

ACCESSability

Autumn 2011

Siffrin Inc.
Engaging & empowering people with disabilities

FROM THE DIRECTOR: "EMPLOYING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES"

People with disabilities want to work and they are motivated to work. In addition to the financial gain, persons with disabilities have the need to feel efficient and complete, spend time among other people in an integrated work setting and, at the end of the day, want to feel they have done something useful and fulfilling.

Naturally, there are several obstacles on the way to the labor market. Some of these are technical, others related to health issues, yet others deal with poor professional skills, education and even physical stamina. Sadly, these obstacles can and have led to persons with disabilities having a low self-esteem and being passive about their wishes and choices for employment.

I feel one of the primary responsibilities of Siffrin, as well as other providers of similar employment services, is to educate ourselves and take an honest and realistic look at the barriers our own system has created that hinders a person's ability to be employed in the community.

Our system has created a very sedentary population. Traditionally, people with disabilities have had "piece work" that requires the employee to sit at a table for multiple hours per day, multiple days per week. This has created a group of potential workers that have a difficult time with more active work placement. Stamina, energy, motivation have not been the priority in these settings. Ultimately, an even smaller box has been built in the employment search process.

Our system has created and utilized "training centers" built on the concept of training a person for something better such as community employment. Many people do not leave these training centers. What message have we sent to a person who is in a training situation with their coworkers for five, 10, 15 sometimes 20 years? What are we saying to the individuals we serve who are training but have sporadic, or worse, no work

with which to train? What message are we sending to workers who are disabled when it snows they do not have to go to work, when they can't even get to work because their transportation has shut down as well?

The argument is that individuals attending the many workshops in this state like to go because they have friends there. That may be, but has our system adequately prepared individuals to know there is an alternative? Have we broken down traditional thinking and barriers that are new to us, the system? Have we inspired individuals and educated individuals as to the possibilities from which they have to choose?

An additional barrier to community employment is the "territorial" aspect of the service delivery system. Situations exist where individuals capable of working in the community are sitting in workshop/day service settings with no work while agency's who have acquired community based contracts for work cannot find enough workers to hire. There needs to be an initiative for identification of willing and capable workers who are able to train on the job with a job coach much like there is a portal for residential services.

I am pleased that there are more choices and options for persons with disabilities than ever before. I celebrate with all individuals, and the staff who support them, who have experienced employment success. But with the increase in employment choices comes a systems based obligation for education of individuals about opportunity, skills needed to take advantage of those multiple opportunities, and not just technical skills but the physical and attitudinal skills as well.

A Karen Ravn quote says, "Only as high as I reach can I grow, only as far as I seek can I go, only as deep as I look can I see, only as much as I dream can I be."

2011 Siffrin Golf Outing

The sixth annual Siffrin Golf Outing presented by The O'Neill Group was held on Monday, September 12 at Brookside Country Club. The weather was a perfect 75 degrees and sunny, and despite the emergency decision to aerate the greens a week prior to the outing, it was a fantastic day of golf and raising money and awareness for people with developmental disabilities.

Twenty-five foursomes played, and after a three-way scorecard playoff, one team went home with the glory. Don DeVille, Tom Jackson, Todd Locke and Dave Waikem each won \$100 credit in the Brookside CC Pro Shop with a score of 134. Though every foursome walked away with a voucher to return to the course to play when the greens are in prime condition.

"It was an emergency situation to aerate the greens early this year, and one that many courses have made," said Faye Hudec, golf outing committee member. "Due to the huge amounts of hard rain we have received this year, Brookside could not wait. We were obviously disappointed initially, but the voucher to return to play for free was extremely generous of the course, and, I think, made up for it and then some. Everyone had a great time, and that's what matters."

The Siffrin golf outing is a charity fundraiser for the nonprofit organization. This year all of the proceeds will benefit the Siffrin

HOPE Fund. Each year, Siffrin services extend beyond the funding dollar. There are certain services and items that Siffrin provides to those with disabilities because it's needed, and has no way of billing for those items or services. The HOPE Fund was created to provide for those needs. Past examples include purchasing bedroom furniture, clothing and toiletries for people in emergency situations; paying a down payment for a person to move into a safer home and neighborhood; purchasing professional clothing for a job interview so that they may be employed in the community. Over the course of a year, these expenses add up. With the HOPE Fund, the goal is to do more for people without affecting the overall budget of the organization.

Thank you to all of the sponsors, golfers and volunteers for making the golf outing so successful!



