



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

2015 OVR ANNUAL REPORT

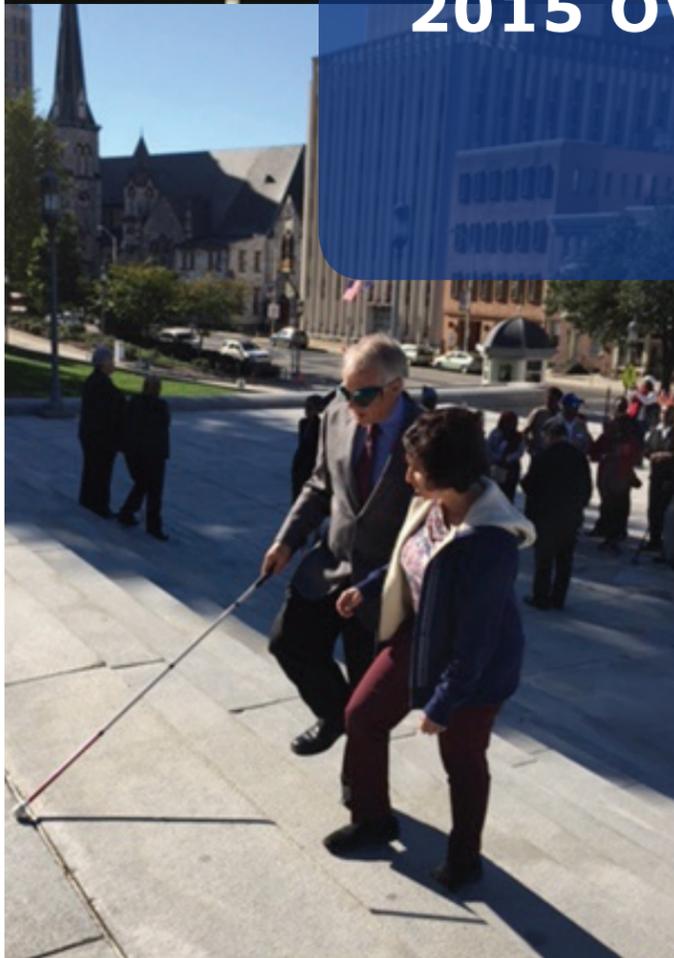


SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION



Welcome from the Governor

Workers with disabilities bring unique gifts to the workforce. In August 2015, the national unemployment rate for people with disabilities was more than double that of people without disabilities. During my first year in office, I'm proud to share that we have ensured that in Pennsylvania we now have the resources to change that statistic for future generations.

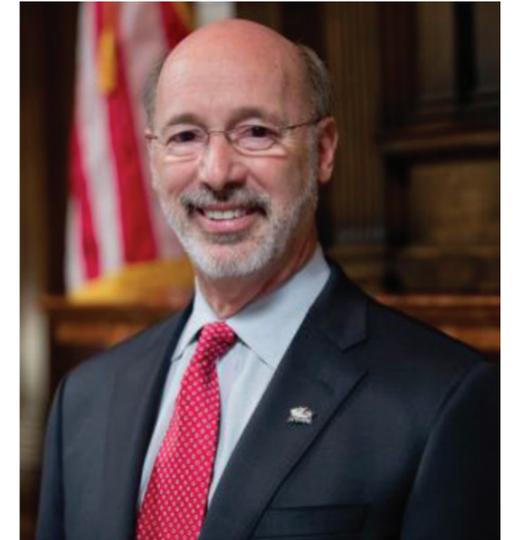
The Department of Labor & Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) assists individuals with disabilities in accessing educational, independent living and real-life, work-based learning experiences that will lead to real jobs with family-sustaining wages. Last year, OVR staff assisted more than 8,700 residents of PA with disabilities in obtaining competitive, integrated employment. This past year, OVR worked with more than 5,000 PA employers to help residents of Pennsylvania with disabilities find work. Employers such as Starbucks, Lowe's, and Giant Eagle, along with thousands of other employers, created and expanded training and competitive, integrated employment opportunities with family-sustaining wages, Jobs That Pay, for individuals with disabilities in Pennsylvania.

Like OVR, I believe in the potential of individuals with disabilities; that is why I encouraged and supported an additional \$5 million increase to OVR's budget that will, for the first time, allow OVR to access all federal dollars available for employment services for individuals with disabilities. The \$5 million in state resources will allow Pennsylvania to access an additional \$18.5 million for a total of \$23.5 million for use in creating and expanding real-life work experiences for Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

These additional resources will allow OVR to assist more high school students in gaining crucial, paid work experiences that will more than double their chances of competitive employment after high school. When we help individuals with disabilities access the same information as their classmates, neighbors and coworkers, they can get the same education, training and jobs. Access equals success. It's that simple.

The increased funding will also allow OVR to continue to partner with Pennsylvania employers to create on-the-job training opportunities that will lead to employment. Individuals with disabilities are one of the most untapped talent pools that I encourage employers to consider for internship and employment opportunities. This coming year, OVR will continue to partner with high schools, colleges and universities, building upon their prior year collaborations with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education and Penn State University to deliver summer initiatives that prepare students with disabilities for college life and work.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) encourages stronger interagency communication, coordination and collaboration. OVR is currently collaborating with other state departments, including Human Services, Education and Corrections, to leverage resources and develop opportunities for customers mutually served. This collaboration is a great example of government that works, and I encourage other state agencies and employers to work with OVR to learn about and consider how individuals with disabilities can positively diversify their workforce and improve organizations' bottom lines.



**Governor
Tom Wolf**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Wolf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "f".



Welcome from the Secretary

One of our greatest tasks at L&I is helping job seekers find employment. We truly are all about jobs, Jobs That Pay for everyone. We house the state's Bureau of Workforce Development; serve as a government liaison with community colleges, technical schools and workforce investment areas; and house the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and the Office of Unemployment Compensation. When we are not helping people find or train for jobs, we are helping them through difficult periods of unemployment due to layoff or injury.

OVR has helped tens of thousands of people with disabilities find and maintain gainful employment. Governor Wolf and I understand the importance of Jobs That Pay for all citizens in the state. With the additional funding received in Governor Wolf's budget this year, we can now draw down federal dollars to help serve even more people with disabilities, helping them reach their fullest career potential. On my Jobs That Pay tour this past summer, I had the privilege of visiting Giant Eagle in Pittsburgh, a company that is working with OVR to create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Pittsburgh's OVR has placed more than 200 people with disabilities in jobs with Giant Eagle. I commend Giant Eagle's efforts, which serve as just one example of a company in PA that is working with our OVR team and its community partners to create an inclusive, talented workforce that succeeds and thrives.

I believe in the potential of individuals with disabilities and applaud and support OVR's initiatives that support real-life, work-based learning experiences through internships, externships and on-the-job training that will lead to competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's economy grows stronger as we assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities in finding and maintaining employment and independence. As Pennsylvanians with disabilities find competitive, integrated employment, our workforce grows stronger as well, and Pennsylvania businesses are able to meet their talent needs. I encourage Pennsylvania employers to explore disability employment options and to work with OVR to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



**Secretary
Kathy Manderino**



State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Pennsylvania State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation is authorized by State Act 167 of 1988 and serves as the designated state agency for services provided by OVR. Its members meet quarterly with OVR's senior staff and specialists to receive updates and reports, review policy proposals, engage in discussion and make recommendations based on their unique expertise and insights, ensuring that the opportunities OVR offers to Pennsylvanians with disabilities are relevant, appropriate and useful. The Board's primary function is to review and officially approve OVR's policies, programs and activities. It also shoulders the responsibility of approving the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Vocational Rehabilitation section in the combined State Plan.

State Board Members

M.J. Bartelmay, Jr. is an independent Information Technology Consultant with over 20 years of experience in the information technology industry. He owns and operates IT Consulting Services and is also the parent of two young men, one of whom has an intellectual disability.

Tom Caulfield has a BS in Business Administration and an MBA in Labor-Management Relations. Tom is a United States Army Vietnam Veteran and the Director of Veteran Community Initiatives, Inc.

Toby Fauver has served as PennDOT's Bureau Director for Rail Freight Ports and Waterways, Bureau Director for Public Transportation and Deputy Secretary for Local and Area Transportation. As Deputy Secretary, he was instrumental in the passage of new, historic public transportation funding legislation, Act 44 of 2007. Toby is now PennDOT's first Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation.

Raymond Hoover is President and CEO of Hoover Rehabilitation Services, which provides health and disability management services to employers and insurance carriers.

