

Creating OPPORTUNITIES



A Publication of Easter Seals Goodwill Industries

Fall 2015

25th Anniversary of the ADA

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). The passing of the ADA was an important milestone for Easter Seals Goodwill Industries' (ESGI) ongoing dedication to employment for all. This landmark civil rights law prohibits discrimination on the basis of a person's disability.

Today, more than 54 million Americans with disabilities, their families, neighbors and communities enjoy the benefits of the ADA. At ESGI we are dedicated to empowering all those we serve with disabilities in their employment endeavors with training, mentoring and placement services as well as job opportunities in our organization. We look past disabilities

to see each person's abilities, and we wholeheartedly support their contribution to the workplace.

Despite the advances brought about by the ADA, there is still much work to be done. Finding



meaningful employment continues to be a challenge for people with disabilities. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data released in June, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 12.5 percent in 2014, more than double the figure for those without disabilities (5.9 percent).

Your donations to ESGI support the broad range of services we provide to assist men and women with disabilities and other challenges in their vocational pursuits. The model Boston minister Edgar J. Helms created remains as strong today as it was 113 years ago—recycling what people no longer want into retail treasures that many people will buy. The simple act of clearing

clutter and donating items helps create jobs in our communities. In the process jobs are created for people with disabilities and other challenges.

H. Richard Borer, President

Featuring ESGI Participants



CRAIG LUCAS



DEANA DEMAIO

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ESGI Participant Profiles



Craig Lucas greets anyone he meets with a wide, happy grin but he rarely makes eye contact. Craig will ask when your birthday is so he can, in an instant, tell you which day of the week you were born. Craig has an affinity for numbers, dates, jingles, and game shows and he uses them to relate to others.

Craig, age 43, has autism and according to his sister, Sharon Amato, he was non-verbal until the age of 5 or 6 and had to use sign language. Today, Craig is a dynamic member of the ESGI Community Employment Services (CES) program, working five days a week at the Clinton Goodwill store hanging up donated clothing to be sold.

“Craig is one of our hardest and most productive workers,” says Karoline Barry, Craig’s job coach and supervisor. “He has a positive attitude, takes a lot of pride in his work and he gets along well with everyone here.”

Barry supervises a crew of CES employees in Clinton and is there to assist Craig with his coping skills if he gets anxious or aggravated. Through breathing techniques, counting or recalling commercial jingles, Craig can better manage his frustrations. Barry tries to slowly introduce Craig to new tasks to give him more independence at a pace he can handle.

Upon coming to ESGI in July 2014, Craig’s vocational resource specialist

performed a job assessment and evaluation to determine the most appropriate job, crew and work site for him.

“ESGI made the transition very easy and worked with Craig to determine what is best for him,” said Amato. “Craig has a hard time with change and transition but since coming to this new program, he handles things well. The CES program is so well run; they put a lot of effort into determining what job and team was best for Craig.”

In addition to work, Craig enjoys participating in ESGI’s Recreational Enrichment Program. According to Amato, “Craig loves to choose which activities he wants to go to each week.”



A longtime member at Easter Seals Goodwill Industries, Deana DeMaio has participated in multiple programs since she was 22 years old. Born with Down Syndrome, Deana’s vibrant personality allowed her to work via our Community Employment Services program and enjoy the multitude of recreational activities we offer.

Now at age 51, her needs are drastically different than when she started in 1986. Diagnosed with dementia at age 40, Deana’s physical and mental decline happened quickly. Deana lost the ability to work, her social needs changed and her personal care needs increased.

The progression of Deana’s dementia eventually led to the need of a full time

aid. For over six years, Misty Daluz, Community Activities Specialist, has been supporting Deana during her time at ESGI, providing complete personal care including eating and changing.

“Easter Seals Goodwill Industries has accommodated Deana throughout her decline and through all the transitions,” says Paula DeMaio, Deana’s mother. “We’re thankful that ESGI is in Deana’s life and they’ve bent over backwards to keep her active in their programs.”

