

Terri Hogan Testimony

Good Morning Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Velazquez and members of the committee. I am Terri Hogan speaking on behalf of Contemporary Cabinetry East, located in Cincinnati, Ohio. My title is CEO and Chairman and we are a certified NWBOC (woman owned business). We began as a very small family business in 1984. My husband and I purchased the company from the family in 2003 and have grown the business steadily and today employ 70 individuals. My husband, Paul and I volunteer in the special needs community and are raising our 17 year old son, Bayley, who has autism. We understand the concern of families who are facing transition into adulthood and those who have already reached this stage. “What happens now” is a question frequently asked. How can our children become independent members of the community? Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you to discuss inclusion in the small business workplace. We need to educate others so they begin to take the “dis” out of disabilities and replace it with “abilities”. We also need to make small businesses aware of the huge untapped resource that is people with diverse abilities. Hiring people who are physically, genetically or cognitively diverse is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.

EMBRACE AND CREATE AN INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

I began the venture and thought process of hiring individuals with “special abilities” over a year ago. This began with contacting different agencies, giving them tours of our facility and lots of discussion and decisions. I met with agencies with employment programs such as Living Arrangements for the Developmentally Disabled, or LADD, for which I am on the board of directors, who is helping to lead a pilot inclusion initiative for small businesses for people with disabilities in Cincinnati with the local Chamber of Commerce and Starfire and their Director, Tim Vogt. After the tour with Tim, he immediately thought of “Mike” who made the trip to be here with me today. Once we went through the interview and hiring process, I planned a meeting with our current employees in preparation of Mike’s first day. It was very important to me to stress to everyone that Mike is just like all of us, he has abilities and talents and he will be given regular tasks. They listened. I

have attached to my written testimonial, many quotes and stories from various employees regarding Mike. Mike has raised morale, brought community awareness, caused others to have broader perspectives and has developed many friends at CCE. For the business, Mike has helped to develop a healthier “bottom line”; everyone works harder because of the example he sets. To quote from a story in the Huffington Post, “winning at workplace diversity is not easy, but it is worth it”. You may ask, “What did you need to do to make this a success story”? First I will say we have a great company with talented and good employees. Leadership is important as well; talking with everyone ahead of time. There is also a “job coach” that stays on the job with the employee until that person can fade away. This person is paid by the agency that referred the employee. Below is a brief outline of steps that are important to take to help with your success stories:

- Orientation for the new employee. Work with the “job coach” regarding special accommodations needed. This would also include working closely with your local agencies involved. Mike had a job coach for a few months and after that he became very self-sufficient.
- If needed and available have on-site or on the job training.
- Talk to current employees about diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Engage with the new employees and encourage current employees to interact as well (include at breaks and during lunch, ask what the new employee’s interests might be).
- Some employers might be able to offer flexible working hours, design schedules that might work better for an employee to succeed; some call it “flexi-time”. Some may need to work during a “quiet” time to accomplish more.
- Know that most individuals with disabilities stay in the job longer. 62% of these employees remained in the same job for three or more years. This represents a 48% lower turnover rate than those who do not have disabilities.
- A quote from Employment First Employment Fact Sheet; “when businesses identify the strengths of employees with disabilities, then put them in jobs that match their skills, those employees turn out to be faithful, low turnover,

hard-working employees”. These special employees come to work on time and when scheduled and have lower sick time off. They are reliable, flexible to demands and 90% of individuals with disabilities performed equal to better than nondisabled individuals.

HOW TO BE PRO-ACTIVE AND WHAT IS PROVEN TO WORK

Integrating students into the labor market early is a key determinant of successful post-school employment outcomes for all young adults, but even more for those with disabilities. There needs to be a combination of academics, career and technical education (formally vocational training), and work experience in a related field to result in successful employment for students with disabilities. It would also be wise to have educators tour facilities, stores, restaurants etc. to learn what is available in the workforce, thus learn what skills are needed to teach. Teaching students as young as middle school certain life and vocational skills can be very beneficial. Employers value work-based learning specifically when the skills a student learns are needed in the workplace. Work-based learning opportunities, such as internships and job-shadowing promote efficient recruitment practices and help develop the pipeline of skilled and qualified workers. Below are several resources, helpful hints and web-sites that would be beneficial to employers:

- Partner with local schools to provide career exploration and work with educators so they learn skills needed to teach. We own a manufacturing company and find it very difficult to hire individuals that have strong skills since schools have basically taken vocational training out of the curriculum.
- The Job Accommodation Network provides free technical assistance services to employers, including one- on- one consultation about all aspects of job accommodations for employees with disabilities. Visit JAN.org or contact JAN Consultant directly at 800-526-7234.
- ADD Us In is a U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEO) initiative designed to identify and develop strategies to increase the capacity of the small business community to hire individuals with disabilities. For contacts and resources, see ADD Us in Grantees.