Judith Jobs graduated from Gannon University with a degree in social work. Before retiring, she worked for Verizon as an operator, where she helped advocate for and test adaptive equipment for directory assistance. Judy's philosophy for life is "to never look at things and say I can't, but to ask: What can I do to participate? What can I do to make this accessible?"

Michael Kiel has been a rehab specialist for 17 years and is currently contracting his services through the Univ. of Pittsburgh. After a spinal cord injury during his sophomore year at PSU resulted in complete paralysis from the neck down, he returned to PSU, after four months of rehab, and then Edinboro University to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in rehab counseling.

John L. Tague, Jr. is sole proprietor of JT Disability Consulting Services, whose mission is to include individuals with disabilities in all aspects of community life. A graduate of Edinboro University with a degree in education, John has over 38 years of experience in community engagement.

Gail Vasko is the parent of a child with an intellectual disability, an advocate for students with disabilities and their parents, and is involved in the federal grant projects Parent to Parent and Parent in Partnership with Educators.



The State Board of VR's September 2015 quarterly meeting in Erie

2016 Quarterly Meetings:

April 7 – Bethlehem
June 9 – Harrisburg
September 8 – DuBois
December 8 – Harrisburg

(Please note that dates and locations are subject to change.)

Executive Director Opening Remarks

I am so privileged for the opportunity to write this opening welcome and extremely grateful to serve as the Executive Director of the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. When I was four years old, I was diagnosed with a degenerative eye condition Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP). RP would cause my total blindness by the time I was nineteen. Some experts attempted to impose negative, limiting labels on me, suggesting that a student with a disability couldn't fully participate and succeed academically or athletically. Thankfully, my parents, teachers and coaches were possibility thinkers who believed in me! They taught me to focus on my abilities, not my disability. Shortly after my diagnosis, my parents and I met with the principal of our school district in Belleville, New Jersey. The principal tried to convince my parents that it wasn't a good idea for me to attend public school. "We've never had a blind student here before, and we aren't prepared," he said. "It would be best for you to send him to a school for the blind." My father replied: "I hear your concerns, and, if it doesn't work, we will try something else. But, please give my son a chance." The school agreed, and, that same year, I received my first braille instruction. My father showed me that I couldn't be afraid to give myself or others a chance to succeed.

My dad always encouraged me to participate in sports, wrestling and weight lifting. I was able to have some wonderful success in sports, winning drug-free powerlifting championships. When I was in school, some educational professionals discouraged my parents from allowing me to be involved in organized sports, suggesting I was going to get hurt. My dad argued: if he doesn't fully participate, he is guaranteed to get hurt, academically, athletically and socially. Sports taught me that I could compete and that I could fit in and not sit out. Growing up, my parents and teachers/instructors introduced me to as many successful people with disabilities as possible. I met sportswriters, attorneys, teachers and counselors, all successful individuals who happened to have a disability. I now realize how blessed I am to have been encouraged by so many. My parents taught me that education and proper training are the keys to unlocking one's potential. My teachers and counselors taught me that access equals success, and, if I could access the same information and inspiration as my classmates, neighbors and peers, I could get the education that would lead to competitive employment. And, they were right! My first job was at a small, local bakery when I was in high school where I washed pots and pans and made boxes. I learned so much from that job: the importance of getting along with others, getting to work on time, understanding expectations, and, most importantly, I learned to always do my best and work hard because you never know who is watching: your boss, future employers or colleagues.

Today, I live in Hershey with my wife, Mariann, and three children, David, MaryKate and Emily. I have a master's degree in Administration Supervision, Leadership, Training and Development. My personal philosophy is: things turn out the best for people who make the best of the way things turn out. When going blind, I was upset, angry and afraid. I was given some wonderful advice: the challenges that we face will make us bitter or better, and we better pick the right one. I am a firm believer in the law of inertia: things in motion stay in motion, and things at rest stay at rest unless acted upon by a greater force. I love working for OVR and helping our staff be part of the greater force who are assisting individuals with disabilities in getting moving. When we get moving, we develop confidence to take the next step, and we can't be afraid to take that next step. We can't be afraid to fail forward. This annual report is a true "spotlight" on success, showcasing that individuals are successful when we focus on ability, surround ourselves with possibility thinkers and aren't afraid to give ourselves, employers and customers a chance to succeed. Like you, I believe in the potential of individuals with disabilities. I am confident and have learned that individuals with disabilities are the most untapped talent pool for employers to consider. Every day I am reminded that teamwork will make the dream work. When we all work together, we create opportunities, expand possibilities and ensure Governor Wolf's vision of Jobs That Pay, Schools That Teach and Government That Works in PA!



**Executive Director
David J. De Notaris**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. De Notaris".



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council's (PaRC's) mission is to inform and advise the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Governor on the diverse issues affecting vocational rehabilitation. As required by the Rehab Act, a majority of PaRC members are individuals with disabilities and represent 16 categories. The scope of the Council's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, collaborating with OVR in writing the VR portion of the combined state plan, in conducting the statewide needs assessment and in participating in policy development workgroups. Besides meeting quarterly, the PaRC has seven standing committees whose members work tirelessly on various projects throughout the year. Members of the legislative committee travel to Washington, DC and Harrisburg, PA to discuss pending legislation impacting individuals with disabilities and to promote increased funding for OVR. The full council meets quarterly in Harrisburg. Meetings for 2016 have been scheduled for March 2, May 4, August 24 and October 26.



PaRC Members

PaRC Required Categories of Representation

*as they are named in the Rehabilitation Act**

Business/Industry/Labor:

Donna Partin
Frederick Wright
Madonna Long
Mary Brougher

Cognitive Disabilities:

Passle Helminski

Community Rehabilitation Provider:

Robert A. Mecca

General Advocacy:

Jody Saitsky

Intellectual Disabilities:

Maureen Westcott

Mental Health:

Heidi Tuszynski

PA Statewide Independent Living Council:

Matthew R. Seeley, Esquire

Physical Disabilities:

Robert F. Fox, III

Rehabilitation Counselor:

Kelley McKee, MS, CRC

Sensory Disabilities:

W.D. Chrisner, III, M.Ed./M.P.A., Chair

Young Adult:

Silvia Buzzanco



**Categories awaiting appointment or vacant are not listed.*

PA Statewide Independent Living Council

The Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council's (PA SILC's) mission is to use its collective power and legal mandate to develop and secure public policies that ensure civil rights and expand options for all people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

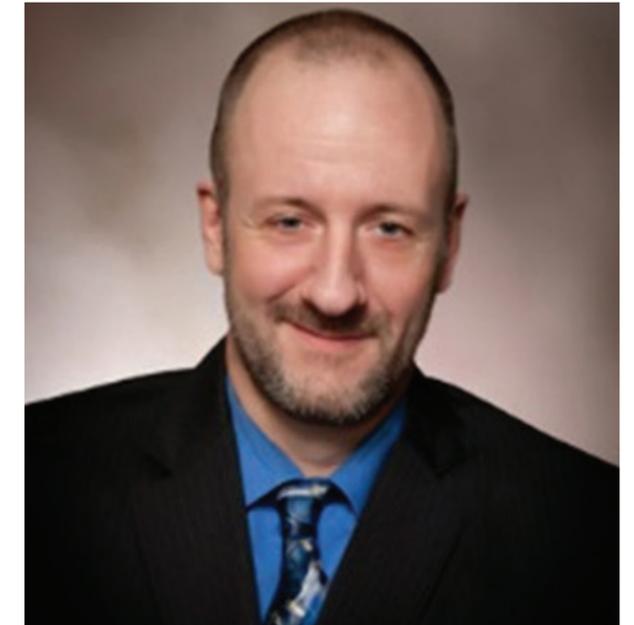
SILCs and Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are authorized for 50 states and six U.S. Territories under the Federal Rehabilitation Act. PA SILC is primarily funded through the federal Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and works with the 18 PA CILs and other disability organizations across the Commonwealth to promote independent living for individuals with disabilities. PA SILC also collaborates on a national level with the National Council on Independent Living.