Presently, ESGI picks up Deana at her nursing home every day for her participation in the SPICE program. SPICE includes Deana in all of their activities. Her family is reassured by the fact that on a daily basis Deana is with people

that she has known for years and with whom she is comfortable.

“Deana is still included and is participating at whatever capacity she can,” says Paula DeMaio. “This is the only program that has offered the special services that meet the extent of Deana’s full care needs.”

As with Deana and many of our aging participants, changes in their mental and physical capacities has led us to make changes to our programs and the level of services we offer. ESGI has evolved to be able to provide a lifetime of services to our participants and we work hard to accommodate their changing needs in order to serve the entire person.

Services Highlight **Community Employment Services**

Donna Mas is happiest when she's working. Employed at Goodwill in Southington, Donna works from 9am to 2pm five days a week hanging up donated clothes that are ready to be sold. As an individual with some speech limitations, Donna has been able to achieve independence and personal satisfaction through Easter Seals Goodwill Industries' Community Employment Services (CES).

People with disabilities often find navigating the workforce a difficult endeavor. CES work crews provide quality work, ensuring a fantastic experience for businesses while giving program participants a sense of fulfillment and pride. Carey Wein, Director of Supported Employment Services, oversees a team that finds employers, assigns work crews to meet the employers' needs and oversees the daily work processes and environment.

With 136 individuals enrolled in the program, ESGI provides them with work opportunities at businesses and organizations throughout New Haven and Middlesex Counties, in small groups of 4-8 individuals. ESGI staff transports the crews to and from the work sites and helps each individual develop work and socialization skills,

behavior management and instruction in adult daily living skills.

Our crews often help local businesses with hand-assembly projects such as sorting, collating, stuffing, labeling and sealing envelopes, light to moderate custodial work, small assembly in a manufacturing environment and stocking magazines.



"Our goal is to form partnerships with businesses," says Carey Wein. "We provide a reliable, hard working crew that meets quality standards and our program participants gain meaningful employment that gives them a sense of pride and fulfillment."

Each employee is assigned a vocational resource specialist who performs a

vocational assessment and assists each individual in developing a service plan that highlights their work choices and strengths. The service plan helps the specialist place the employee in the appropriate job at the appropriate work site.

Twenty six job coaches are assigned to take crews to their daily work site. Each job coach works with the employees to help them become independent and ensure that their work is up to standards. They also set individualized goals to help each employee learn and grow.

Donna, who has been participating in the ESGI program for 30 years, likes the security and regularity of going to the same work place daily.

According to Donna's mother, Cornelia Mas, "Without Easter Seals, I don't think Donna would have the confidence she has today. They've had a big impact on her life."

Attention Employers: *We can help you meet the demands of your business by providing a supervised crew of employees with disabilities that produces quality work. Let us know about your workforce needs and we'll come up with a tailored solution. Email cwein@esginh.org for more information.*

Employer Profile **New Haven Moving Equipment**

Developing innovative ways to help individuals with disabilities reach their employment goals is an important part of our mission. It wouldn't be possible without the participation of companies like New Haven Moving Equipment.

A provider of corrugated and packing materials for the moving and storage industry, New Haven Moving Equipment has been an Easter Seals employer for over six years. Northeast General Manager, Neil Nepiarsky, recognized that the labor intensive jobs he was trying to fill could be a good fit for the CES program.

"The group is well run, well managed and responsive to my needs," says Nepiarsky. "It's great that they bring their

team to our site. We're very happy with the success of the program."

A team of six or seven part time employees from ESGI goes to New Haven Moving Equipment in East Haven on a daily basis. They are responsible for cleaning and removing stickers from large plastic boxes with tops that have recently been rented for moving purposes. With cleaning equipment and tools provided, the team prepares the plastic boxes so they can be rented again.

"I believe it's been a 100% success on both ends," says Nepiarsky. "We're proud to provide six or seven jobs on a part time basis to some great people."

Community Services: SPICE and RECreation

Variety is the SPICE of life!

Social interaction, expression and engaging with the community are a few of ESGI's goals for its members of SPICE (Senior People Involved in Community Enrichment). This thriving program, which incorporates a wide variety of trips and activities, gives our aging vocational program participants the ability to transition into social and community activities once they stop working.