- The Employer Assistance and Resource Network provides online, phone and individualized technical assistance, consultation, and customized training on a broad range of disability and inclusion topics to meet employers' recruitment and hiring needs. For more information, see AskEARN.org or contact 855-275-3276.

What do I expect Congress to do?

Leave here today with a better understanding of how inclusion in the workplace adds to the diversity of the workplace environment and may lead to a more diverse customer base. The positive effect these individuals have on lifting the morale of other employees and set "role model" work ethic examples. Begin career and technical education in middle and high schools. Take the "dis" out of disability and focus on ones "abilities".

Here is a quote I recently read and feel it is applicable to this discussion; "we become like our friends. The people we surround ourselves with either raise or lower our standards". Mike has raised everyone's standards at Contemporary Cabinetry East and hiring Mike was the best business decision I have ever made.

Thank you for your time and attention. Let's get to work!!

David M. Ooten & Kathy Ames-Ooten
41 Worthington Ave.
Wyoming, Ohio 45215

December 15, 2015

Terri,

I could not let the end of year pass without sincerely thanking you for the opportunity you have provided our son Mike. It is one thing to be compassionate for people of difference but to own a business and provide a chance and opportunity for someone like Mike is simply refreshing. To step up and define inclusion as part of your business and operating culture is courageous, and a powerful model for others to witness.

We recognize that every employee must add value and hopefully Mike has done that in more than just his productivity. His pure joy with himself every day as he gets up and packs his lunch and each week when he deposits his check is priceless.

Over the years Mike has taught us a lot. We experience his spirit often and it is clear to us that all he has ever wanted, as anyone with difference, is to be "included". Mike truly savors his role as contributing member of society, both in his employment at CCE and his volunteer role with the facilities team at Crossroads.

We are truly humbled and grateful for all that Mike has been able to experience as an employee of your company. A mere thank you seems so insufficient, but we truly wanted to extend a sincere thank you for taking a risk on Mike and blessing him with such an incredible gift that he is very proud of.

Kathy and I wish you and your family a peaceful, joyous, and blessed Christmas season.

Sincerely,

David Ooten

Kathy Ames-Ooten

Terri,

Here is what I have received so far:

“Working alongside someone with special needs has shown me that they can do any task that anyone else would normally do. Helping and teaching someone with special needs to be more independent by working with them is so rewarding. To actually make a positive difference in the life of a person is a feeling that is priceless.” --- Steve Schmidt (Finish Dept.)

“Mike is polite and hardworking. He’s always here and never misses a day. He’s a fun guy to work with. He does everything you ask of him. We consider Mike just one of the guys. When he’s finished with one job you give him, he’s always looking for what to do next. He has a great attitude. If everyone else had Mike’s attitude, then CCE would be great. He takes pride in what he works on. He keeps the day fun with an air guitar solo every once in awhile.” --- John Rogers (Building Dept.)

“Mike has been with us for a year and has fit in very well. He has a professional and courteous disposition with an awesome upbeat attitude to boot! This something that everyone else picks up on. Over time, he has worked more independently on projects without the need for direct supervision. He seems to enjoy his workday and the time he spends at CCE. He promotes a level of camaraderie by including others in things like volunteer projects, CD exchanges, or even sharing a snack at lunchtime.” --- Alex Jordan (Plant Manager)

“Mike Ames has been a great addition to the crew here at CCE. Three days a week, we have a positive, hardworking, and understanding team member that really helps the flow in the shop. In addition to that, he has become a good friend to me and others here. Mike and I have also found that we like a lot of the same music, and I really enjoy his enthusiasm to ROCK! If Mike notices I’m having a bad day he won’t hesitate to come over and offer a kind word in addition to some helpful advice. His positive attitude and kind nature make me look forward to the days Mike puts in at the shop. He really is just “one of the guys”, and I’m glad that I’ve found a friend in Mike.” --- Will Bacon (Machine Operator)

I should have something from Brent tomorrow. He was working all day in back helping pack the casework for McLaughlin. Mike was helping him all day.

