

INSIDE THIS EDITION

CSCC Certification Program	1
Message from the President	2
Sara Haag Honored	3
HOME Choice	4
LIFE Works	5
Professional Employment Organization	6
Map	8
Board of Directors	9



CSCC CERTIFICATE PROGRAM STARTS SECOND YEAR

By Teresa O'Connell, Editor

Leading the trend to make college training accessible to people with developmental disabilities, Columbus State Community College (CSCC) welcomed 14 students in June to its second Community/Habilitation Assistant Certificate Program. The 20 credit-hour program is designed to prepare students who have developmental disabilities for a career in human services. Class of 2009 students were selected from a pool of thirty applicants, are residents of Franklin (9), Delaware (1), and Fairfield (1) counties, and range in age from 18 to 40. For each of four quarters they will attend classes 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. one day a week. With the exception of only the first quarter, students will spend 14 hours a week completing internships at various agencies. It's not an easy program.

CSCC's Community/Habilitation Assistant Certificate Program started in 2007. It is based on Human Services Department Chair Lenore Schneiderman's vision that post high school education be accessible to students with developmental disabilities and, just as importantly, lead to employment. It is the emphasis on preparation for employment that distinguishes the CSCC program. While other colleges adapt classes so that people with developmental disabilities can pursue personal interests, the CSCC certificate program is designed to provide students with training, credentials and experience that lead to a job supporting individuals with disabilities. Of eight students who completed the first year certificate program, five currently work with individuals with disabilities in assistant positions. These graduates work 20 – 35 hours per week, earn above \$8.00 hour, and report sky-high levels of job satisfaction.

Jackie Teny-Miller, Program Coordinator, developed the Community/Habilitation Assistant Certificate Program at CSCC. Courses are ODMRDD approved and graduates are eligible for registration. Teny-Miller shares that simple, planned adjustments allow people with developmental disabilities to successfully complete requirements. Certificate program student receive help with registration, scheduling, and otherwise navigating the college system. All classes are staffed by an instructor and two teaching assistants to assure support for each student. Adaptations to the curriculum include the way material is presented, how learning is assessed, and an active classroom structure. Teaching assistants also provide initial support at internship sites.

(Continued on page 4)

And Now a Final Word from Your President.....

In my final note as the outgoing president of our exceptional association, I wish to share my views about relationships. Professional relationships are important in any work environment but they are especially critical in the delivery of human services. The persons receiving our adult services and support are depending on continuous, high quality service delivery. It is by collaboration and cooperation that we ensure the individual's success.

On occasion, I wonder about how we as providers collaborate and cooperate with one another. And most of you know me so you know that I can spend an inordinate amount of time pondering such dilemmas. We should never take our relationships for granted for it is the relationship that *is the bridge* that carries us over the difficult times.

Many people know that I like to read and that I like to share the more interesting passages with others. Well, at least they are interesting in *my* mind! I came across the following piece a couple of years ago during a time when my "batteries" were low. It helped me to remember just how important our relationships are, and I've since relied upon these guidelines to further develop my connections with folks within and outside of Adult Services. I hope that you will find this passage both interesting and helpful!

Guidelines for a Professional Relationship

Adapted from Unknown Source

I will learn your language and teach you mine.

I will ask you for your perceptions and feedback, not for praise or affirmation, but to learn more of what you know and to challenge my own timeworn positions.

I will share my strengths and my weaknesses with you so that we can both grow.

I will not withhold professional secrets from you or cling tenaciously to my turf; but I will tell you when I am feeling invaded and expect you to do the same.

I will confront you, challenge you, listen to you, and learn from you. I will expect you to do the same with me.

I am not going far. I'll be sitting around the corner of the table. I'll be doing what other former adult services directors who are now superintendents do. I'll still be advocating for persons served. And I'll be proud to continue to use my voice to promote and champion the efforts of a most dedicated and honorable organization providing services to adults in Ohio.

Best Regards, Melanie

OAAS HONORS SARA HAAG



President Melanine Stretchberry (right) presents OAAS keepsake box to Sara Haag. Sara was honored at the OAAS annual meeting.