*(Right to left):
Don DeVille,
Todd Locke, Tom
Jackson & Dave
Waikem won at
the Siffrin golf
outing with a
score of 134.*



AMERICAN HEROS

A tribute to all who serve our country

This year, November 11 celebrates Veterans Day, a national holiday dating back to World War I that celebrates the cause of world peace and honors all people who have served our country. Ten years after the attack on September 11, our country is still engaged in battle. Only time will tell how this war will be remembered, but the men and women who have and still are serving our country will forever be remembered as American heros.

The following is a list of all Siffrin employees and their family members who have proudly served our country.

ALBRIGHT, ALEXANDER Son of Christine Albright, Active member of the Navy, Nuclear-Submarine, 2 years of service
BELL, CURTIS Siffrin employee, Air Force Veteran, served in Vietnam

DANFORD, ANDREW Son of Trina Danford, Active member of the Army, currently completing service in Iraq
CARROLL, TANIKA Siffrin employee, Active member of the National Guard

CLARK, DONALD A. Uncle of Pamela Tolliver, Army Veteran, Awarded Purple Heart, 3 years of service

COLE, WILLIAM Husband of Kristi Cole, Army National Guard Veteran, 4 years of service

EVERSOLE, RANDY Brother of Cheryl Eversole, Active member of the Air Force Reserve since 1985

FARNSWORTH, BRENDAN Nephew of Lisa Robarge & Becky Lloyd, Active member of the Air Force

FOX, HUGH Grandfather of Melanie White, WWII Army Veteran

GROSSI, ANTHONY Siffrin employee, Army Veteran, 2 years service

HEGAL, JON Siffrin employee, Army Veteran, 3 years of service overseas

HILL, MERVIN Father of Lisa Robarge & Becky Lloyd, Army Veteran

MASTERS, JERI, S. Friend of Pamela Tolliver, Army Veteran, 3 years service, 2 years Active Reserves

POLK, KIMBERLY Siffrin employee, Army Veteran, 4 years of service, received Medal of Good Conduct

POTTS, DENNIS Siffrin employee, Air Force Veteran, 3 years active duty, 5 years reserves

TOLLIVER, CLARENCE H., JR. Brother of Pamela Tolliver, Retired from the US Navy, 1984 - 2004

TOLLIVER, CLARENCE H., SR. Father of Pamela Tolliver, Marine Veteran, 3 years of service, five years Reserves

WOLAK, COLE Brother of Elaine Wolak, Army Veteran, 5 years of service



Identify & erase barriers for people with disabilities.

There are many different types of barriers that interfere with everyday life for people with developmental disabilities. Working together to identify and eliminate these barriers is the only way to be successful.

Barrier Category: TRANSPORTATION

Research clearly shows that travelers with disabilities face multiple barriers in every mode of travel. People with disabilities travel less and report more mobility problems than those without disabilities; almost 2 million Americans report themselves to be home bound. Public transit helps for some when that option is available, but when it's not an option, and purchasing an accessible vehicle is not possible, people have a very difficult time getting around. Barriers to transportation make it extremely difficult for people with disabilities to be involved in their community.

These barriers and others need to be identified and removed throughout our community to allow equal access for people with disabilities. Please call the Siffrin office if you have identified a barrier 330-478-0263.

Anyone associated with Siffrin is welcome to call Rob at Progressive Chevrolet when looking for a new vehicle. Progressive Chevrolet is a long-time partner and supporter of Siffrin, and he is happy to take care of anyone within Siffrin.

UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

Pam Eversole lives independently in a home she owns and has worked very hard to maintain. After she and her support staff at Siffrin submitted an application to United Way, Pam's home became a project site during this year's Day of Caring.

"I have lived here for 21 years," said Pam. "The deck looks really nice now. I'm so proud of my house."

On September 1, four volunteers from First Energy chose to work with Pam to stain her back deck and do some light landscaping around her home.

"Pam's home looks amazing," said Darla Rider Manager of Community Support Services. "We are so appreciative to the First Energy employees. They did a great job."

According to United Way of Greater Stark County, Pam's home was one of 96 projects completed through the Day of Caring, with more than 1,100 volunteers from Stark County businesses. The theme of this year's Day of Caring was "Think We Before Me" and is a community-wide effort to make Stark County a better place to live.

Next year Pam plans to replace the front door and five windows to continue improving her home.



Pam, pictured in the front, had help staining her deck by First Energy volunteers through the United Way Day of Caring.