Alex Jordan

Contemporary Cabinetry East

(513) 791-9115 office

RE: Good Morning

From: "Ooten, David" <ooten.dm@pg.com>
To: TERRI HOGAN
Subject: RE: Good Morning
Date: May 11, 2016 3:45 PM
Attachments: [image005.jpg](#) [image006.png](#) [Terri Christmas 2015.doc](#)

Terri,

Fantastic, thank you for the update. This is the Christmas note (attached).

And below is the nomination note I wrote for the 2016 Neighborhood Summit Community Awards.

Regards,
David

"Contemporary Cabinetry East has demonstrated its commitment to providing opportunities for individuals of special needs through an environment of training, inclusion, and potential job opportunities. This family owned business embraces a culture of inclusion by its employees which enables people of difference to be productive and contributing members of society and fosters a sense of pride and being "part of" to all of its employees. CCE has provided a work place that has enabled my son Mike to grow and learn new skills, all with patience, love, and tolerance for his needs. The entire staff at CCE welcomes Mike in a way that makes him feel valued and just "one of the guys/gals". This was recently demonstrated in conversation with Mike when he commented how much he likes his guys at CCE. Being part of a community happens in our neighborhoods, our families, our work places, etc. and I am extremely impressed by the willingness and open mindedness of CCE to risk the unknown and strengthen our greater Cincinnati community as a whole by providing these valuable opportunities for those with special needs. CCE is an example of leadership in our community and is definitely making a difference in the lives of people in our community."



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Employee Statement - Mike Ames

From: ALEX JORDAN <alexj.cce@fuse.net>
To: 'TERRI HOGAN'
Subject: Employee Statement - Mike Ames
Date: May 11, 2016 4:41 PM
Attachments: [image001.gif](#)



Terri,

Here is Brent's statement:

“ My journey with Mike Ames began 3 months ago when I started at my new company (CCE). I was assigned to the edgebander and Mike was my co-worker on the machine. Mike is my first extended exposure to Down Syndrome. I'll be honest, I entered our work relationship with a certain amount of trepidation. There were a lot of unknowns for me about what I was getting into. But at the same time, I was also excited about the opportunity presented to me. In my limited experience with Down Syndrome, I have always found those individuals to be gentle with incredibly big, loving hearts, and Mike is no exception. My ignorance is being erased, and my concerns have dissipated. I have to say that being around Mike is one of the greatest joys I take from my job. His kindness and willingness to help anyone who asks is admirable, and he has earned my respect and affection. Mike teaches me everyday how to love more. His outlook reminds me to appreciate the things and people in my life. His presence somehow frees me so I can be the “me” that sometimes I'm afraid to be. I'm a happier person because of my friend Mikey.” --- Brent Arrowsmith (Co-worker)

Alex Jordan

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ISSUE BRIEF: ABLE to Work Act (S.2702/H.R.4795)

Legislative Request

Please cosponsor the bipartisan *ABLE to Work Act* to increase the amount of yearly assets that an employed beneficiary may save in an ABLE account by contacting:

- **Senate:** Natasha Hickman with Sen. Burr at Natasha.Hickman@burr.senate.gov or (202) 224-3154
- **House:** Jennifer Debes with Rep. Crenshaw at Jennifer.Debes@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-2501

Talking Points – ABLE to Work Act

- Twice as many Americans with disabilities live in poverty compared to those without disabilities (over 28 % compared to 12.4%), and less than 30 % of working-age Americans with disabilities participate in the workforce¹
- In order to encourage work and self-sufficiency as well as help keep disabled individuals out of poverty, the *ABLE to Work Act* would allow individuals and their families to save more money in an ABLE account if the beneficiary works and earns income
- The federal *Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act* took nearly a decade to pass and goes a long way towards raising the asset limitation from the \$2,000 asset cap to \$100,000 so that beneficiaries may save money for qualified disability expenses such as education, health care, job training, transportation and more without jeopardizing their means-tested benefits
- The *ABLE Act* limits annual contributions to an ABLE account to \$14,000 (the federal gift tax exclusion). Any additional contribution - even if it is from earned income of the beneficiary - is not permitted without incurring penalties and could jeopardize the ABLE account's tax benefits and federal benefits
- This \$14,000 annual contribution cap does little to incentivize employment since it is the aggregate of all contributions to the ABLE account (including earned income), and employed beneficiaries are still unable to contribute to employer-provided retirement accounts, such as 401(k) plans, which could jeopardize their benefits
- Specifically, an ABLE beneficiary who earns income from a job could save up to the Federal Poverty Level, which is currently at \$11,770, and when enacted raises the annual contribution limit for employed ABLE beneficiaries to approximately \$26,000 (current limit is \$14,000)
- Help us bring people with disabilities out of poverty and incentivize them to work by permitting them to save their earnings in an ABLE account
- **TELL PERSONAL STORIES RE: BEING FORCED TO TAKE NON-PAYING OR LOW-PAYING JOBS, WORKING LESS HOURS THAN YOU WANT DUE TO EARNED INCOME LIMITATION**