Pennsylvania's 18 CILs provide four core services:

- **Information & Referral** when individuals contact CILs for information/disability program referrals
- **Advocacy** for both individual and systemic issues
- **Peer Support** to connect individuals with similar disabilities for support
- **Independent Living Skills** for people who acquire a disability and need to relearn basic life skills

PA Statewide Independent Living Council

207 House Avenue, Suite 107, Room 14
Camp Hill, PA 17011
P: 717-364-1732
F: 717-236-8800



Matthew Seeley, Esq., Executive Director, PA SILC

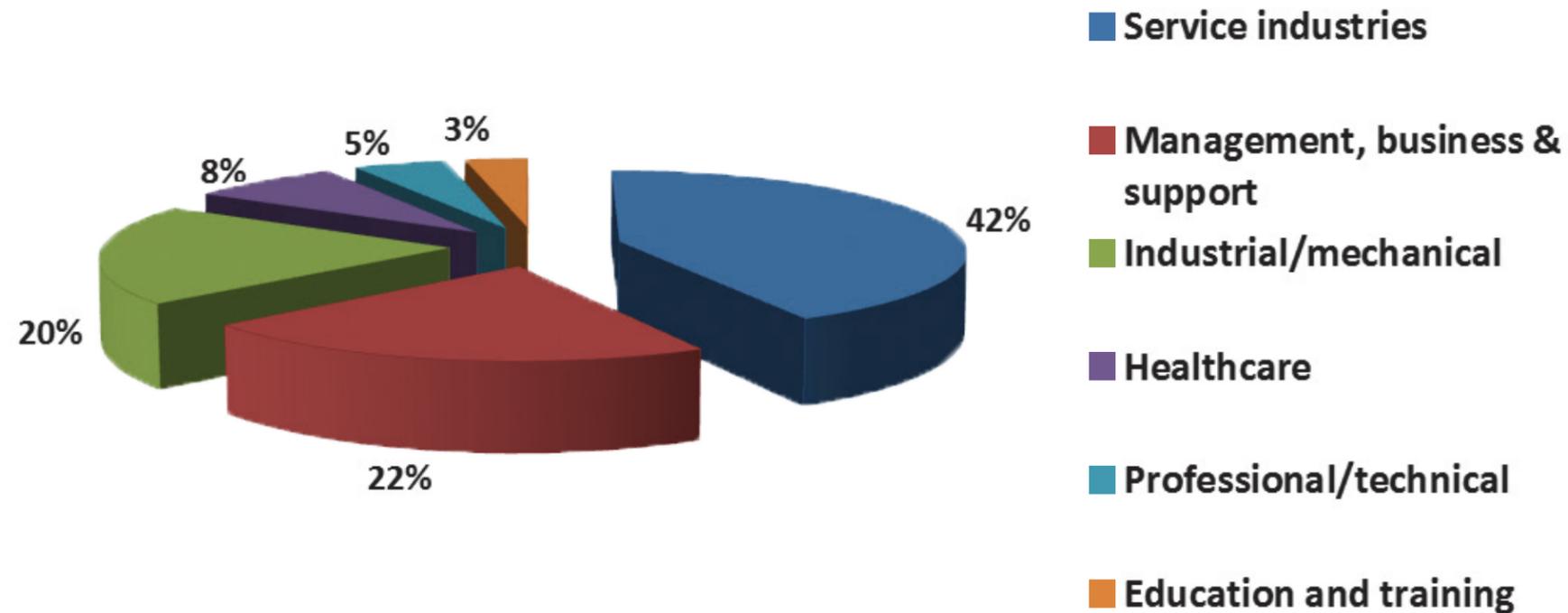


PA SILC at Senator Tartaglione's 2015 Disability Awareness Day



PA SILC Quarterly Meeting

OVR by the Numbers



- In Federal Fiscal Year 2015, OVR provided services to more than **70,000** individuals with disabilities.
- Over that period, OVR increased the number of customers it successfully placed into employment by **2.7 percent** to nearly **8,800**.
- Of those **8,800** individuals, **98.8 percent** were placed in competitive employment, a **1.7 percent** increase over 2014 levels.
- Average wages for these customers increased **3 percent**, to **\$13 per hour**, exceeding the 2015 federal RSA standard by more than **12 percent**.
- These customers are estimated to net the public savings of nearly **\$54 million** from taxes collected and reduced costs to public support programs.
- As a result, the state is expected to see a return on investment from these workers in just over a year.

April 2016

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Governor's Awards

Governor's Awards Spotlight the Potential of Individuals with Disabilities

The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Association's (PWDA's) Governor's Awards were presented at the 2015 PWDA Annual Employment, Training & Education Conference in Hershey, PA in May.

The Governor's Individual Achievement Award recognizes an individual who achieved greater independence as a result of their work and career.

2015 Recipient: Joshua Dean

Josh was awarded the Individual Achievement Award for his determination, work ethic and high expectations for himself that helped him persevere through challenges to pursue and obtain a bachelor's degree in business from Cairn University and employment as an associate claims processor with Highmark Blue Shield in Camp Hill, PA. OVR assisted Josh throughout his college and professional career pursuits, providing vocational counseling and access to driver evaluation and training, which led to Josh being able to obtain his driver's license. Josh notes that "it was an extraordinary thing to be awarded the Governor's Award. I am convinced that I could not be where I am today without the assistance of OVR. Even now, some days get difficult. But OVR has equipped me very well, and I know that I will be able to overcome these next challenges with great maneuverability."

The Governor's Award for Employers Hiring Workers with Disabilities recognizes a business for their commitment to hire all talent in building a diversified workforce.

2015 Recipient: Saint Francis University Dining Services

The Dining Services at Saint Francis University, one of the nation's oldest Catholic universities, is an employer who believes in the potential of individuals with disabilities, as is demonstrated by their management staff's commitment to hire and retain OVR customers. Currently, approximately half of Saint Francis University's 40 Dining Services staff are prior or current OVR customers.



Back row, left to right: Cathy Farr, BVRS Western Regional Manager; Lisa German, Altoona OVR Business Service Rep.; Rob Hodapp, Western Business Services and Outreach Specialist; and Ralph Roach, Business Services and Outreach Division Chief

Front row, left to right: Colleen Woodring, Altoona OVR District Administrator; Joshua Dean, Governor's Award Recipient; and David De Notaris, OVR Executive Director

May 2016

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Memorial Day

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Blindness Awareness Expo

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services and the Advisory Committee for the Blind of Pennsylvania hosted the 2015 Blindness Awareness Expo in the Main Rotunda of the State Capitol on Tuesday, June 2, 2015. Attendees, including teachers, students, employees, employers, seniors, and federal, state, and elected officials, were invited to explore how Pennsylvanians who are blind or visually impaired overcome challenges in education, employment and independence. The Expo's Master of Ceremonies was Dr. Marianne Boltz, and Bill McCann, founder of Dancing Dots in Valley Forge, PA, was the keynote speaker. Awards were presented at the Expo to individuals who are blind or visually impaired for overcoming challenges in education, employment and independence and to organizations who have assisted individuals who are blind or visually impaired in doing so.

2015 Blindness Awareness Expo Award Recipients:

Outstanding Elementary School Student with a Visual Impairment

Brock Kitterman and Devon Lengel

Outstanding Middle School Student with a Visual Impairment

Trinity Gill and Treasure Signorelli

Outstanding High School Student with a Visual Impairment

Jessica Minneci, India Scott and Michael Smedley

Outstanding Employee with a Visual Impairment

Jule Ann Lieberman

Outstanding Employer of an Employee with a Visual Impairment

Temple University Institute on Disabilities

Independence Award

Marsha Drenth

Access Equals Success Award

Comcast



Senator Thomas J. McGarrigle presents Jule Ann Lieberman with her Outstanding Employee with a Visual Impairment Award.



Doug Zubeck, Senator Charles T. McIlhinney Jr.'s Outreach Coordinator, presents Marsha Drenth with her Independence Award.



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25 Years of the ADA

July 26, 2015 marked the 25th anniversary of the signing of the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. This civil rights legislation “prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services and to participate in state and local government programs and services” (ada.gov).

A wonderful resource offered by OVR is our ADA Technical Assistance training and guidance project. This is a no-cost resource for companies/organizations to learn about and consider options for improving facility accessibility. ADA technical expertise is a part of OVR’s Central Office Employer and Business Services outreach initiative. OVR’s goal is to promote the use of assistive technology in the workplace. Assistive technology breaks down barriers, levels the employment playing field and has opened doors that were once locked shut to job seekers with disabilities.

With the passage of the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) in 2009, OVR’s Business Services and Outreach Division:

- Provides ADAAA Leadership Training and ADA Compliance Assessment Toolkit (CAT) training
- Provides no-cost ADA compliance technical consultation and training to PA CareerLink partners, workforce partners and external stakeholder groups, including businesses and employers



President George Bush signs the ADA into law (from: prologue.blogs.archives.gov).



President Barack Obama, with Vice President Joe Biden, delivers remarks during a reception for the 25th anniversary of the ADA (from: whitehouse.gov).