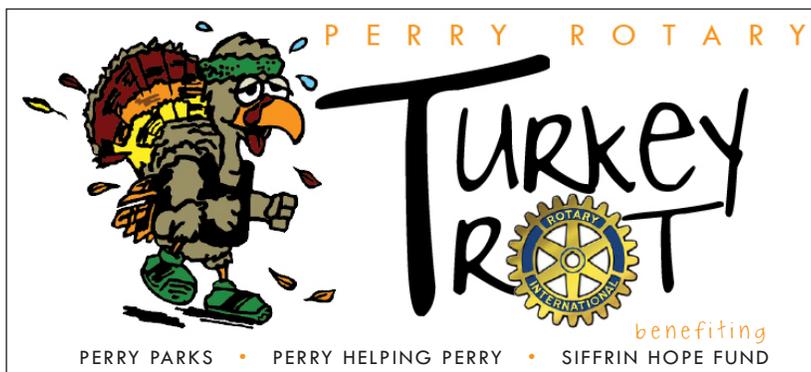


Perry Rotary Turkey Trot

Siffrin is proud and excited to be a beneficiary of the 15th Annual Perry Township Rotary Turkey Trot. The 5K race is held each year on Thanksgiving morning, and is a charity event that supports nonprofits selected by Perry Rotary. This year, along with Siffrin, the proceeds will be shared with Perry Township Parks System and Perry Helping Perry.

“The Turkey Trot is a fantastic Thanksgiving tradition,” said Marketing Director Melanie White. “Our community and whole families coming out to run or walk for a charity event is such a great way to start the day of Thanksgiving.”

The race will be held on Thursday, November 24 at 8:30AM at Canton Central Catholic High School. Registration for the 5K run/walk or 1.2 mile walk is now open online at www.RS Racing Systems.com. Visit perrytwpro-tary.org for more information.



What's Happening? Doug loses 100+ lbs & Bob visits Canada

Doug Richards has been working very hard for more than three years to become healthier and more physically fit. He has reached a huge milestone in that journey recently after breaking the 100 pound weight loss goal. Healthy eating and regular exercise have helped him shed a total of 104 pounds and has made him more outgoing and energetic. Congratulations, Doug!



Dale Richards Community Support Specialist vacationed with Bob Little this fall on a northern Michigan and Canadian train ride. The train traveled 114 miles north of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan to the Agawa Valley. On the way home they stopped at Frankenmuth, MI, and at the Mackinac Bridge for pictures.



*In loving
memory*

It is with great sorrow that Siffrin says goodbye to two wonderful co-workers and friends, Al Torrence & Fran Mattern, and long-time friend and former resident of a Siffrin home, Maria Charlikowskyi. All are greatly missed by everyone at Siffrin.

Both Al Torrence and Fran worked for Siffrin for about 13 years. They were exceptional at their job, and cared dearly for those they served. They are truly an inspiration to all of us for how to serve others and make a huge difference in other people's lives one day at a time.

Maria received residential services from Siffrin for seven years before her needs increased and moving to another home. She will always be a part of the Siffrin family.

Supporting Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is all about people being empowered to make choices and decide what is best for them as an individual. Self advocates enjoy their rights and responsibilities and understand that everyone should have the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them. Being a strong supporter of a self-advocate comes down to ensuring that the person has opportunities for self-expression and developing assertiveness skills, while at the same time being aware of rights and responsibilities.

The core value of the self-advocacy movement is that the person is an equal, and capable of making choices and calling the shots. If a potential supporter holds an attitude that this is not possible, they are not ready to be a genuine supporter and efforts will most likely fail. If a potential supporter's mind set is still stuck in a place of being a "caregiver" vs. a "supporter", again this won't yield positive results. The best way to support a self-advocate is to follow the rule of thumb of treating someone as you'd like to be treated, for example...as an adult ...with dignity and respect ...and as an equal whose opinions and experience matters and are valued.

*"If you're not actively involved in getting what you want, you don't really want it."
- Peter McWilliams*

YOU CAN BETTER SUPPORT SELF-ADVOCACY BY ENCOURAGING SELF-ADVOCATES TO...

- take responsibility for their own lives, and to speak up for themselves and for what they want
- believe in the power of their voice and their influence
- take on leadership roles and opportunities for personal growth
- make personal choices and informed decisions for themselves
- develop their skills of persuasion: engage in letter writing campaigns, find ways to gather support for a cause, and be involved in rallies and on political action committees, and so on
- educate and inform community members about important disability issues
- develop and nurture their social capital, social connections and community involvement
- negotiate with those holding positions of authority such as in government and at the local community level
- meet with doctors and professionals independently when possible and communicate their needs autonomously as an individual
- find alternate means of communication if the advocate doesn't use words as his or her primary mode of communication

- promote and be involved in the local People First chapter and other self-advocacy groups
- ensure that youth are supported to advocate for themselves as students
- finish their education and pursue any goals of complimentary education and higher education
- be involved on boards and on advisory committees
- learn about political issues that concern them and to be involved in voting

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUPPORTERS: YOU CAN BE A BETTER SUPPORTER BY....