Background

People with disabilities are living longer, healthier and productive lives, working and contributing to society. Yet these individuals are forced to live in poverty when they have the potential to achieve so much more because they are subject to a \$2,000 asset limitation and an extremely low monthly income limitation in order to preserve eligibility for benefits

¹ See Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions website, <http://www.harkin.senate.gov/documents/pdf/500469b49b364.pdf>
Fulfilling the Promise: Overcoming Persistent Barriers U.S. Senate Committee on Health, to Economic Self-sufficiency for People with Disabilities
Education, Labor, and Pensions

such as Medicaid and SSI. This asset limitation also means that individuals with disabilities who work are not able to save in retirement and other tax-favored accounts without losing critical benefits.

In December 2014, Congress took a huge step forward by creating Section 529A of the IRS tax code to establish tax-exempt savings accounts, "ABLE accounts", for disability-related expenses that do not count towards this asset cap and, therefore, do not affect eligibility for means-tested programs. The ABLE program was modeled after the popular state-based 529 college savings plans. With 454 cosponsors in the House and Senate, the ABLE Act was the most bipartisan piece of legislation in the 113th Congress. Harnessing the momentum of the bipartisan effort to enact the ABLE Act in 2014, to date, more than 40 states have enacted their own versions of ABLE and many are now in the process of establishing state ABLE programs. ABLE accounts will start to become available in the spring of 2016.

While the ABLE Act is a significant step forward and has been heralded as one of the most important pieces of disability legislation since the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* more than a quarter century ago, it can be improved in many ways. The *ABLE to Work Act* will raise the annual contribution limit for those beneficiaries who work and earn income.

Summary of the Legislation

The *ABLE to Work Act (S. 2702/H.R. 4795)* was introduced in the 114th Congress on March 17, 2016 by Sens. Richard Burr (R-NC) and Casey (D-PA), and Reps. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Rep. Sessions (R-TX) and Rep. Van Hollen (D-MD). The legislation would amend Section 529A(b)(2)(B) of the federal *ABLE Act* so that an ABLE beneficiary who is employed may contribute, in addition to the current \$14,000 (federal gift tax) contribution limit, the lesser of: (i) the amount of actual compensation or (ii) the amount equal to the poverty line for a one-person household (currently \$11,770). Therefore, when enacted, an ABLE beneficiary could contribute up to \$25,770 to an ABLE account in a year.

There are exceptions to this additional contribution from income. An ABLE beneficiary who already contributes to an employer-based contribution plan would not be able to take advantage of *ABLE to Work's* increased contribution limit. This is a mechanism to ensure that wealthier individuals who work would not be able to use the *ABLE to Work Act* as a tax shelter.

The *ABLE to Work Act* would also allow ABLE beneficiaries to qualify for the Saver's Credit, an existing federal tax credit that low and middle-income individuals can currently claim when they make contributions to a retirement account. This bill would extend this credit to ABLE accounts, providing an ABLE beneficiary with a savings match of as much as \$1,000 (\$2,000 if married), depending on how much they contribute to their ABLE account and their earnings.

Frequently Asked Questions about the ABLE to Work Act

Why is the increased contribution limit tied to the Federal Poverty Level?

The Federal Poverty Level is a readily available number that is regularly adjusted by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Since so many individuals with disabilities are impoverished, the legislative ask to cosponsor this bill so that people with disabilities can save up to the poverty line is very compelling. Politically, there had to be a maximum number so that the score of the bill will be tangible and so that disabled individuals with high-paying jobs will not be able to use ABLE accounts as a tax shelter.

