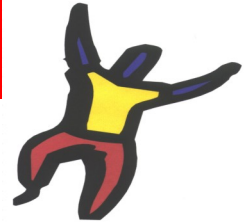


ACHIEVEMENTS



A quarterly newsletter published by Creative Achievements to support our mission: **Creating Solutions For Persons With Employment Challenges.**

Set Goals for a New and Fulfilling Year in 2015!

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This month, we're looking at making goals, and having others weigh in on what they've learned about their own goal-setting.

We're taking a closer look at the interview process, a vital part of the employment dance.

Board Member Debi's article about the Fort Worth Transportation System on Page 3. She's very familiar with The "T", and has even offered to help to those that need it.

Lastly, we go through some real Social Security benefits issues and pass on our tips.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

It's that time of year where TV, internet, and magazines are chock full of New Year's Resolutions. There's just something about a new beginning in January that begs for taking stock of your life and setting goals.

In a recent Creative Achievements Board meeting, every single member offered to write an article in the New Year. That was unexpected, but awesome. They just came up with that goal, but it will help immensely to have a variety of contributions from such wonderful people. Thank you all!!!

We've learned a lot from our clients this year. Every client that has taken the step to call us about their Ticket To Work, or has been referred through vocational rehabilitation has taken a giant step towards the goal of employment.

Having the courage to let go of social security benefits, and getting a full time job has been the goal of several Ticket To Work clients. Sometimes the first job has not worked out. However, many are well on their way to achieving that goal with the help of our staff, and the knowledge of work incentives that are there to make the transition easier. Also, there are clients that have tried full time work, and their bodies do not hold up to the everyday stresses and strains.

Here are a few things that our Board Members, staff, and clients have learned about their own goal-setting.

- ◆ Getting help on your goals is not a sign of weakness. It's ok if you have continued to fail on the same goal. Just try something different.
- ◆ Life is what you make of it. Sit and whine and feel sorry for yourself or get off your butt and take charge of your destination! We were never told life was easy; you have to fight. Positive thinking and prayers go a long way. Never give up, confront your fears to achieve your goals. There are battles within wars. You take one at a time, face things and move on.
- ◆ Goals are tricky—the more I set them, the less inclined I am to do it. I get stuff accomplished when I don't put deadlines or concrete markers because I don't feel the pressure.
- ◆ My goal was to find a job after 10 years of not working. I've learned to be patient. Don't be afraid to ask for help and to celebrate each little step forward!
- ◆ Get a goal, find out what it takes to accomplish the goal, do the steps, and never quit.
- ◆ I believe that a goal is just a wish until you actually take steps to make the goal happen. Goals are easy to make, but it takes actually putting the work in to achieve the goal.

Optimize Your Interview!

An invitation to a job interview is always a good sign that you're seriously being considered as a prospect to fill an opening or perhaps a created position. When you are contacted for an interview, always ask for the location, name of the interviewer and a phone number so you can write it down correctly. Double check the phone number with the contact person. Record this information along with the date and time of the interview on a calendar immediately. Research the organization, and memorize the business mission and their values. Learn about their business from the internet or those that have worked there. You'll impress the interviewer when you've done your homework. They may have done their homework on you! So, watch what you post – its public record!!



Arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time of the interview. Take care of a restroom or water break quickly before going to the waiting area. Never leave the interviewer waiting for you. A no-show without any explanation will surely result in not being hired. If an emergency comes up, reschedule immediately. Remember, the interviewer's time is important; everybody has a boss.

Greet the interviewer in a pleasant, professional manner. Always pay close attention, and listen to the questions without interruption. Give yourself a few seconds to gather your thoughts. Always communicate as clearly as possible and use good grammar in complete sentences. Pay attention to those infrequent questions that only require, "Yes" or "No" answers. An example may be, "Do you have reliable transportation to get you here on time every workday?" Your answer should be a resounding "Yes".

If you have a phone interview, don't take that for granted. Be ready to answer the phone in a quiet place where you can hear well and respond appropriately. Have a notebook to jot down important parts of your interview—after all, you are interviewing them too. With this in mind, you may be able to relax more.

Each interview is an opportunity to learn. Always keep in mind you must have the skills and abilities an employer is looking for. Don't lead with your disability. In fact, unless your disability is obvious, don't discuss it in your first interview. Right now, you're selling yourself. Discussing a disability is usually a distraction at this point. Ask any appropriate questions you have without asking about your salary or benefits. You have been invited because an employer needs a job done well, and for no other reason. Always keep that in mind.