July 2016

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BBVS Summer Academy

Empowering Students who are Blind to Overcome Obstacles

OVR's Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS), in partnership with the Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education's Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) and Pennsylvania State University (PSU), offer the Summer Academy for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired: Enhancing Independence Skills for Students Transitioning to Post-Secondary Education.

Now in its eighth year of operation, Summer Academy is a recommended emerging best practice by the Federal Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. This three-week program that builds on students' skills and experiences is designed for students who are blind or visually impaired and preparing for post-secondary education leading to competitive employment. Focus areas include daily living activities, career awareness and enhancing travel, self-advocacy, networking, social and assistive technology skills. It is available at no cost to eligible Pennsylvania students enrolled in 9th through 12th grades.

In addition to providing professional instruction in Low Vision skills enhancement and self-advocacy, leadership and teambuilding skills development, BBVS, PaTTAN and PSU provide professional instruction in the following skill areas:

- Orientation and Mobility to enhance necessary independent travel skills
- Vocational Counseling and Career Exploration to help define students' vocational direction and to provide opportunities for students to interact with successfully employed individuals who are blind or visually impaired
- Social Work to enhance students' social skills and provide emotional support
- Assistive Technology to explore accessible computers and mobile technologies and develop students' skills

Resident Assistants, some of whom are former/current BBVS customers, provide assistance to the students during the Academy. Prior to the start of the program, these Resident Assistants attend a five-day training to develop strategies to help the students maximize their educational experience.



Summer Academy students navigate Penn State's Stone Valley Vertical Adventures high ropes course.



August 2016

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Starbucks Inclusion Academy

Brewing Up Opportunities

In August 2014, Starbucks launched the Starbucks Inclusion Academy, an on-the-job training program for individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities in Nevada. The program consists of six weeks of training in areas of the plant's operations, including shipping and packaging. Because the Starbucks Inclusion Academy's pilot was so successful, the program was quickly expanded to additional locations, including the Starbucks Roasting Plant in York, PA. There, Starbucks partnered with OVR; the Crispus Attucks Association of York, PA; and ProLogistix to implement the program.

OVR's local team met with Donna Johnson, Manager of Starbucks Partner Resources, and established a model that would work for this partnership. Individuals with disabilities interested in achieving a career in food manufacturing and warehouse distribution were recruited for the program, which consists of four weeks of classroom instruction and hands-on training, followed by a two-week internship in the Starbucks facility.

In September 2015, the Starbucks Inclusion Academy in York, PA graduated its first class of four students who all accepted offers of full-time employment at the facility upon graduation. To date, the partnership between OVR and Starbucks has yielded four full time jobs and six temporary jobs. The full-time employees are earning an average wage of \$14.00/per hour. Starbucks continues to grow the program and expects to conduct training sessions quarterly.

Cody Dietz was one of the first graduates of the Starbucks Inclusion Academy at York. After suffering a massive stroke at the age of 17, Cody had to re-learn everything, including walking and speaking. Seven years later, after much determination, hard work and with the assistance of Starbucks and OVR, Cody is now a Distribution Partner at the Starbucks York Roasting Plant. For Cody, it is "an awesome feeling to have a job and work hard."

Top Photo, left to right: Cody Dietz and Eric Brooks, two of the York Plant's first Starbucks Inclusion Academy graduates.

Bottom Photo: Graduates from the first Starbucks Inclusion Academy at the York Roasting Plant receive their certificates at the awards ceremony in September 2015.



September 2016

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National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October 2015 was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), and, in celebration of this year's theme, My Disability Is One Part of Who I Am, OVR District Offices continued their efforts to raise awareness for the need to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and assisted in maximizing individuals' abilities, resources and skills for success in post-secondary education, employment and life. In addition to presenting to employers on disability awareness and the ADA, District Offices hosted job readiness workshops, career fairs, college planning sessions for high school students and mentoring days to introduce students to career options.

2015 NDEAM Highlights

At **Deloitte Disability Mentoring Day** on October 21, OVR customers attended presentations on job searching skills, participated in mock interviews, and attended workshops on resume writing, interview best practices and career planning strategies.

On October 15, in partnership with PennDOT, OVR/BBVS hosted **White Cane Safety Day** at the capitol steps to promote the independence and safety of individuals who travel with a white cane. State Rep Mauree Gingrich, Policy Director for PennDOT Roger Cohen, Secretary of L&I Kathy Manderino and L&I Deputy Secretary Chris Dwyer joined BBVS Harrisburg and Central Office staff and public attendees to receive lessons in Orientation & Mobility, learning how to navigate the capitol steps with a white cane while under simulation shades or goggles.

Volunteers of America of PA and the Pittsburgh OVR District Office co-hosted an **Employer Networking Breakfast and Ability Expo** on October 6. Sponsored by Dollar Bank, the Univ. of Pittsburgh, First Commonwealth Bank, Giant Eagle, 21 and Able and the United Way of Allegheny County, the afternoon Expo gave participants the opportunity to interact with community-based organizations, assistive technology providers, recreational programs, vendors and businesses, including PNC, ATI, FedEx Ground Pittsburgh, UPMC, dck worldwide, Allegheny Health Network, Highmark and Bechtel Marine Propulsion.

Pittsburgh BBVS hosted a **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Career Expo** at Carnegie Mellon University on October 17. A panel presentation led by individuals who are blind or visually impaired and successfully employed by or studying at Carnegie Mellon University and breakout sessions conducted by Google, Enabling Technologies and Independence Science were followed by an afternoon expo showcasing assistive technology, accessible lab equipment and TechBridgeWorld Robotics!

On October 20, the Harrisburg BBVS and BVRS District Offices participated in **Senator Tartaglione's Disability Awareness Day** in the Capitol Rotunda to celebrate NDEAM and to raise awareness for inclusion and equality in the workplace for individuals with disabilities.



Deloitte Disability Mentoring Day



Ability Expo



White Cane Safety Day



Disability Awareness Day



STEM Career Expo



October 2016

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Independent Living Older Blind

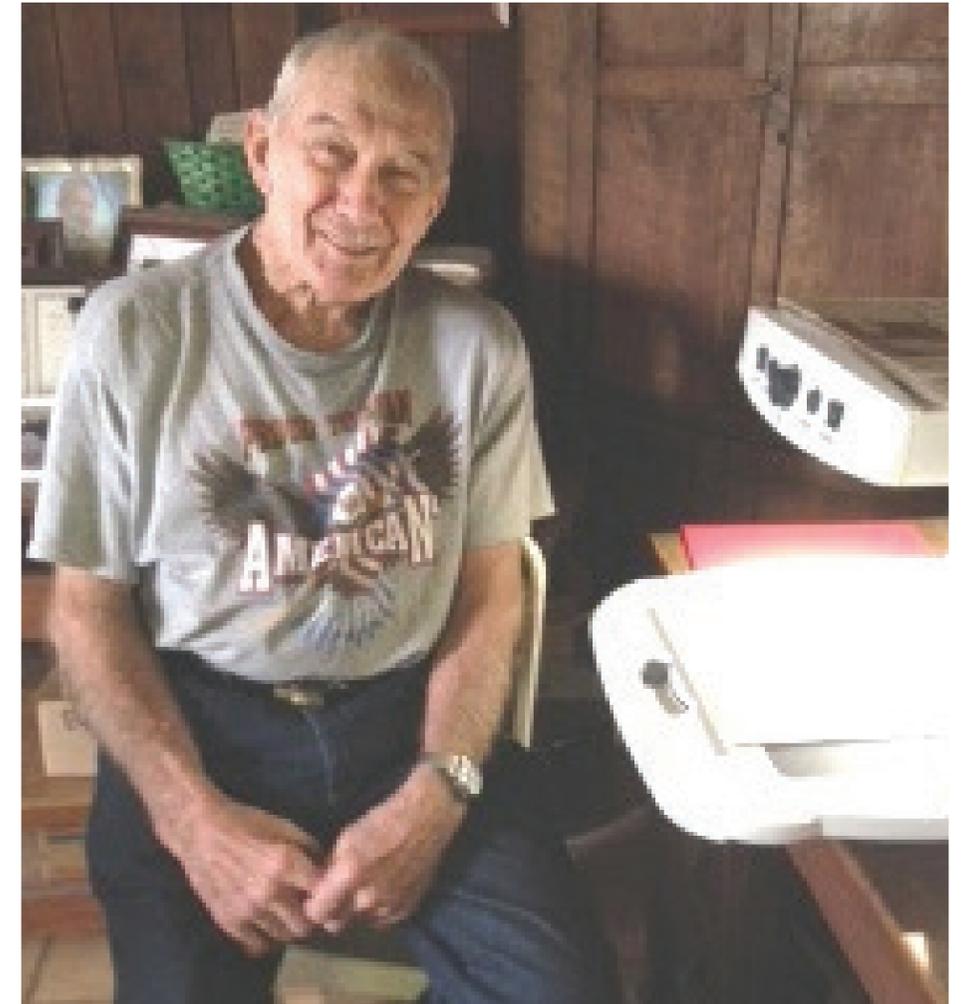
Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB): Services that Promote Self-Reliance and Community Engagement

The purpose of the ILOB program is to provide rehabilitation services to enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired and aged 55 and above to become more independent and self-sufficient in their homes and communities. This program serves an ever-increasing portion of Pennsylvania's aging adult population. After an evaluation is completed, a training plan is developed with a Social Worker to meet the individual's specific needs. This plan can include instructional services provided in-home by professional staff, such as vision rehabilitation therapy for performing daily living activities and orientation and mobility training to teach individuals how to travel independently and safely within their homes, workplaces and communities. Other services include advocacy training; information and referral; individual and family counseling and guidance; adjustment to blindness counseling; communication skills; provision of adaptive aids and equipment; access technology and training; referrals for low vision exams, aids and training; referrals to other agencies; and facilitating community inclusion.