How does the ABLE to Work Act relate to the other recently proposed ABLE amendments? Does NDSS support the other ABLE bills?

(The *ABLE to Work Act* was introduced at the same time as two other ABLE amendments, the *ABLE Financial Planning Act* and the *ABLE Age Adjustment Act*. All three bills are supported by the original six ABLE legislative champions.

The *ABLE Financial Planning Act (H.R. 4794/S. 2703)* will enable ABLE beneficiaries to roll over regular 529 accounts to 529A (ABLE) accounts up to the annual maximum contribution limit (\$14,000), and will also allow for a reverse-rollover if the beneficiary ceases to be disabled. This bill is particularly helpful for families who set up 529 accounts before receiving a child's diagnosis, or for teenagers who incur life-changing events that render them unable to go to college and use their 529 funds for their original purpose.

The *ABLE Age Adjustment Act (H.R. 4813/S. 2704)* will raise the age of onset of disability from 26 to 46, which is halfway to retirement age. This will enable individuals who become disabled later in life to take advantage of the benefits of ABLE accounts.

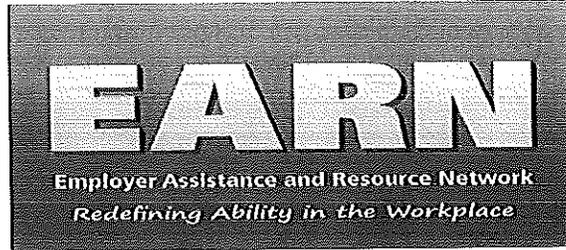
NDSS supports all three bills. However, our top priority is the *ABLE to Work Act* because we believe it will have the most impact on the Down syndrome community and it advances our employment campaign, [#DSWORKS™](#). Since Down syndrome is diagnosed at or before birth and is a lifelong condition, the other two bills are not as applicable to our population. NDSS will be advocating for all three bills on behalf of our cross-disability partners who have designated them as priorities, but the Buddy Walk® on Washington meetings should focus on the *ABLE to Work Act*.

Does the ABLE to Work Act increase the Social Security earned income limitation? Will wages that a beneficiary puts into an ABLE account be counted by the Social Security Administration as "earned income," or will they be exempt from this designation?

(The *ABLE to Work Act* does not increase the monthly-earned income limitation (NDSS will be working to accomplish this goal in the future but it will be through a more complicated legislative initiative). The wages put into an ABLE account will likely still be counted by the Social Security Administration as "earned income" for the first month they are deposited; after the first month, they simply become assets in the ABLE account.

How does the ABLE to Work Act incentivize employment?

Although the *ABLE to Work Act* does not address the income limitation issue, it provides beneficiaries with a mechanism to save more of their earnings. Many beneficiaries who have been reluctant to take a paid employment position or who have declined raises or extra hours will now have an expanded savings vehicle in which they can accumulate their wages. Beneficiaries will be able to weigh the additional income they can earn and save against their monthly Social Security check, which may decrease as income rises.



Small Business Disability Inclusion Fact Sheet

Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy and play a critical role in job creation and broad-based economic growth. According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses create 65 percent of net new jobs. Depending on the industry, a small business may be defined by the number of employees, receipts, or assets.

Having enough financial and human capital are major issues facing small business. How can businesses recruit key talent with limited time and resources? One practical approach is tapping into underutilized recruitment resources to attract new and emerging talent inclusive of individuals with disabilities. Another hiring strategy is offering internships, which may be more affordable than hiring permanent employees. By hiring interns, businesses can capitalize on new talent, creative ideas, enthusiasm, and cutting edge knowledge for their workplaces. Recruiting diverse candidates may be a new experience; however, it is business as usual if the focus is on the fit between the position and the candidate's qualifications.

Technical assistance is available for small businesses on practical business strategies and solutions to make their workplaces more accessible and welcoming to diverse customers and employees. The following resources provide information on accessibility, accommodations, community resources, legal issues, recruitment and shared best practices.

Add Us In Initiative

Add Us In is a U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) initiative designed to identify and develop strategies to increase the capacity of the small business community to hire individuals with disabilities. For contacts and resources, see Add Us In Grantees.

Job Accommodation Network

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) provides free technical assistance services to employers, including one-on-one consultation about all aspects of job accommodations for employees with disabilities. For more information, visit AskJAN.org or contact a JAN Consultant directly at 800-526-7234 (Voice) or (877) 781-9403 (TTY).