The most renowned voice in Ohio MRDD was honored September 29th at the OAAS annual meeting, held in conjunction with the fall retreat at Deer Creek Resort and Conference Center. In a surprise ceremony Sara Haag, recently retired from ODMRDD’s Office of Staff Development and Certification, was recognized for her work to help adult services staff maintain State-required credentials. Sara’s appearance at Deer Creek, arranged by friend and former colleague Susan Woods, was the first time most OAAS members had seen the woman behind the legendary voice.

As a tribute to Sara’s exemplary public service, OAAS announced the establishment of an annual \$500 scholarship in her name to fund seminar costs for direct service workers. In addition she was given a basket over-filled with gift items made by people with disabilities.

Clearly moved by the expressions of appreciation and affection, Sara said to those attending, “Keep doing good work, keep your certifications renewed, and be patient with Lottie (Blazer) because she has new duties.”

Although the rules were always the rules, Sara never hesitated to go the extra mile to make things work. We listened while she pondered our latest dilemma out loud. It wasn’t always pretty. OAAS members will forever remember Sara for a raspy voice that could both scold and sooth, the former always well deserved and then some, but invariably followed, at some point, by the latter. She could not disguise her kindness. Many were the times she pulled our behinds out of the fire. Thanks Sara. We do so miss you.

HOME Choice - Helping Ohioans Move, Expanding Choice

HOME Choice is a “Money Follows the Person” demonstration project funded by CMS to help Ohio transition approximately 2200 older adults and people with disabilities from long-term care facilities to home settings. Candidates for the HOME Choice project may be any age, but must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Have lived in a facility setting at least six months
- Be eligible for Medicaid
- Have care needs that would otherwise be met only by a long-term care facility
- Agree (or a parent or guardian agrees) to program requirements

When an individual is determined eligible for HOME Choice, an ODJFS transition coordinator will work with them to develop a comprehensive transition plan before they move. Transition plans include locating suitable housing, coordination of benefits, and community linkage. To ensure continued supports after transition, HOME Choice recipients are also enrolled on existing waiver programs or state plan Medicaid services.

Additionally, transitioned individuals can also receive HOME Choice Demonstration and Supplemental Services for the first year of living in the community. These services could include independent living skills, community support coach, nutritional consultation, nursing, and social work/counseling. One-time services may include communications aids or service animals.

HOME Choice rules went into effect July 1 of this year. Program enrollment is expected to begin sometime in October. County boards are currently gearing up to use HOME Choice to support transition to Martin waivers. HOME Choice is scheduled to run through December 2012.

OAAS thanks Kim Linkinhoker for providing the fact sheet on which this article is based.

CSCC Certification Program *(Continued from page 1)*

Students in the certificate program are responsible for their own transportation. Help with tuition comes from regular student financial aid, BVR, families, and individual budgets. While transportation to campus activities is a barrier to full participation in college life, one student last year was able to join the CSCC vocal choir. The college experience also has produced many friendships and one pending nuptial.

Applicants to the CSCC certificate program must have a developmental disability, hold a HS diploma or GED, be at least 18 years old, read at or above the 5th grade level, have interest in assisting others, be able to “look” outside themselves, and be committed to attending college for one year. Teny-Miller reports that many parents of transition age students are interested in learning about college opportunities for their children. The CSCC program receives numerous inquiries from Ohio and other states.

For more information contact: Jackie Teny-Miller, Program Coordinator at 614-287-2544 or by email at jteny@csc.edu

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Leveraging Internships for Employment (LIFE) Works is a four-county collaboration with the Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) that will include Franklin, Fairfield, Licking and Hocking Counties and their assigned RSC Counselors. The purpose of this project is to increase services and foster non-traditional employment outcomes for individuals with mental retardation or other significant developmental disabilities in the four-county region through the increased utilization of federal funds. This project will promote individual choice through collaboration with participants, their families and RSC Counselors. The project will also redirect students into the community who might otherwise participate in sheltered employment.