As part of BBVS's efforts to improve or expand services for these individuals, each district office offers group instruction classes for ILOB customers, called JumpStart. These classes are designed to help seniors who are blind or visually impaired understand that it is possible to remain active and independent by introducing different types of training and assistive technology devices. JumpStart sessions address independent living skill needs, such as food preparation, labeling, clothing care, writing, recording/listening devices and cleaning. Classes also may instruct customers on: how to travel safely indoors/outdoors; how to use a white cane; and how to navigate stairs, elevators and public transportation. Finally, many classes include group discussion sessions to allow participants to talk and learn about issues like adjusting to vision loss, medication management, community resources, elder abuse and family interactions.

Mr. Whitfield, World War II Veteran

In 2015, on the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, a local newspaper featured an article about Mr. Thomas Whitfield, a World War II Marine Corps Veteran who fought in Iwo Jima. Due to Mr. Whitfield's severe macular degeneration, he was unable to read the article. After reaching out to BBVS, Mr. Whitfield received low vision and rehabilitation therapy services to assist him with reading, independence and safety. ILOB services facilitated the provision of a closed-circuit television, which allowed Mr. Whitfield to read the article that honored him for his service in World War II.



OVR thanks Mr. Whitfield for his service to our country!

November 2016

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	Veterans Day 11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	Thanksgiving 24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Project SEARCH

Penn State Hershey Medical Center Project SEARCH is a collaborative school-to-work internship program for students with disabilities led by OVR, Penn State Hershey Medical Center and the Capital Area Intermediate Unit with the goal of competitive, integrated employment for each of the students after the internship. Throughout the internship, students participate in classroom instruction and on-the-job training experiences in up to three departments at Penn State Hershey Medical, and there are 15 departments that students can choose to explore career options in, including Dermatology, the Cancer Institute Infusion Clinic, Medical Records and Patient Transportation. Some of the employment and independent-living skills that are taught in the classroom include effective communication, self-advocacy, critical thinking and travel skills. Throughout the internship, students also learn from job coaches and department staff who collaborate to provide support to the students as they gain experience and independence.



Penn State Hershey Project SEARCH students explore career options at Hershey Medical Center in the Clinical Simulation Center and the Patient Transportation Department.



2015 Project SEARCH Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital graduates.

Project SEARCH at Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital is a program that, in partnership with OVR, assists adults with disabilities in achieving sustainable employment and greater independence through classroom education, internships and job development, providing participants with on-the-job training, job coaching and mentoring that builds the skills and experience needed to obtain competitive, integrated employment. The classroom training assists individuals with, among other skills, work readiness, interviewing strategies and practices, and business communication techniques. Individuals can choose to complete their internship in a variety of departments, including Data Entry, Inpatient Therapy and Central Sterilization Processing. Other internship options include Patient Transporter/Unit Attendant, Central Supply Technician and Unit Coordinator.



December 2016

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24
Christmas Day 25	26	27	28	29	30	31	31

OVR Partners with Crayola

OVR and Crayola Create a Colorful Partnership

Crayola believes that “What if?” is the greatest question in the world, a question that makes the impossible permissible. It is this vision that has led them to think creatively about their hiring practices and increase their diversity efforts. And, Crayola is all about diversity as their partnership with OVR demonstrates!

Crayola is also all about community involvement. Their community engagement mission is to enrich the neighborhoods, schools and lives of families in the communities in which they live and work. For Crayola, assisting individuals with disabilities in the community in finding employment, assisting them in focusing on abilities and what they can do, moves their company and the community forward. In their words, it is “a win-win for everybody.”

In collaboration with OVR, Crayola has hired individuals with disabilities to work in a variety of competitive, integrated careers over the past year, including guest relations specialist and custodial positions. Crayola has also employed several Bethlehem Area School District life skills students as production workers with job coaching support from the school. What were Crayola’s keys to successful hiring initiatives with OVR? The first step forward for their company was enrolling the whole company in their vision, getting everyone involved, excited and passionate about inclusive hiring initiatives. Adapting their Crayola Experience to meet the needs of every employee and a willingness to be flexible with employment options, such as changing work schedules and offering part-time opportunities, were keys as well. Receiving training from OVR about the different opportunities available to work with individuals with disabilities and attending OVR’s job fairs to meet talent in the community are both factors that Crayola sites as also having contributed to the success of their programs and initiatives.



Crayola Corporate Recruiter Nicole Davis (center) and a Staffmark Recruiter (left).



From left to right: 1st Row - Crayola Corporate Recruiter Nicole Davis, Corporate Recruiter Stephanie Yachim, Human Resources Director Ken West. 2nd Row – OVR Eastern Business Services & Outreach Specialist Vondol Hammond and Allentown OVR Business Services Representative Jonathan Santana.



January 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
New Year's Day 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	Martin Luther King Day 16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Supported and Customized Employment

OVR uses Supported and Customized Employment services to help customers achieve competitive, integrated employment. Supported and Customized Employment are intensive rehabilitative services that pair an OVR customer with a Job Coach from a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) of their choosing. The Job Coach works intensively with the customer to help them obtain employment. Once employed, the Job Coach works with the customer and employer on the job site to ensure that the customer is able learn their new job duties and is meeting the expectations of the employer. In addition, the Job Coach helps the customer to develop relationships with supervisors and peers.

Bryttanie is a 24-year-old resident of Westmoreland County who was diagnosed with mild cerebral palsy and borderline intellectual disability. Bryttanie worked with her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from OVR who provided career guidance and counseling, and arranged for Bryttanie to participate in a Community Based Work Assessment (CBWA) that would help her identify her skills and potential job goals. The CBWA led to the need for additional services, including supported employment, a driver's evaluation and driver training with a modified vehicle. Her OVR counselor also provided information on housing options, benefits counseling and made referrals to connect Bryttanie to other community services that would allow her to be more independent in her community. This past year, Bryttanie was able to obtain employment at Giant Eagle as a cashier making \$8.25 per hour. When asked how she overcame obstacles in her life to obtain employment, Bryttanie stated: "I have very good determination. I don't like it when people underestimate me. I like to prove people wrong. Just because I have a disability, does not mean I can't do what anybody else can do."

Congratulations, Bryttanie, and best wishes for continued success in your new career!



February 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	Presidents Day 20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

On-the-Job Training

OVR Youth Shine in On-the-Job Training

The Jobs for All On-the-Job Training (OJT) program enables OVR customers to enter into employment by creating paid work opportunities with OVR business partners. OJTs assist employers by providing a reimbursement for a percentage of the customer's wages while they are on-boarding a new employee. The OJT program assists employers in acquiring skilled employees capable of satisfying the specific needs of their business. The Jobs for All OJT program is a win-win for OVR customers and OVR business partners.

A key component of the Jobs for All OJT program is a focus on youth. In 2015, OVR partnered with more than 90 businesses across the state and placed more than 100 youth in paid OJT programs in a diverse range of occupations, including retail, sales, maintenance, food service, call center, public school support, clerical and agricultural positions.

In 2015, through the Jobs for All OJT program, **Zachary Klorczyk** obtained employment at the Fayette County Courthouse with the District Attorney's Office. At the DA's office, some of Zac's duties include: pulling files, making copies and coordinating the delivery of packets, forms and documents to other departments, offices and courtrooms. One of Zac's skills that has helped him to be successful is his ability to remember case information for the District Attorney. When asked what it is like for him to have a job, Zac stated: "It makes me really happy."