Employer Assistance and Resource Network

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) provides online, phone, and individualized technical assistance, consultation, and customized training on a broad range of disability and inclusion topics to meet employers' recruitment and hiring needs. For more information, see AskEARN.org or contact a TA Specialist at 855-275-3276 (Voice/TTY).

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Available through state vocational rehabilitation and veteran organizations, employers may be reimbursed for a portion of a new employee's salary, fees associated with training, support services (uniforms, tools, bus passes, etc.), and any needed accommodations for a specific duration of time. For more information, contact the National Employment Team for a Business Relations Specialist in your area. If you are interested in hiring veterans with disabilities, contact the Department of Veterans Affairs' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

WOTC offers a benefit to employers for hiring veterans based on wages paid to the employee, including 25% of qualified first-year wages for those employed at least 120 hours but fewer than 400 hours, and 40% for those employed 400 hours or more. Section 261 of the Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, "Returning Heroes and Wounded Warriors", amends and expands the definition of WOTC's veteran target groups and applies to employees who

started work the day after its enactment on November 22, 2011, and before January 1, 2013. The Vow to Hire Heroes Act includes the following provisions:

- ✓ Extends the current target group for veterans with a service-connected disability with the same qualified wages cap (\$12,000) and maximum tax credit (\$4,800).
- ✓ Extends the current target group for veterans with a service-connected disability unemployed for at least six months with the qualified wages cap increased to \$24,000 and the maximum tax credit increased to \$9,600.
- ✓ Includes veterans unemployed for at least four weeks with a qualified wages cap of \$6,000 and maximum tax credit of \$2,400.
- ✓ Includes veterans unemployed for at least six months with qualified wages cap of \$14,000 and maximum tax credit of \$5,600.

Additional Tax Credits and Deductions

Businesses accommodating people with disabilities may qualify for some of the following tax credits and deductions.

✓ **Small Business Tax Credit: Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code**

Also known as the Disabled Access Credit, a business with less than \$1 million in gross receipts or 30 or fewer full-time employees is eligible for an annual tax credit for becoming accessible to people with disabilities. Tax credits can be used for:

- Sign language interpreters for employees or customers who have hearing impairments and readers for employees or customers with visual impairments.
- The purchase of adaptive equipment or the modification of equipment.
- Printed materials in alternate formats (e.g., Braille, audio tape, large print).
- The removal of architectural barriers in buildings or vehicles.

✓ **Architectural and Transportation Tax Deduction: Section 190 of Internal Revenue Code**

The Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction encourages businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of persons with disabilities and the elderly. Businesses may claim a deduction of up to \$15,000 a year for qualified expenses for items that normally must be capitalized. Businesses claim the deduction by listing it as a separate expense on their income tax return. Examples of deductions include:

- Providing accessible parking spaces, ramps and curb cuts.
- Making telephones, water fountains and restrooms accessible to persons using wheelchairs.
- Making walkways and paths of travel accessible (e.g. 32 inch doorways when open at a 90 degree angle, 36-48 inch wide hallways or sidewalks free of obstruction).
- Providing accessible entrances to buildings (e.g. automatic doors, proper door weights, etc.).

These two incentives can be used together by eligible businesses if the expenditures qualify under both Sections 44 and 190. Additional information may be found at [accessibility and barrier removal](#).

Employment Laws Assistance for Workers and Small Businesses (elaws)

The [elaws Advisors](#), developed by the U.S. Department of Labor, assist employers and employees in understanding several Federal employment laws, including disability nondiscrimination statutes.

ADA Resources

The ADA National Network provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), tailored to meet the needs of business at local, regional, and national levels. For additional information, see the [Small Business Primer](#), [employer resources](#), or contact an Information Specialist at 800-949-4232 (Voice/TTY).



The National Technical Assistance, Policy, and Research Center for Employers on Employment of People with Disabilities is funded by a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy to Cornell University. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply the endorsement of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Manufacturers and Employees with Autism- The Opportunity

Over the next decade, nearly 3.5 million manufacturing jobs likely need to be filled. Manufacturing executives report a significant gap in their ability to find talent with required skills. More troubling, the skills gap is expected to grow substantially over the next decade.