- being comfortable in taking guidance from the self-advocate – be there to listen and support, not to take over
- avoiding being judgmental and disapproving – being negative in this way will often kill any seeds of relationship building
- following through on what you say you'll do – this is one of the best ways to demonstrate that you can be trusted and relied upon
- being able to accept criticism and use it to become a better supporter
- identifying and supporting self-advocates at work and through pursuing their desired career goals
- being a great listener and taking supporting action when necessary
- understanding the difference between supporting and getting in the way – and not getting in the way
- having great expectations for the self-advocate and believing in them as they continue to gain in confidence and grow in personal resilience
- recognizing and acknowledging that the self-advocate holds the power over his or her life or circumstances – no one else

Written by The Council on Quality and Leadership

Congratulations
to the Project SEARCH staff for winning the 2011 OPRA Outstanding Team Award! You all do a wonderful job creating opportunities for people with disabilities in the workplace.

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF: *Becky Lloyd*

One of the first things you'll notice about Becky Lloyd is her high level of energy, and it's a good thing too because she is a busy woman. Between her professional life, family, volunteer work and personal interests, Becky stays busy around the clock and has no intention of slowing down anytime soon.

Becky has worked at Siffrin for a combined six and a half years in several different positions and departments. Originally hired as a Community Support Specialist, helping people who live in their own home with various needs and services, Becky recently was promoted to Associate Regional Director (ARD). Only about two and a half months into her current position, she's still learning but has big goals in sight.

"Becky's true passion lies with our individuals," said Regional Director Kim Phillips. "She is a real go-getter, and has been a fast learner for the ARD position. She is a great addition to the Siffrin Management."

As the ARD, Becky supervises the Stark County Managers of Supervised Living (MSL), supervises and helps schedule the home staff in Stark County, and coordinates services and growth in Medina County. Much of Becky's job is problem-solving, and implementing innovative strategies to maximize services.

"Right now I'm trying to meet and create relationships with those we serve in Stark County," said Becky. "In order to fully serve people I need to know them personally, and know what they want from us. We have a great team of MSLs working together; I'm just trying to be a resource for them to create solutions when there's a road block."

Ultimately, as Becky delves further into her responsibilities and assumes even more, she will be overseeing all of the service plans for about 70 people in Stark County and working to further enhance and maximize the quality and efficiency of services. Her focus will remain on quality lives for those we serve through on going observation, dialogue and collaboration with the MSLs, funding agencies, direct care staff, parents & guardians, and most importantly, people served.

"I love that I'm able to help other staff, individuals and their families," said Becky. "I'm good at finding solutions, and am inspired by the fact that I have a chance to improve people's lives."

Becky is a proud mother of three, Breanna, who is married,



Becky (far right) sits with her three kids, Breanna, Josh & Adam.

Adam, who lives in Cincinnati and is getting married next November, and Josh, a senior at McKinley High School currently investigating colleges. She and her boyfriend, Rob Wright, also an employee at Siffrin, have two dogs, and are preparing for Rob's daughter, Caroline's, wedding in December. Rob has a second daughter, Jaci, a sophomore at Kent State University. "Christmas gets a little crazy at my house," said Becky with a smile.

Becky's also involved with her church. For several years, she and Josh have volunteered to pack food to be sent to Haiti. Her next goal is to raise enough money to go to Haiti on a mission trip with her church. Becky bowls once a week on a league with her daughter and two sisters, she also plays on a softball league, gardens and sews. "I have a box of t-shirts for each of my kids from when they were in camps and sports that I will be making into t-shirt quilts when I find the time," said Becky.

If anything, Becky has energy; what she could use a little more of is time to do everything.

Celebrating service

TWENTY YEARS

Kristi Cole

TEN YEARS

Toni Ross
Esther Smith

FIVE YEARS

Alicia Loughry
Genevieve Brunner
Robert Barkan
Marguerite Hoover

THREE YEARS

Meshaela Gurley
Cassandra Wisdom
Jory Silver
Karen Fears
Gary Venus
Kimberley Polk
Contessa Simons
David Macias
Laterra Henderson
Tiffany Ericksen

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Melissa Smith, CPA

Stephen Wright

Bradley L. Vincent
Executive Director

mission statement

Siffrin, Inc. is a not for profit service organization whose mission focuses on supporting people with disabilities to achieve full community access leading to a meaningful and productive life, by encouraging and assisting personal choice and goals of each individual.

suggestions

Melanie White
Director of Marketing & Public Relations

Ideas, Comments, & Suggestions:
Please send to Melanie White at
2912 Whipple Ave. NW
Canton, Ohio 44708
or email them to
melaniewhite@siffrin.com

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2912 Whipple Ave. NW
Canton, Ohio 44708
330-478-0263
www.siffrin.com