On December 22, the OVR Business Services Team, who assisted with Zac's placement, presented the Fayette County Courthouse with an Employer Award for their partnership and for believing in the potential of individuals with disabilities.

Congratulations, Zac, and best wishes for continued success in your career!



Zac (center), his co-workers and OVR District Administrator Darla Openbrier (third from left) with the District Attorney for Fayette County Jack Heneks, Jr. (far left).



March 2017

SUNDAY

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TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

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Little Flower Manor

Linda Shemory is a customer success story from the Wilkes-Barre BBVS office. Over the years, her vision has deteriorated, and, as a result of her vision loss and being unemployed for several years, she was initially unsure of what career she wanted to pursue. A Community Based Work Assessment was completed to allow her to explore her ideas and interests so that she could decide on a career path. Linda did extremely well on the work assessment, and, as a result of this and through the support of her counselor and job coach, Little Flower Manor offered her a position! When Linda began working for Little Flower Manor in Wilkes-Barre in the laundry department, there were challenges to overcome. Two of the challenges were that she had difficulty seeing the dials on the washer and she was unfamiliar with the layout of the facility. Through BBVS, Linda received low vision aids and orientation and mobility services to help her succeed.

Linda notes that when she started at Little Flower Manor, she was nervous, but she persevered. "I knew I could adapt one way or the other," she said. And, she did adapt, through determination and through strategies and techniques used/provided to make her environment accessible.

Frank Butry, Director of Environmental Service at Little Flower Manor, shared with OVR how, when he initially hired Linda, he received resistance from administration and staff who did not think she was capable of doing the job. Frank promised the staff that in six months they would be telling him that she was incredible and one of the best employees at the facility. And, he was right! Frank now encourages other employers to learn from Linda's success story: "You need to give someone a chance," he says. "Please don't ever hesitate to give someone a chance."



April 2017

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TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

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Deaf-Blind Living Well Services

For individuals who are deaf-blind, access to the same environmental and visual information as their peers equals independence and an improved quality of life. Since April 2015, Deaf-Blind Living Well Services (DBLWS) has been assisting individuals who are deaf-blind in accessing the world around them and in achieving greater independence. Made possible by the partnership of OVR's Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services, OVR's Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing and the PA Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC), Support Service Providers (SSPs) offer services to persons who have a dual sensory loss of both vision and hearing, linking them to their environment by supplying relevant information, acting as a guide and facilitating communication in a manner that enables individuals who are deaf-blind to make informed decisions.

OVR, PA SILC and DBLWS held three regional SSP trainings in 2015 at the following locations: Liberty Resources in Philadelphia, Three Rivers Center for Independent Living in Pittsburgh and the Center for Independent Living of Central PA in Camp Hill. Partners for the training included professionals from the Helen Keller National Center and certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists and Orientation & Mobility Specialists. As part of the SSP training, individuals experienced what it was like to be deaf-blind by participating in vision and hearing loss simulations. Trainees received instruction on how to provide visual and environmental information and participated in practice sessions on how to assist a person who is deaf-blind when traveling in different environments, such as city sidewalks, malls and on escalators and stairs. Pennsylvania residents who are deaf-blind are able to be independent in their community again because of the SSP Program, sometimes for the first time in years. The ability to be fully independent means more than being able to travel in the community, though; it involves the opportunity for individuals who are deaf-blind to make their own informed choices. A consumer in Philadelphia shared that "without her (the SSP), I wouldn't know all of these options existed, so I could make my own choices as to what I wanted. I feel SSPs are essential to a deaf-blind person's livelihood."

Deaf-Blind Consumers: As of February 1, 2016, 44 consumers who are deaf-blind are interested in SSP services and 26 consumers who are deaf-blind are actively using SSP services.

SSP Assignment Totals: For the time period 4/15/15 to 12/31/15 – 215 total requests for services and 962.75 hours of services provided

Examples of SSP Assignments Include: doctor appointments; physical therapy sessions; attendance at classes and events, such as conventions; attendance at community meetings; Christmas and grocery shopping; dining out; and leisure/entertainment outings, such as bowling.



SSP Training

May 2017

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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Memorial Day

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31

Early Reach Services

OVR Early Reach Coordinators (ERCs) are building bridges, stretching imaginations and improving futures for transition-age individuals with disabilities! Now there is a trained and dedicated Early Reach Coordinator located in each of OVR's 15 District Offices. Early Reach is helping youths with disabilities across the state to maximize their educational potential and experience. ERC's facilitate opportunities that will help youth think about and prepare for their future in the world of work and a life of independence! ERC's educate, inform and inspire youths along with their parents, schools and provider agencies, regarding the potential of individuals with disabilities, greatly increasing the likelihood of employment success after high school. As part of their outreach coordination, ERCs provide connections to: work-readiness training, OVR services, work-based learning experiences, post-secondary educational programs and self-advocacy.

In addition to ERCs, OVR's Bureau of Central Operations (BCO) employs three Regional Transition Specialists who assist OVR's District Offices through technical assistance, guidance and identified best practices. As OVR expands services to students with disabilities and continues to develop strategic collaboration/partnerships with state departments, colleges/universities and community providers, the Regional Transition Specialists will be working with OVR offices and providers to ensure an infrastructure for programmatic success and integrity, assisting with fulfilling the vision that every student with a disability in PA graduates with at least one paid work experience.

2015 ERC Success Story

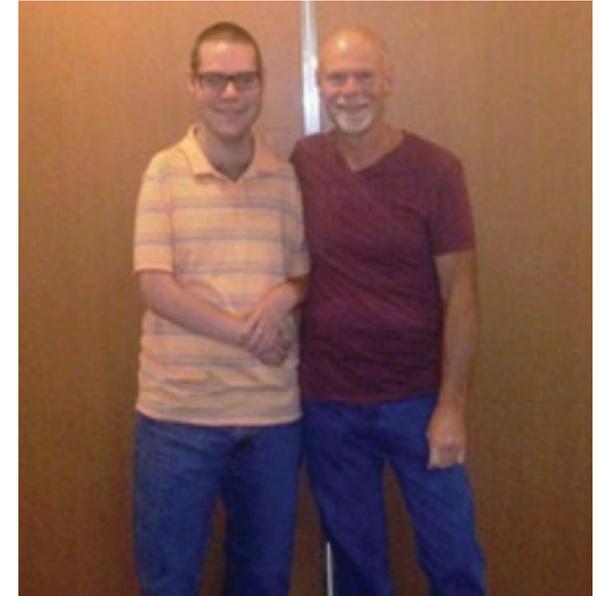
Due to the efforts of Stephanie Perry, ERC in the OVR Norristown District Office, four families learned about, applied for and received scholarships from the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) to attend the PA Community on Transition Conference: Navigating the Road to Success in July 2015. At the conference, participants had the opportunity to network with other youth and young adults and participate in sessions on, among other topics, leadership, job-readiness training and accommodations. Students also had the opportunity to attend the Accommodations and Supports Expo that featured hands-on assistive technology exhibits, vendor displays and resource tables.

During the conference, one scholarship award winner, Tyler Robbins, told Stephanie that "it was humbling to see so many amazing people coming together to learn and share knowledge with a common goal of helping youth with disabilities live more productive, independent and happier lives. What Early Reach and OVR is doing really matters and makes a huge difference."

"Working with my Early Reach Coordinator at OVR is providing me with the support, guidance, encouragement and confidence to continue my education," Justin Cleary, who also received a scholarship to attend the Transition Conference, stated. "A disability should never hold someone back. I know with OVR's support and Early Reach services, I can go onto college and be successful."

Top Photo, left to right: Tyler Robbins (Early Reach Participant) and Robert Robbins (Grandfather)

Bottom Photo, left to right: Jim Cleary (Father), Justin Cleary (Early Reach Participant) and Josephine DiMaio-Cleary (Mother)



June 2017

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WEDNESDAY

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FRIDAY

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Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



The **Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)** is a key provider of services and information for Pennsylvanians who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Who We Are:

- Situated within the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry
- Serve all Pennsylvanians in all 67 counties
- Operate four offices in Allentown, Harrisburg, Johnstown and Erie
- Have no eligibility requirements or fees for our services

What We Do:

- Advocate for equal access to services on behalf of people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Act as a clearinghouse of important information
- Refer people to appropriate organizations
- Maintain a database of registered sign language interpreters

For example, ODHH Can Assist You By:

- Answering your questions and providing you with resources including hearing aids, sign language, laws and technology.
- Offering tailored trainings for your organization.
- Clarifying laws and providing legal resources regarding accommodations.
- Advocating for your equal access at appointments, meetings or in school.

