

**“Working together,
we can create even
more opportunities
for people with
disabilities.”**



ABOVE: SHAWN STOKES, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES



National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2015

*Celebrating workers
with disabilities*

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At Work, It's What People Can Do That Matters

A Message from Shawn Stokes, Director, Office of Human Resources

I am so pleased to present this final edition of the County's National Disability Employment Awareness Month newsletters. I hope that the stories shared in each newsletter have helped inform readers about Montgomery County's commitment to provide job training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In prior issues, we highlighted Project SEARCH, the Customized Employment Public Intern Project, and the Non-Competitive Hiring Policy for people with disabilities. This issue showcases stories from the County's Public Libraries.

The stories serve as examples of best practices made possible by departments throughout the County that provide job training and employment opportunities to people with disabilities. Nevertheless, Montgomery County government cannot do this alone—it takes the combined efforts of individuals across public and private sectors to help people with disabilities achieve their goals.

As this special month of recognizing workers with disabilities comes to a close, let's renew our efforts to partner with the parents of children who are disabled, increase the availability of paid and non-paid job training programs, improve on-the-job training, and strengthen coaching initiatives for people with disabilities, including disabled veterans. Together, we can develop innovative approaches to acquire new resources and enhance the partnership of everyone involved in these very special initiatives.

Above all, let's continue to work together to make a difference every day in the lives of people with disabilities.

Shawn Y. Stokes, Director
Office of Human Resources

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Parker Hamilton

Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL)

As Director, Parker works to assure that MCPL offers residents free and equal access to information that sustains and enriches their lives. MCPL believes in the right of all to learn and to grow.

Parker is committed to provide a workforce reflective of individuals who live and work in the County. She states, "It is important for County residents to see MCPL staff members who are from their communities. Persons with disabilities live and work in Montgomery County and they want to live productive lives to care for themselves and family members."

MCPL employees are productive workers and provide quality customer services. This is possible because of partnership programs like Project SEARCH and the Customized Employment Public Intern Project. "Just as there are differences among individuals, like language, cultures, skills, and experiences," said Parker, "persons with disabilities have individual strengths and abilities they use in their work settings."

MCPL managers and supervisors give their time and experience to provide job training and support to newly hired staff to help them learn their work responsibilities. She believes that the "key to helping any individual, including a person with a disability, is to keep the doors to opportunities open to help individuals succeed in their job." She

described the example of an MCPL employee with a hearing impairment who completed her job training program and now successfully works at the MCPL Information Desk providing quality services for library customers.

On a personal note, Parker recalled the challenges she faced because she was a stutterer. She remembered the difficulties she experienced and overcame to develop skills she now uses to help her communicate. "Like me, others need the opportunity to use their existing skills and abilities while developing the new skills needed to overcome any difficulties, maximizing their chance for success."



Michael Roberts

Library Aide, White Oak Library, MCPL

In February 2015, Michael was hired as a Library Aide in the Kensington Park Library. Michael is responsible for pulling and processing the online requests submitted by County residents for books, CDs and video materials. He assists co-workers with collecting, sorting and shelving library materials.

Due to renovations underway at his work station in the Kensington Park Library, Michael has been temporarily assigned to work at the White Oak Library. On the day of this interview, Michael reported to his new White Oak Library assignment, ready to join his co-workers. His supervisor, Su-Yuan Chen, said of Michael, "He is very capable of managing the duties of the White Oak online reservation system."

Speaking about his work experiences prior to joining MCPL, Michael said that he did not feel a sense of accomplishment. He wanted to work somewhere he could use his skills and abilities. He notes, "I feel pretty confident in the work I do at the library. I enjoy the professional atmosphere, I like the people I work with, and I provide good customer services."

Outside of work, Michael volunteers in his church. "I am a member of the Knights of Columbus at my church," he said, "and work in activities that help my community members." Michael graduated from the University of Maryland at College Park with a Bachelor's degree in information systems management.

Fun fact:

Job accommodations for people with disabilities are usually low cost or no cost. A recent study conducted by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) revealed that 57 percent of workplace accommodations cost absolutely nothing. Of those accommodations that did have a cost, the typical one-time expenditure by employers was \$500.

Source:
www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org

Meet the Providers of Opportunities for People with Disabilities



Su-Yuan Chen

Library Assistant Supervisor, MCPL

Su-Yuan has worked with MCPL since 1996. This is her second year working at the White Oak Library. Previously, she worked at the Wheaton Library.

The White Oak Library offers special events and services to a diverse community of County residents. For example, the library partners with the Work Opportunities Unlimited agency that provides job skills and support services to adults with disabilities who volunteer at the library. The volunteers are supported by job coaches to learn and develop their work skills.

Su-Yuan said, "I look forward to working with Michael Roberts, our new Library Aide. I am aware that he is a good worker, because he is a good listener and asks good questions. This is one of the core values of library staff—an important value needed to help people who use our library services."



Regina Holyfield-Jewett

Senior Executive Administrative Aide, MCPL

Since 2008, Regina has worked at the Rockville Library in several capacities with department staff who provide job training opportunities to individuals with disabilities. For example, she has served as supervisor for interns enrolled in Project SEARCH Montgomery.

Regina believes that each new employee, including those with disabilities, has a unique learning style. She also feels that new employees have one thing in common when they begin a new job — the need for guidance to help them understand their responsibilities so that they can do the best possible job.

According to Regina, "To help new employees, I first needed to be aware of their individual learning and work styles. This taught me how to give helpful instructions and provide the support that they need to succeed in their jobs." She uses this insight when she works with people with disabilities.



Carol Legarreta

Public Services Administrator for Community Engagement and Human Resources, MCPL

Carol's primary responsibility is to ensure that community libraries are responsive to the communities they serve, and that the MCPL workforce is trained to provide quality services. Several employees under the non-competitive hiring policy work as library aides in the Rockville, Olney, Davis, and Kensington Park Libraries.

To support these and other new employees, Carol developed a targeted staff training model. The model utilizes a team-based approach to carefully examine and break down the complexities of each job task. The team consists of the new employee or intern, a career counselor, a job coach and the staff coordinator, and ensures the new employee understands the requirements of the job.

When asked how the County's non-competitive hiring policy benefits people with disabilities, Carol said, "The County is committed to removing barriers for persons with disabilities. This makes a significant impact on the lives of County residents who apply for employment with MCPL. Individuals under the non-competitive hiring policy have shown that they not only qualify to fill the positions, they are dedicated employees."

Special Thanks

Many organizations and County departments provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to help them develop their work skills and abilities. Representatives provide their time and experience to train, mentor and supervise Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project and Project SEARCH Montgomery participants to help them achieve their workforce goals.

A sincere message of appreciation to the individuals who work at:

- Montgomery County Government Departments:
 - Board of Elections
 - Community Use of Public Facilities
 - Correction and Rehabilitation
 - Environmental Protection
 - Fire and Rescue Service
 - General Services
 - Health and Human Services
 - Housing and Community Affairs
 - Human Resources
 - Management and Budget
 - Office of the County Attorney
 - Office of the State's Attorney
 - Permitting Services
 - Police
 - Public Libraries
 - Recreation
 - Sheriff's Office
 - Technology Services
 - Transportation
- Ivymount School
- Seeking Equality Empowerment and Community for People with Developmental Disabilities (SEEC)
- City of Gaithersburg
- City of Rockville
- Montgomery College
- Montgomery Parks

Photo Gallery



In Closing...

This newsletter concludes our special series of weekly publications celebrating the 70th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. We have enjoyed presenting stories of the County's best practices that provide job training and employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

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