"For older members who no longer take part in the other ESGI programs, SPICE still keeps the disabled active and busy," says Paula DeMaio, mother of Deana, a SPICE participant.

What started as a part-time program in 1990 has now blossomed into a daily, full-time option for those aged 50 or older. The program's 44 participants take part in community activities and attend local senior centers to increase their socialization skills, give them independence and to encourage the exploration of the new opportunities.

Karen Herrmann, Community Services Director, oversees a staff of seven community activities specialists who support the SPICE group with their in-house and community activities. She also manages a community resource specialist who maintains contact between the ESGI participant, his or her family and residence.

ESGI Community Activities Specialist, Cookie Curson, helps to plan and execute the group's day to day activities. From exercise programs and themed events such as Carnival Day to board games and outings, SPICE provides a wide range of retirement activities and support for all its participants. Crafts, bake sales, cooking groups, exercise programs, holiday or cultural events and music are just a few of the items on their monthly calendar.

Long-time ESGI member Robin Walters is very active in the SPICE community.

Upon her decision to stop working in 2009, made the transition to SPICE. Participating in the weekly trips to the senior centers and bowling alley, she also looks forward to our monthly special events trips such as baseball games, museum trips and the annual holiday party.



Visits to four local senior centers (in Woodbridge, New Haven, Orange and Wallingford) allows SPICE members to network with other seniors and participate in activities such as playing pool or cards. Those over age 60 can even get a low-cost, healthy meal at the centers.

"These trips offer our members more mainstream inclusion," says Herrmann. "All of the senior citizens we interact with are very welcoming of our group."

Additional SPICE services include to and from transportation for participants, general case management, socialization skills training, behavior management and instruction in adult daily living skills.

REC (Recreational Enrichment in the Community)

After-hours and weekend activities are popular at ESGI. The REC (Recreational Enrichment in the Community) program provides later afternoon, evening or weekend recreational activities for ESGI program participants. The program offers fun social activities and includes transportation services to and from activities.

According to Karen Herrmann, "The after-hours program came about when we learned from participant family member surveys that their sons and daughters wanted to take part in more social activities with their friends."

REC alternates between bowling every Tuesday evening and in-house activities, such as pizza parties and games, Thursday evenings. Saturday outings are planned based on participant feedback.

"These extra social opportunities are great for our members and it gives their families a respite too," says Herrmann.



What's New?

Caregiver Support Group

Alzheimer's Association Support Groups are designed to provide emotional, educational and social support for caregivers through regularly scheduled meetings. Our new group helps participants develop methods and skills to solve problems. It also encourage attendees to maintain their own personal, physical and emotional health as well as optimally care for the person with dementia.

All are Welcome

When: The fourth Thursday of each month, 4 – 5 pm

Where: Easter Seals Goodwill Industries
432 Washington Ave
North Haven, CT 06473

Please register with:

Karen Herrmann at (203)777-2000 ext. 289
or kherrmann@esginh.org

Plans for New Sensory Room

Time to decompress and relax in a quiet, peaceful environment will soon be an option at ESGI in North Haven. Easter Seals Goodwill Industries recently received a grant to develop a sensory room at our North Haven location.

The room will be equipped with adaptive recliners, aromatherapy to stimulate the senses, calming music and

equipment that will contribute to a quiet and calming experience for small groups of people.

According to Karen Herrmann, Community Services Director, "The room can be used for anyone who is over stimulated or having behavioral issues and can benefit from some time with staff in a relaxing and sensory enriched environment."

The room is now in development with plans for completion by the end of the year.

Save the Date

ESGI Holiday Party



SPICE and CES participants and their families are invited to join our staff at the Annual Holiday Party December 12th, from 1-5pm at Fantasia in North Haven. Join us for lunch, dancing, music and prizes!

Annual Golf Classic



31st Annual Golf Classic
May 16, 2016
The Farms Country Club
Wallingford, Connecticut
Call: 203-777-2000, ext. 228

Fantasy of Lights

Opens November 20th!