Contact ODHH At:

800-233-3008 v/tty (PA only) • 717-783-4912 v/tty • 717-831-1928 videophone • odhh@pa.gov • www.dli.pa.gov/ODHH

Find us on Facebook:

Pennsylvania Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



July 2017

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

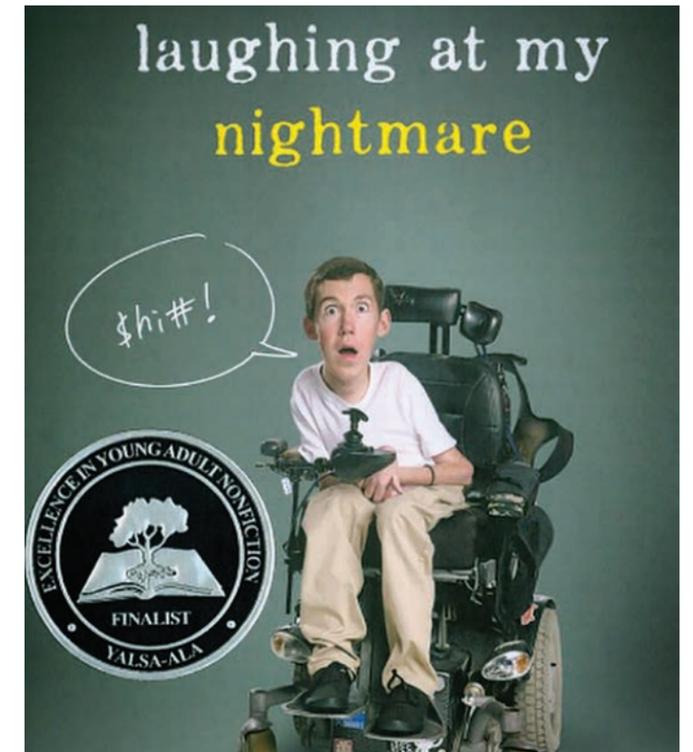
						1
2	3	Independence Day 4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Shane Burcaw's Success Story

Shane Burcaw's Success Shines a Spotlight on the Potential of Individuals with Disabilities

Shane Burcaw is an author, entrepreneur, award-winning blogger, Emmy-winning producer and inspirational speaker from Bethlehem, PA who happens to have spinal muscular atrophy. A graduate of Moravian College with a degree in English, Shane is the author of the bestselling memoir, *laughing at my nightmare*, which was shortlisted for the ALA Excellence in Nonfiction Award. Shane is also the founder and President of the nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, *Laughing At My Nightmare, Inc.*, whose mission is to spread a message of positivity while providing equipment grants to those living with muscular dystrophy. Shane also maintains a blog which has over 500,000 followers and writes freelance for *The Morning Call*.

As a public relations specialist, Shane participates in speaking engagements, promotional activities and book signings. An integral part of Shane's job is traveling to speaking engagements across the county. In addition to receiving VR counseling services from OVR, OVR assisted Shane with obtaining a modified floor and fold-out ramp for his accessible van. These services enabled Shane to fulfill over 45 speaking engagements in 2015, including engagements at venues such as Boston University, the University of Connecticut and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.



August 2017

SUNDAY

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TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

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Pennsylvania Randolph Sheppard Program

The vending facility program authorized by the Randolph-Sheppard Act provides persons who are blind with employment and self-support through the operation of vending facilities on federal or state properties. The program, enacted into law in 1936, was intended to enhance employment opportunities for trained, licensed individuals who are blind to operate facilities. The law was subsequently amended in 1954 and again in 1974 to ultimately ensure individuals who are blind a priority in the operation of vending facilities, which include cafeterias, snack bars and automatic vending machines that are on federal property. The program has broadened through the states Little Randolph Sheppard Act to include state, county, municipal and private locations as well. Under the Randolph Sheppard program, state licensing agencies recruit, train, license and place individuals who are blind as operators of vending facilities (www2.ed.gov).

- BEP licensees earn, on average, \$75,000 annually. This is \$16,000 more than the national average of \$59,000 and an increase of more than 15 percent over 2014 PA vendor earnings.
- Those licensees, in turn, employ more than 75 people, including seven individuals with disabilities.
- In 2015, BEP trained an additional four individuals to become licensees.

BEP Success Story: Alycia Barras

Alycia Barras operates a snack bar in the Finance Building in downtown Harrisburg. A graduate of the BEP program at the Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC), Alycia uses assistive technology to successfully run her business as an individual with a visual and hearing impairment. Some of the assistive technology Alycia uses at her stand include the point of sale technology Square Register, a refreshable braille display, a barcode scanner attached to an iPad and the LookTel Money reader.

“The only thing different about you and I,” Alycia says “is that I happen to be blind. I happen to not be able to see. All of this technology and everything that I do levels the playing field. And, we are more alike than we ever were different.” For Alycia, BEP also gives her the opportunity to educate the public on blindness, teaching individuals about braille, assistive technology and dog guides. Alycia’s hard work, dedication and perseverance shine a positive spotlight on the potential of individuals with disabilities.

For more information about the PA Business Enterprise Program, please contact the Program Director, Ally Wullbrandt, at 717-783-3462 or awullbrand@pa.gov.



September 2017

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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3	Labor Day 4	5	6	7	8	9	
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Hiram G. Andrews Center

Evaluation, Exploration, Education, Empowerment and Employment!

The mission of the Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) is to offer quality, individualized post-secondary education, which provides career opportunities and independent life skills. HGAC, located in Johnstown, provides a comprehensive program of services, featuring the integration of education on campus at the Commonwealth Technical Institute (CTI), counseling, evaluation and physical restoration in a barrier-free environment. A continuum of support services prepares individuals to work and contribute to the community.

Vocational Evaluation

HGAC's Vocational Evaluation Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and is an empowering process that provides the potential student with information necessary for sound career planning. By participating in the evaluation process, individuals learn how to identify their vocational strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Technology

At the Center for Assistive and Rehabilitative Technology (CART), highly trained Assistive Technology (AT) Specialists evaluate customers' abilities, match them with appropriate assistive technology and provide training in its use to maximize independence in the home, school and/or work environments. HGAC also houses the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Lending Library which provides Pennsylvanians with disabilities the opportunity to borrow and assess AT devices prior to purchase.

Cognitive Skills Enhancement Program (CSEP)

CSEP is a collaboration between the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology and HGAC. This 15-week, full-time, pre-vocational training program is designed for OVR customers with cognitive disabilities.

Commonwealth Technical Institute

The mission of the CTI at HGAC is to offer quality, individualized postsecondary education that provides career opportunities and independent life skills. CTI encourages students to evaluate their capabilities, offers the support services needed for pursuit and completion of an educational program, and provides the flexibility to allow for addressable needs. Along with diploma and academic support programs, available degree programs at CTI include: Associate in Specialized Technology (AST) Culinary Arts; AST Networking and Telecommunications Technology; AST Architectural Drafting; and AST Mechanical Drafting.



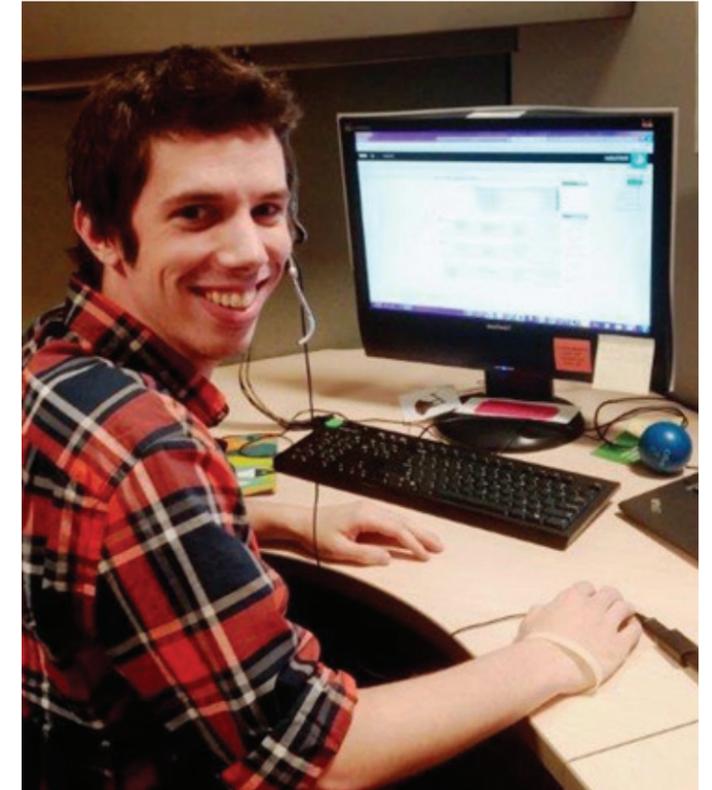
CTI at HGAC Success Story

As a Computer Support Technician with Cigna in Philadelphia, Alex Gideon answers calls, troubleshoots and remedies issues for Cigna employees. A graduate of the Commonwealth Technical Institute (CTI) at Hiram G. Andrews Center's Networking Telecommunications Technology program, Alex began working for Cigna in October 2014 via Bender Consulting Services. He is currently receiving competitive wages with benefits and has been named Bender's "Best Consultant of the Year".

