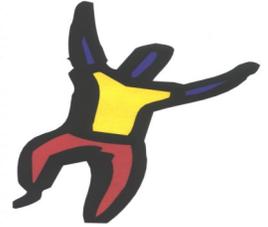


CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

A quarterly newsletter published by Creative Achievements
Our Mission: Creating Solutions For Persons With Employment Challenges.



March 2014

Sadie! You Go Girl!

Sadie is a special young lady. She is fun, responsible, energetic, and loves people.



Creative Achievements worked with Lori, Sadie's DARS Transition Counselor, and the decision was made to enroll Sadie into a program called Walgreens REDI. REDI is a retail training program designed to help people make the leap into a service clerk position with in-store training. Sadie had a great attitude and was a joy to work with. Josh, her store manager was an instant fan. Sadie excelled in stocking and organizing the merchandise, though cash register was not a strong suit. She also interacted well with co-workers and provided customer service with patience and charm.

After the 6 hour a day, 4-week training program ended, the Creative Achievement staff sat down with Sadie and her family and discovered her dream job was working at The Ball Park in Arlington, supporting the Texas Rangers. We worked the front end with Delaware North (who handles the food and merchandise contract for the Rangers) to find a job carve where Sadie could use the skills she learned in the program, without having to be on the register.

We were allowed the few accommodations needed to bring Sadie up to speed. Sadie was placed in a large retail area and proved herself rather quickly, with an able job coach for initial support. Sadie did so well her first season, that she continued to get work.

assignments even after the season was over. She extended a personal invitation to come back and apply for 2014, and that's exactly what she'll be doing very shortly!! Below is a Q and A interview with Sadie:

CA: What did it feel like to get your first paying job?

Sadie: *It felt awesome because they actually hired me and it was sports related (Ranger's).*

CA: Did it make you nervous to work at a place as big as The Ballpark in Arlington?

Sadie: *No, not really.*

CA: Most people don't know this, but on game days, you have to work a few hours before people start to fill the stadium. Don't you get tired?

Sadie: *Yes, sometimes because it's a long day. Standing and walking for 8-hours+; my feet start to hurt.*

CA: What were your duties in the season?

Sadie: *My duties included unpacking new stock and hanging it up in the store room, gathering empty hangers from the front and taking them to the back, along with bagging customer purchases.*

CA: You were able to continue on with The Ballpark, after the season. A lot of people don't get that chance. How were you picked over other people?

Sadie: *Not sure except my bosses liked me and I'm a hard worker, and did what I was told. I got to work on time and I had a positive attitude.*

CA: What are your best qualities?

Sadie: *I'm friendly and like to help other people.*

CA: What do you like to do when you're not working?

Sadie: *Play sports in Special Olympics and Challenger League Baseball.*

CA: What advice would you give other people that are looking for a job?

Sadie: *Don't be afraid to try for what you want. Work hard, be dependable and have a good attitude.*

www.creativeachievements.org
Editor: Karen Forbis

Sochi 2014

Canada's world champion skier Alex Bilodeau



celebrates with his brother after slashing through the landscape of slush and snow at incredible speed and coordination. Alex Bilodeau captured his second straight Olympic title and gold medal recently. He is inspired by his older brother Frederic, whose life with cerebral palsy provides a daily reality check on the considerable athletic gifts the younger Bilodeau has been granted. Frederic never misses a race. His drive to persevere in spite of his physical challenges inspires Alex to keep pushing and never give up. Together, they have raised thousands of dollars to help persons with cerebral palsy in

Test Your Knowledge on Workplace Discrimination:

Which of the following can employers legally ask on a job interview?

