

Achievements

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



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Achievements
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Spencer - A Force To Be Reckoned With

Spencer has a very active life. He is married, employed as a graphic designer, a step-father, and is a proud member of the North Texas Cowboys quad rugby team.

Staff from Creative Achievements met Spencer over two years ago. He was new to the area from Idaho, where he worked in the television industry, after obtaining a degree in visual communications. Spencer had made a lateral move into graphic arts in Idaho with the same company after a mountain bike accident a few years ago. Job hunting in a new city had proven to be difficult without the connections that he had developed in another location.

Creative Achievements was able to link Spencer with Rick Powell, owner of Builder's Software, through a mutual contact. Rick allowed Spencer to do some small projects for a tryout, and in a short time he was employed for Rick, working from his home as a graphic artist. That was almost two years ago, and Spencer continues to fill a valuable role for Rick in his web design business.

Typically, Spencer will design three templates for a client (many of whom are homebuilders), based on their logo and color preferences. That gives the client something to go by and Spencer will modify things from there until the client is



Spencer, with his coach in a recent game of Wheelchair Rugby

fully satisfied. Spencer continues to learn new techniques and programs, such as using Flash, a program that enables him to do interactive web design.

Though he works from home, once a month Spencer gets together with Rick's staff for a game of cards and dinner. It's a great way to stay connected on a personal level to people he talks with each week.

This is the second time that Rick has hired an employee with a disability. Several years ago, Rick was

approached about Brent, who was blind, working for him. "I had strong misconceptions before I hired Brent. I couldn't imagine how a blind person could navigate a 20,000+ client database. Brent made me a believer that people with disabilities can do amazing things. Many years later, when Spencer came on board, I guess I expected great things from him like what Brent has brought to the table for over 8 years now!

As you can see (Cont., Page 2)



Spencer (2nd from left) as he collides with the opponent

Help Creative Achievements raise some money and help the environment at the same time!!

Donate your used inkjet or toner cartridges to us, and we'll be able to use the proceeds to assist our clients financially. We've done a lot of that recently, due to our economic times!!

Thanks. Just call: (817)238-7802, and we can pick them up.

Spencer is very active in Rise Adventures, a non profit that promotes independence through adaptive outdoor adventures and recreational sports programs. For more information, go to: www.riseadventures.org

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FYI - Health Care Information from Rep. Kay Granger's Office

Creative Achievements is passing on excerpts of Granger's June 4th Newsletter that may be of interest to persons with disabilities and their families.

Since the passage of the health care legislation in March I have been asked a lot of questions about how the new bill will affect your lives. I am using this week's e-newsletter to answer your most frequently asked questions. As always, if you still have questions, please call me at (817) 335-7652.

Q. When will I be required to purchase health insurance?

A. People will be required to obtain health insurance by 2014, or they will be subject to fines.

The new law does not require the following people to purchase health insurance: those with qualifying religious exemptions; those in a healthcare sharing ministry; individuals not lawfully present in the United States; and incarcerated individuals. No penalty will be imposed on those without coverage for less than 90 days.

Q. How soon can children up to age 26 stay on their parents' insurance plan?

A. By the end of September of this year, newly issued group health insurance plans and health insurance plans sold on the individual market must extend coverage to dependents up to age 26. Group plans that are "grandfathered" in must offer this coverage only to those dependents under age 26 who do not have access to health insurance coverage through his or her own employer.

Spencer Larimore, Continued from Page One

from the photos, wheelchair rugby is a contact sport. Spencer explained that quad rugby is played by quadriplegics so players have to have some disability in three or more limbs and be able to push a chair. "For the time we're on the court, we really forget disability", said Spencer. "Its all about the game". He pointed out that some of the players might need to be transferred into a chair, but you'd never know it on the court. Spencer credits Rise Adventures for getting him started in this and other sports. If you go to their website at riseadventures.org, you'll note several opportunities to participate in their programs.

Rick explained that BSEWebsites.com builds websites that the owner can update and maintain themselves. "Gone are the days where you must wait days, weeks, or even months for a website developer to update text, pictures, or PDFs to your website. Also, gone are the days where the website owner must pay a large hourly rate to a website developer to make a few minutes worth of changes. We now add live videos to that list of dynamic content. In other words, our customers' websites have the capability of having their own onboard YouTube."