The project focuses on transition from school to work by offering a variety of paid work internships/ work experiences to participants. Career exploration sites and work experiences will be developed in partnership with local employers in each of the participating counties. Individuals will design their own internship rotation schedule in conjunction with their family, RSC Counselor, and project staff. Project staff will monitor, train and assess project participants as they perform their jobs. It is expected that these paid work experiences will lead to improved employment outcomes and case closures for RSC for a group of individuals that are traditionally difficult to serve.

LIFE Works will also enhance the relationships between MRDD county service providers and RSC Counselors through coordination and training. Some of the individuals typically served by the county boards of MRDD may not be seen as appropriate for vocational rehabilitation services. This project, through training provided by the Nisonger Center of the Ohio State University, will assist counselors, individuals, and project staff in understanding the needs of transitioning adults and their families who are navigating this process.

This non-traditional project design is a cost effective model which does not include the expenditure of funds to hire additional staff that would act as RSC Counselors. Instead, the project will support the caseload management function of the Counselor by providing services to RSC and MRDD eligible individuals that lead to quality, non-traditional jobs. *LIFE Works* positively impacts the ability of RSC Counselors to redirect traditional case dollars to individuals who are not targeted for this project.

For more information, contact any of the following *LIFE Works* partners.

- Lisa Dunaway, Licking County Board of MR/DD
- Claudia Ross, Franklin County Board of MR/DD
- Dianna Walters, Hocking County Board of MR/DD
- Stephanie Wilson, Fairfield County Board of MR/DD

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYER ORGANIZATION

By Teresa O'Connell, Editor

An opportunity to expand manufacturing operations presented U-CO Industries, Inc. (Union) with an interesting challenge. To support higher volume and increased complexity, the non-profit corporation needed to staff a small number of quality and materials services positions. Temporary staffing services did not match U-CO's long term commitment to the new positions. On the other hand, direct employment would require management of complex human resource functions. To solve the problem, the non-profit board entered into a co-employment arrangement with a professional employer organization, or PEO.

A PEO is neither a payroll service nor a temporary staffing agency. A PEO hires a client company's employees, thus becoming their employer of record. It then leases them back under contract to the original employer. The client company directs the employees' day-to-day activities. This practice is known as co-employment, employee leasing, or staff leasing.

The Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation describes a PEO as "a company that manages and administers the human resource responsibilities of other companies that have contracted with the PEO. Typically, a PEO establishes a contractual relationship with client companies whereby the PEO assumes responsibility and liability for the "business of employment," such as risk management, personnel management, human resource compliance, and payroll and employee tax compliance." Services a PEO may provide include:

- Hiring and assigning employees to client company locations
- Human resource management (e.g., employee handbooks, forms, policies, and procedures)
- Paying wages and employment taxes of employees
- Reporting, collecting, and depositing employment taxes with state and federal authorities
- Complying with federal and state employment laws and regulations (e.g., fair hiring standards)
- Providing health insurance, retirement savings plans, life insurance, educational benefits, and other benefits to employees
- Managing workers' compensation premiums and handling workers' compensation claims

According to the National Association of Professional Employer Organizations, "a PEO provides integrated services to effectively manage critical human resource responsibilities and employer risks for clients. A PEO delivers these services by establishing and maintaining an employer relationship with the

(Continued on page 7)

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employees at the client's worksite and by contractually assuming certain employer rights, responsibilities, and risk.” Typically the PEO is responsible for administration of payroll and payroll taxes, employee benefits, and workers compensation. Other duties may be specified in the contract, including administration of 401(k) plans and the provision of health care benefits. By combining the employees of multiple clients, PEOs can qualify for lower premiums on health insurance plans, allowing client companies to offer a better benefit package and thus attract and maintain more skilled employees.

Various sources indicate that some 70 PEOs operate in Ohio. PEOs may also be accredited through the Employer Services Insurance Corporation (ESAC). Those that operate in Ohio must be registered.

This newsletter article is for informational purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice and should not be construed as a statement in support of, or opposition to, professional employer organization services. OAAS recommends that legal counsel be obtained to review and advise on any proposed contract for PEO service.



**Our heads are round so that thoughts can change direction. -
Francis Picabia, painter and poet (1879-1953)**



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