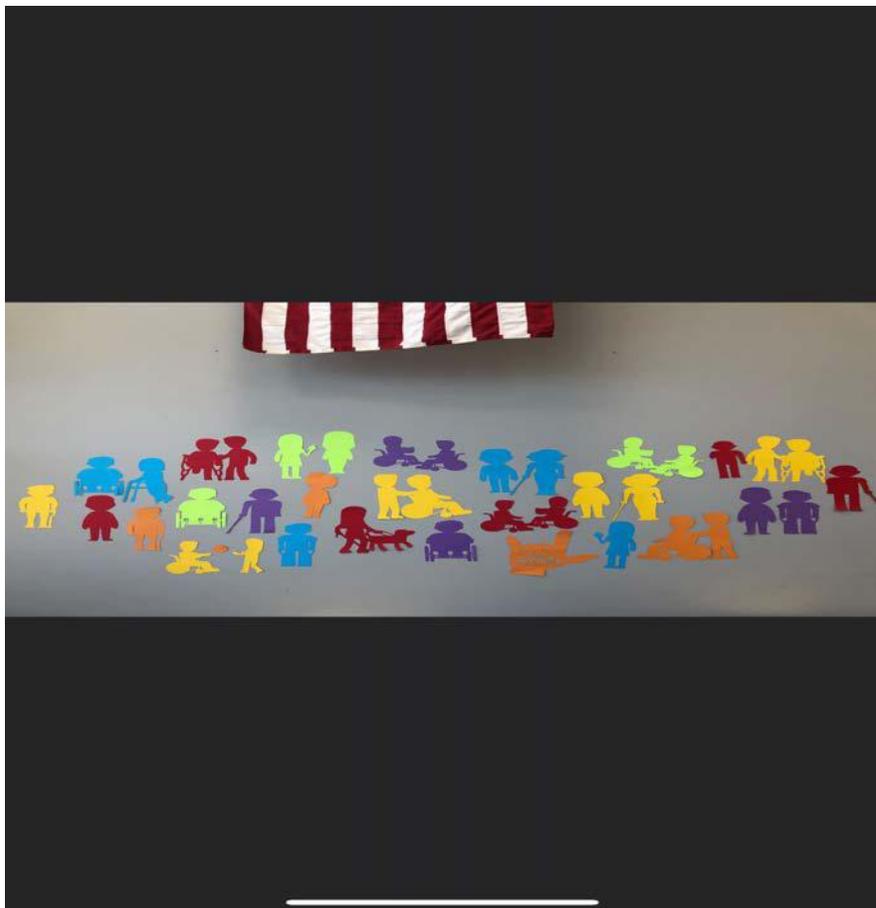
PPS Disability Awareness Events

4. WE ARE SHOWING U TUBE VIDEOS AT LUNCH TIME TO HI-LIGHT FIRST PERSON TESTIMONIALS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND HOW THEY SUCCEED
5. WE HAVE HIRED A DISABILITY EDUCATION SPECIALIST TO GIVE DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING FOR ALL MANAGEMENT STAFF
6. BEST OF ALL, BECAUSE OF GROWTH, TODAY, I WAS ABLE TO POST EIGHT NEW POSITIONS THAT MUST BE FILLED BY A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY.
7. THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY TIED TO DIVERSITY EMPLOYMENT MONTH, WE ARE CELEBRATING OUR APPRECIATION FOR OUR EMPLOYEES WITH FOOD, CONTESTS, GIFTCARDS, DRIVE IN MOVIE NIGHT OUTSIDE OUR BUILDING ,AND FOR LUCKY WINNERS, TIME OFF.

PPS Disability Awareness Pictures



PPS Disability Awareness Pictures



2020 Celebrations

2020 Celebrations

- 100 Years of Vocational Rehabilitation in the U.S.
- 75 Years celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)
- 30 Years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- CSAVR Website Celebrating 100 Years of Public VR in the U.S.
- <https://www.csavr.org/vr-100-timeline>

Iowa

- Increasing Access and Opportunities – Learn About Accommodation in the Workplace from Subject Matter Experts and Business Partners.
- Virtual event hosted in collaboration with Easter Seals, the Department of Veterans Affairs and Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. They partnered together to design and event focused on providing business partners with valuable information regarding hiring and accommodating individuals with disabilities in the workplace.



Michigan

- VR agencies partnered with the Michigan Diversity Council to host a virtual disABILITY Summit, “Aiming for Equity: Accessible Inclusion for All.” The conference focus is on the inclusion of disabilities in the overall diversity to focus to better understand the what “disability” means and the intersectionality of disability and other diversity groups.



Oklahoma

- Virtual Business Summit – Breaking Barriers for an Inclusive Workforce sponsored by Oklahoma Rehabilitation Services:
<http://www.okdrs.gov/summit2020>
- The focus is on educating business and partners about the resources available at the national, state and local level.



Virginia

- Virginia team hosted a number of events during October including:
 - Virtual recruiting and hiring events with CVS, Advanced Auto Parts and federal agencies
 - A demo of the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) for businesses and partners
 - Training sessions using Windmills modules focused on disability awareness
 - Training sessions on assistive technology and reasonable accommodations



Washington

- Business focused event sponsored by the Interstate Disability Employment Alliance (IDEA) and collaboration between WA state and Oregon.
- Business to Business event was titled “Increasing Access and Opportunity” and featured the following business partners:
 - Intel
 - New Relic
 - Paper Tiger Coffee Roasters



“LEAD ON VR” Song & Music Video

- The song and video captures the spirit of VR and showcases VR clients from all across the country. The song is based on the words spoken by Justin Dart who was a key and central figure in the passage of the American’s with Disabilities Act, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.
- The artist is former a VR customer, George Dennehy from Richmond, Virginia. He has become an internationally recognized musician and motivational speaker, performing with major acts like the Goo Goo Dolls, speaking on TED Talks and captivating audiences with his inspiring messages. He is a vocalist and a guitarist without arms who is in his own right, exceptional. George’s success through vocational rehabilitation is something he talks about regularly. George wanted to join in the 100th Anniversary of VR celebrations and is now featured in this great new music video.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DP6FJG1qr9E&feature=youtu.be>



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thank you