As the holidays approach, be sure to set aside time to view the Fantasy of Lights at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven. A family tradition for many residents through the region, our display of over fifty holiday images and shapes celebrates the season and raises funds for Easter Seals Goodwill Industries' programs. Many displays have been upgraded from standard to LED lights in a "green" effort. For viewers' added

pleasure, we now offer 3-D glasses that enhance the light displays.

Our Preview Party will be on November 19th at 6 pm and the Lights will be open to the public from November 20, 2015 until January 6, 2016.

To make this holiday event happen, we rely on the generosity of volunteers and sponsors. Light setup begins in October and volunteers are needed each night of the event. Business, civic, community and church groups are encouraged to join us.



Volunteers Needed!

To volunteer, contact Veronica Preston, Special Events Manager at 203-777-2000, ext. 228.

Annual Lobsterbake

Lobsterbake Was a Big Success

Thanks for all who supported ESGI at our 25th Annual Lobsterbake at Lighthouse Point Park in East Haven on September 18, 2015. Over 170 guests enjoyed the fabulous lobster and steak dinners, live music, dancing and prizes. All of the proceeds fund our employment, educational and recreational programs for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.



Celebrate 2015

Your Investment Goes a Long Way

Did you know that last year Easter Seals Goodwill Industries provided 1,489 people with disabilities and other barriers to employment, including 873 new participants, with intensive life-changing assistance so they could reach their goals of employment and independence?

With your help, we've accomplished this and more:

- 140 individuals with disabilities were provided assistance through Community Employment Services (CES), giving participants a sense of fulfillment and pride
- 88% of Community Re-Entry Services (CRS) participants [individuals with a history with the Department of Correction] secured jobs within 90 days of program enrollment

- 124,788 transportation trips to work were provided for participants with disabilities

- 82% of Family First Initiative (FFI) participants [families seeking to improve their financial self-sufficiency] reported increased household income through improved knowledge of budgeting and financial planning.

"Easter Seal Goodwill Industries award-winning community programs are breaking down the barriers, big and small, to employment, education, and recreation for people in need."

Peter S. Carozza, Jr.
Chairman, ESGI Celebrate Annual Appeal Campaign
President, Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters of Connecticut

Thanks to our Board Members

ESGI appreciates the skills and expertise that each of our Board members has contributed by volunteering their time to help us!

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Easter Seals Goodwill Industries
 432 Washington Avenue
 North Haven, CT 06473
 (203) 777-2000 or (888) 909-8188



How Your Donations Make a Difference

With the generous financial support from businesses, foundations and individuals plus millions of pounds of donations (like clothing, toys, shoes, small appliances and furniture) which we sell in our stores, Easter Seals Goodwill Industries is able to continue pursuing our mission.

Contributions help provide services and opportunities to individuals who are overcoming barriers to employment, enabling them to become independent, contributing members of our community. We help children and adults overcome mental or physical disabilities or other obstacles.

Our mission is to enhance educational, employment, social and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities and other challenges. We try to consistently create new services and develop a broader, comprehensive base of community support.

ESGI Retail Stores & Donation Centers

Clinton

369 East Main Street
 (860) 664-9211

Groton

664 Long Hill Road
 (860) 448-6400

Hamden

2369 Dixwell Avenue
 (203) 230-2910

Middletown

955 Washington Street
 (860) 347-5404

New Haven

472 Foxon Boulevard
 (203) 468-2355

Norwich

201 Salem Turnpike
 (860) 204-0018

Orange

81 Boston Post Road
 (203) 795-3333

Goodwill Outlet

2901 State Street
 (203) 248-1600

Rocky Hill

80 Town Line Road
 (860) 529-6838

Southington

350 Queen Street
 (860) 621-0775

Wallingford

1145 North Colony Road,
 (203) 265-4211

Westville

61 Amity Road
 (203) 397-2735

Branford

249 West Main Street
 (203) 481-7777

New Britain

190 Columbus Boulevard
 (860) 224-0885

To find a Donation Center or Donation Bin near you, please visit www.eastersealsgoodwill.org/donate

Visit Easter Seals Goodwill Industries on:      