Transportation – No Obstacle in Fort Worth!!

Have you ever wanted to just get out—away from your residence, don't have a car, or just want to leave the driving to someone else? Maybe you just don't understand how to read the bus/train schedule. Well now you can!!

The T has an excellent web site. Here you will find the routes that buses go to for local attractions such as the Fort Worth Zoo, Stockyards, and malls. If you believe your disability is significant enough that you need curb to curb service, get the MITS application filled out by your agency or doctor to verify your disability. If approved, you do this you will be able to ride the bus and train for free!!!!!! Take it downtown to 1600 Lancaster to get your picture taken – you will get an ID card. Tell them you want a MITS +1card.

If you don't need MITS and you are on Medicare, you can get a reduced pass ID. All you need is your Medicare card, SS card, or Veteran's benefits letter. If you want this ID, do the same thing. Go to 1600 Lancaster and tell them what type of ID you need.



There are several options with The “T”. You can even take your bike with you.

Reading the train schedule is the same as the bus schedule - the numbers going down are the times the train gets to your stop and the words going across are the 8 stops the train makes. The last stop is Union Station in Dallas. This is 1 block away from the JFK Museum. The next to last stop is American Airlines Center where all the concerts are! The station is a straight shot to the doors of the center! Once you get to Dallas, they have trains and buses to get anywhere! Riding the train is a little scary the first time. You should go up to the platform if you cannot climb the step up. The train employees will put out a ramp and you will walk/roll over it.

On both the train and public buses you will not be buckled in, but you will have designated places to sit.

Don't sit home-get out and explore!!!!!!!!!! First, check out the T's website at: www.the-t.com—it shows both bus and train schedules. If you need help please email me or call — I'll help in any way I can. I am a true veteran of the bus system in Fort Worth! **Debi— 817-718-**

Benefits Planning Corner

Patience and Persistence with Social Security

Soon after receiving my “Community Partner Benefits Certification”, from Virginia Commonwealth University, I learned that there's nothing like taking day trips to the local Social Security Office in order to learn what happens in the real world. So, I'm going to give you some real stories (names withheld to protect the innocent) as well as tips that could enhance your dealings with the SSA. Currently, we are helping three clients by accompanying them to the Social Security Office.

- ◆ We have found that things happen more quickly when you show up in person to the local office. **In Fort Worth, to avoid a long wait at either office, get to the office after least 30 minutes before it opens and get in line.** You'll be glad you did.
- ◆ **If you go to the SSA after losing a job, it is best to give them copies of your termination, or voluntary resignation for proof.**

- ◆ **Follow up, follow up, and make sure you follow up!** We actually accompanied one client to the local SSA office, and made sure that everything was in order. This was a situation of a client being well within the extended period of eligibility to get back on their SSDI benefits quickly. Unfortunately, even though we left with every expectation that things were on their way towards a check the next month, it didn't happen. After making a second trip, we were told that the worker failed to input the information into the system after we left. It was corrected quickly, and they issued a rush check.
- ◆ One gentleman lost his job, and was within the time frame to get back on his SSDI benefits very quickly. First, he went to SSA without us. Instead of a seamless process, they gave him a huge packet to fill out. It confused him—they made it much harder than it needed to be. **Make sure you know exactly what you need—call me and I will advise you.**

Who We Are

Creative Achievements is a private, 501-C3 non-profit organization dedicated to community employment for persons with a variety of disabilities. Together, we have placed hundreds of persons in individualized job settings ranging from 5-40 hours, based on the needs of our job seekers and employers. We are passionate, skilled, and serious about employment. We have a small Board of Directors, and operate with minimal administrative costs.

Goals for this newsletter:

- To applaud organizations that have hired our customers;
- To highlight some of the great work that our customers are doing;

- To **give tips** to job seekers that are able to get their own job;
- To educate employers about the benefits of thinking “outside the box” when it comes to non-traditional jobs, and job “carving” for our customers that have a tough time getting their own job;
- To **educate** persons about specific disabilities;
- To report on current events that relate to employment for persons with disabilities.
- To let businesses know that even if they are not in a position to hire a client, they could always help us by **being on our list of places our clients can volunteer or “job sample”**. (You would be getting some

free labor with supervision, and in turn, we get a better idea of how our client performs in a community environment.” Contact us at (817)238-7802 for more details.

- To remind our former customers and other friends of Creative Achievements to **always be on the lookout for job openings!! You are our eyes and ears. If you give us a job lead that results in employment for one of our customers, we will pay you a finder's fee.**