If you have questions about a website, please contact Rick at Builder's Software Enterprises for more information: rick@builders-software.com <http://BSEWebsites.com>,, <http://Builders-Software.com>

Need a Volunteer, Need an Employee?

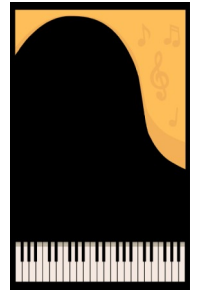
We know the economy is tough right now. Please remember that you can call the Creative Achievements office (817)238-7802 to talk about getting a volunteer for your business. Many of our clients are looking for a good reference as they begin their work life or change fields, and volunteerism is a perfect opportunity to hone their skills. This is a winning situation for all who take part.

For those who go through temp agencies to hire workers, we're a welcome resource. We have talented individuals that don't cost you a finder's fee. Try us, you've be glad you did!!

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Ceci—Self Employment and Supported Employment Combine for Success



Ceci is an amazing person that is making the most of her employment opportunity. This has been a collaboration of her wonderful family, Division for Blind Services (Counselor Kevin Markel), a gifted music therapist (Debra Dacus), and Creative Achievements Staff.

When Ceci graduated from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, she returned home to Fort Worth. She had been very busy in school, and suddenly, there were few activities, which didn't sit well with Ceci. She got involved with DARS Blind Services, and shortly afterward, began working with Debra, her music therapist to improve her piano skills. This was a challenge, due to Ceci's blindness, developmental delays, limited speaking, not to mention the fact that some fingers work better than others.



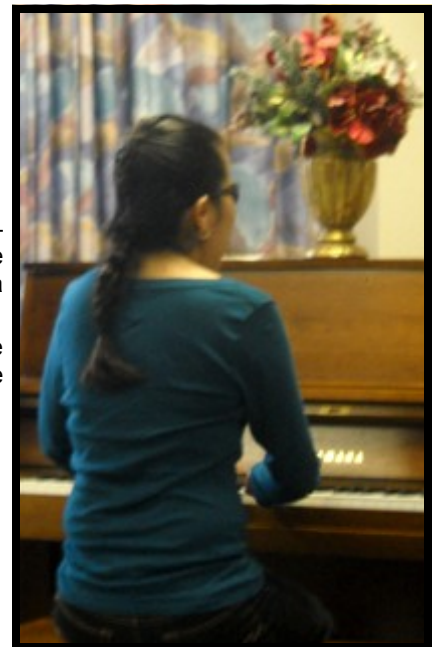
Above, Ceci, shown next to her mom, receiving her very first paycheck from Steve Slayton, Tanglewood's Executive Director, who gave her the first opportunity to perform.

In the discovery process for supported employment, we found that Ceci had lots of natural musical ability. She can listen to a song on the radio, and be able to hum it, and play the melody. She loves to sing, and is bilingual. Ceci also has the ability to memorize songs, and play them with energy. She can play songs slowly or swiftly. Her music therapist tailors her teaching to Ceci's talents.

It has taken a while (don't most wonderful things?), but Ceci is now self employed, playing monthly for several assisted living centers in the Fort Worth area, including: **Tanglewood, Broadway Plaza (Westover Hills), Evergreen (Keller), Garden Terrace, Tandy Oaks, and Bethesda Gardens.** For some of these groups, she plays sing-a-longs for their Alzheimer Unit. For others, she plays some sing-a-longs, and also Spanish songs from her native Mexico. These songs are very lively, and residents have thoroughly enjoyed them. At first, Ceci is led by her music therapist, Debra at these sites. We then transition into Creative Achievements Staff leading Ceci. The third stage is transferring the song-leading to staff at these locations. It is a thorough process that works.

Ceci has a great attitude and has been very receptive to everyone. Its not uncommon for some senior ladies to approach her after she plays to tell her how special she is and how they look forward to seeing her again. On one occasion at Bethesda Gardens, Jeff Petterson, their Administrative Director, heard her playing for the residents, and walked out of his office playing a violin right along with Ceci for the remainder of her songs. Ceci gave a very large smile, and didn't skip a beat. A true musician!!

Thanks to the variety of people that have worked together to make Ceci's employment happen. Ceci continues to take piano lessons from Debra, and update her repertoire for the future. She recently went on a shopping trip and enjoyed buying earrings and a purse with some of her earnings.



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 a specific disability in each newsletter;
- 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.**



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