- ◆ What is your race?
- ◆ What is your age?
- ◆ Are you married?
- ◆ Have you ever been arrested?
- ◆ What is your religious background?
- ◆ Do you have any children?
- ◆ Have you had a back injury?
- ◆ Have you ever been on Workers' Compensation?
- ◆ Do you take any medications?
- ◆ Do you use illegal drugs?
- ◆ Are you disabled?
- ◆ How many sick days did you take last year at your other job?
- ◆ How long have you been handicapped?
- ◆ Why are you in a wheelchair?



Other than the question on arrest and drugs, everything else is illegal. Unfortunately, employers do not always follow the rules.

A good way to handle these questions, is to be very positive, and handle things with wit and humor. It's best to think in advance what you might say if you were asked one of these questions. For instance, if an employer asks if you have children, you could respond by asking "Oh, is that a prerequisite for this job?" Or, you could be more direct and say, "I'm not sure why you are asking." These kind of comments might back the employer off, or they might be impressed by your humor, (and also realize they were out-of-bounds with the question in the first place). On the other hand, if they detect a defensiveness, that may give them the ammunition they need to cross you off the list. You could follow the childcare question up by saying, "I have a very dependable work history, and am free to travel, if that's your concern."

If the question is related to age, then its best to address the concern. Something like, "I'm a fast learner and love to learn". Or, "My younger co-workers have a tough time keeping up with me", or "I'm looking for long term employment, if that's your concern."

Any inquiry regarding physical condition is not allowed under the guidelines of ADA, unless the question specifically relates to the essential functions of a job. An example of this would be, "Can you lift 50 pounds". If you can't, then you can't do the job required. That's not discrimination by the employer, its making sure there is a good job match.

Bobby: Ready, Willing and Able to Work

Bobby is a refreshingly pleasant man. He lives in his own apartment in Fort Worth, cooks for himself, and lives life to the fullest, despite being blind. He has several options for transportation, and a supportive family.

For 29 years, Bobby has worked at The Lighthouse for the Blind in Fort Worth. A few months ago, something happened that he could not have predicted. He, and several others got laid off from The Lighthouse. Wow! Finding himself unemployed for the first time in what seems like forever was quite a shock.



Bobby relaxes at home.

Creative Achievements' staff has had a chance to get to know Bobby. Bobby has gotten a chance to show us what he can do, as we had many job sample experiences together.

Bobby is great at things like stuffing packets, and especially enjoys shredding. He reports having a contract once at The Lighthouse, where he took staples out of paper, to prepare for shredding. Like many persons with visual impairments, Bobby is very focused, organized and methodical in his work.



On the left, Bobby rinses dishes and prepares to load them into the dishwasher. To the right, Bobby works to complete a shredding assignment.

If you know anyone that might benefit from Bobby's skills, please call us. He will make a wonderful employee. Help Creative Achievements spread the word! Thank you !!



Bobby's Skills:

- ◆ Shredding Paper
- ◆ Washing Dishes
- ◆ Packing and Assembly

Bobby has worked in many areas at The Lighthouse. Many of his jobs included standing for the entire day, and using things like a roller press, and a die cut.

Bobby also did well in the paper area, where he took reams of paper off of a conveyor belt, and packed those into a box. He has glued foam to the inside of boxes for cushion in packaging.

Bobby also had a sit-down job. He assembled ballpoint pens, and counted his inventory with ease.

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 in the Metroplex 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.**



Understanding How Social Security Benefits May Affect Work

Recently, our director attended a Virginia Commonwealth training on work incentives in Dallas, Texas. The purpose of this training was to educate service providers about all of the many work incentives that are available to persons that are choosing to work, who are currently on either SSI (Supplemental Security Income) or SSDI (Social Security Disability Income). Now, after several tests and written work submitted, Creative Achievements has the distinction of having a staff person with the Provisional Community Partner Work Incentives Counseling Certification.

If you have a disability, and receive benefits, that are many options available to ease you into working, while having a safety net of benefits if things go wrong. Yes, this can be a little complicated, but that's why we're here to help. Give us a call at: (817)238-7802. For many people out there, working can be a real option with the rights supports.