Alex was initially referred to HGAC by the Johnstown OVR District Office for comprehensive Vocational Evaluation. He later returned to participate in the Cognitive Skills Enhancement Program (CSEP), a collaboration between HGAC and the University of Pittsburgh designed for individuals with cognitive disabilities. For Alex, this program helped him recognize his leadership abilities; he also cites the constant support of cognitive therapist Deb Endres as a key to his success.

Alex received tutoring via HGAC's Academic Success Center while he was enrolled in training; and, by the time he graduated, he was able to return as a contracted tutor, providing the same support he once received as a student. While Alex enjoyed working as a tutor at CTI, he is extremely happy to now be living and working in Philadelphia. His job is, he says, "awesome" and "hectic, but in a good way. All the people are super nice, friendly and I really enjoy the work that I do." Every day, he notes, he can't wait to go to work.

When asked what advice he would give prospective CTI students, Alex says that "you need to be dedicated, willing to learn and put time into your education; if you do that, you will get a job."



Alex working at his computer at Cigna in Philadelphia.



OVR Directors

Central Operations	Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Hiram G. Andrews Center	Blindness & Visual Services	Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
				
<p align="center">Ryan Hyde Director</p> <p>OVR's Central Operations in Harrisburg coordinates the policies, funding and resources that make it possible to serve the thousands of Pennsylvanians with disabilities so they can lead productive, independent lives, simultaneously helping Pennsylvania employers meet their workforce needs. For more information, please contact us at 717-787-5244 or ovrco@pa.gov.</p>	<p align="center">Denise Verchimak Director</p> <p>We provide services that are geared towards achieving an individual's employment goals or independence and are intended to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency and independence. Individual personalized services include job counseling and placement, assessment services, job training, entrepreneurial assistance and referral services. For more information, contact us at 717-787-5244 or bvrs@pa.gov.</p>	<p align="center">Jill Moriconi Director</p> <p>Established in 1959, HGAC is one of the world's first and largest comprehensive rehabilitation facilities. HGAC offers a wealth of individualized services, including counseling, evaluation, physical restoration and on-site education at the Commonwealth Technical Institute (CTI). For more information, please contact us at 814-255-8200 or hgac@pa.gov.</p>	<p align="center">Joe Strechay Director</p> <p>We help Pennsylvanians who are blind or visually impaired gain the needed skills to live and work independently in their communities. Services include job placement, orientation and mobility training, rehabilitation teaching and independent living skills. We also work with children with visual impairments to ensure they reach their maximum educational and vocational potential. For more information, contact us at 717-787-6176 or bbvs@pa.gov.</p>	<p align="center">Sharon Behun Director</p> <p>We advocate for individuals and for system changes, act as a clearinghouse of information, administer the Sign Language Interpreter & Transliterator State Registration Act, refer individuals to service providers and ensure communication access with the provider. For more information, contact us at 717-783-4912 or odhh@pa.gov.</p>

Contact the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

<p>OVR Central Office 1521 N. 6th Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 Local Voice: 717-787-5244 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6351</p>	<p>Allentown 45 N. Fourth Street Allentown, PA 18102 Local Voice: 610-821-6441 Toll-free Voice: 800-922-9536</p>	<p>Altoona BVRS 1130 12th Ave., Suite 500 Altoona, PA 16601 Local Voice: 814-946-7240 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6343</p>	<p>Altoona BBVS 1130 12th Ave., Suite 300 Altoona, PA 16601 Local Voice: 814-946-7330 Toll-free Voice: 866-695-7673</p>
<p>DuBois 199 Beaver Drive Dubois, PA 15801 Local Voice: 814-371-7340 Toll-Free Voice: 800-922-4017</p>	<p>Erie BVRS 3200 Lovell Place Erie, PA 16503 Local Voice: 814-871-4551 Toll-free Voice: 800-541-0721</p>	<p>Erie BBVS 4200 Lovell Place Erie, PA 16503 Local Voice: 814-871-4401 Toll-free Voice: 866-521-5073</p>	<p>Harrisburg BVRS Forum Place 555 Walnut Street, 8th Floor Harrisburg PA 17101 Local Voice: 717-787-7834 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6352</p>
<p>Harrisburg BBVS Forum Place 555 Walnut Street, 8th Floor Harrisburg PA 17101 Local Voice: 717-787-7500 Toll-free Voice: 866-375-8264</p>	<p>Johnstown 727 Goucher Street Section 10 Johnstown, PA 15905 Local Voice: 814-255-6771 Toll-free Voice: 800-762-4223</p>	<p>New Castle 100 Margaret Street New Castle, PA 16101 Local Voice: 724-656-3070 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6379</p>	<p>Norristown 1875 New Hope Street Norristown, PA 19401 Local Voice: 484-250-4340 Toll-free Voice: 800-221-1042</p>
<p>Philadelphia BVRS 444 N. 3rd Street, 5th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19123 Local Voice: 215-560-1900 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6381</p>	<p>Philadelphia BBVS 444 N. 3rd Street, 5th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19123 Local Voice: 215-560-5700 Toll-free Voice: 866-631-3892</p>	<p>Pittsburgh BVRS 531 Penn Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15222 Local Voice: 412-392-4950 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6371</p>	<p>Pittsburgh BBVS 531 Penn Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15222 Local Voice: 412-565-5240 Toll-free Voice: 866-412-4072</p>
<p>Reading 3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200 Reading, PA 19605 Local Voice: 610-621-5800 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-0949</p>	<p>Washington 201 W. Wheeling Street Washington, PA 15301 Local Voice: 724-223-4430 Toll-free Voice: 800-442-6367</p>	<p>Wilkes-Barre BVRS 300 G Laird Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702 Local Voice: 570-826-2011 Toll-free Voice: 800-634-2060</p>	<p>Wilkes-Barre BBVS 300 G Laird Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702 Local Voice: 570-826-2361 Toll-free Voice: 866-227-4163</p>
<p>Williamsport The Grit Building, Suite 102 208 W. 3rd Street Williamsport, PA 17701 Local Voice: 570-327-3600 Toll Free Voice: 800-442-6359</p>	<p>York 2550 Kingston Road, Suite 101 York, PA 17402 Local Voice: 717-771-4407 Toll-free Voice: 800-762-6306</p>	<p>Hiram G. Andrews Center 727 Goucher Street Johnstown, PA 15905 Local Voice: 814-255-8200 Toll-free Voice: 800-762-4211</p>	<p>Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing 1521 N. 6th Street Harrisburg, PA 17102 Voice/TTY: 717-783-4912 Videophone: 717-831-1928</p>

Thank You and QR Code Information

2017

January							February							March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31	26	27	28	26	27	28	29	30	31									

April							May							June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1	1	2	3	4	5	6						1	2	3
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31	25	26	27	28	29	30				
30																				

July							August							September								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
						1							1	2							1	2
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30	31	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				
30	31																					

October							November							December										
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7							1	2	3	4							1	2
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23				
29	30	31	26	27	28	29	30	24	25	26	27	28	29	30										

OVR's mission has always been to assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities to secure and maintain employment and independence. We would like to thank our stakeholders, partners and staff for helping to keep that mission alive!

Throughout this annual report you will find QR Codes that link to success stories and videos that spotlight a few of OVR's successful customers, proud partnerships and additional resources.

From your mobile device you can download a free QR Code Reader app that can be used to scan our QR Codes.

If you do not have a QR Code Reader app, go to the App Store or Marketplace on your mobile device and search for "QR Code Reader". There are many free options that will allow you to access all of the content that we are proud to share with you!

Once you have a QR Code Reader app installed, use it to scan a QR Code like the one you see below, which links to our Office of Vocational Rehabilitation website!