Autism as (Part of) the Solution

- **500,000 teens with autism** will enter adulthood – and the labor market – over the next decade. As many as 85-90% of adults with autism are unemployed or badly underemployed below their capabilities.
- **Hiring people with autism can make companies more successful.** Many businesses and companies have found this to be true as employees with autism, when aligned with their talents and interests, are productive, loyal and have fewer work place accidents than employees without disabilities.
- **Competitive Advantage of Hiring People with Disabilities (Including Autism)**
 - Turnover rates are lower than people without disabilities
 - Greater productivity and safety
 - Improvements in innovation, problem solving abilities, ability to compete in all markets and serve diverse consumers
 - Establishes positive company image and reputation, increases customer satisfaction
 - Strengths of individuals with autism include strong memory of details, ability to focus, visual skills, unique problem solving ability, consistency on repetitive tasks, honesty and loyalty.

Small Businesses need a pipeline of talented workers

Integrating students into the labor market early is a key determinant of successful post-school employment outcomes, for all students, even more so for students with disabilities. A combination of academics, career and technical education (CTE), and work experience in a related field, consistently result in employment for students with disabilities.¹ Increased access to CTE programs, especially work-based or on-the-job learning, can help address the unmet needs of the small business community, manufacturing industry and individuals with autism transitioning into adulthood as a pathway to the skills needed for employment and independent living.

What is Proven to Work

Work-based Learning

Transitioning youth with disabilities into the labor force early is a key determinant for successful employment. An abundance of research over the last three decades confirms that- youth with disabilities who have work experiences during their secondary school years are more likely to be successfully employed. In addition, these early work experiences are beneficial to businesses.²

Employers value work-based learning because the competencies acquired are those that are specifically needed in the workplace. Work-based learning opportunities, such as internships and job-shadowing, promote efficient recruitment practices and helps develop the pipeline of skilled and qualified workers.

¹ Shandra & Hogan, 2008

² Goodman, Nanette, and Michael Morris. "Creating Change with Incremental Steps: Enhancing Opportunities for Early Work Experience: Report." *ResearchGate*. Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University, Jan. 2013.

Research shows that employers who have internships for people with disabilities are 4.5 times more likely to hire a person with a disability than those who do not.³

These work experiences while in secondary school increases motivation to work toward a career and provides greater understanding of the skills needed to succeed at job tasks. The opportunities also provide young people with a better understanding of career options and disabilities related work accommodation strategies. In addition, work experiences can demonstrate to employers and community members the value that individuals with disabilities can bring to the workforce. Schools should partner with small business to strengthen and increase accessibility of career and technical education programs, internships, and apprenticeships for secondary school students and ensure that schools are providing support services for students with autism so they can fully participate, gain technical skills, and transition into employment.

****Terri can discuss her need for skilled workers, her partnership with the school to provide career exploration, etc.*

Supported Employment

In addition to early work experience and skill development, with the proper supports and accommodations, individuals with ASD can achieve their fullest potential and independence. Individuals with autism have a strong chance of becoming employed once they have appropriate supports.⁴ Rehabilitative services, such as supported employment, cuts the cost compared with providing standard care and results in better outcomes for adults with ASD. Despite the fact that individuals with ASD can be costly to provide vocational rehabilitation services for, adults with ASD have a very strong chance of becoming employed once appropriate measures are in place.⁵ Hence, work-based learning opportunities for secondary students, supported employment and similar rehabilitative services are a worthy investments.

****Terri can discuss her employee needed an aide, then became self-sufficient.*

Communities of Practice

Small businesses serve as an integral player to solving the workforce development needs of many communities. Their unique flexibility allows for innovative approaches to recruiting, training, and employing individuals with diverse abilities. Small businesses require qualified and skilled workers. Schools and employment service providers require employers willing to train and hire workers. Small businesses, schools, community organizations, local workforce development boards, and chambers of commerce can partner to create more opportunities for work experience and employment that is based on local and regional labor market demands. Local partnerships can streamline efficiencies to train young adults with autism for the skills that match the needs of small businesses. Therefore, students and young adults with autism would have multiple career pathways to match their skills and interest to, rather than simply choosing from limited employers willing to hire them.

****Terri can discuss how her community is working together and sharing best-practices/success stories to spread knowledge about hiring workers with disabilities*

Steps Congress Can Take to Cultivate a Pipeline of Skilled Workers for Small Business and Better Prepare Students with Disabilities for Employment

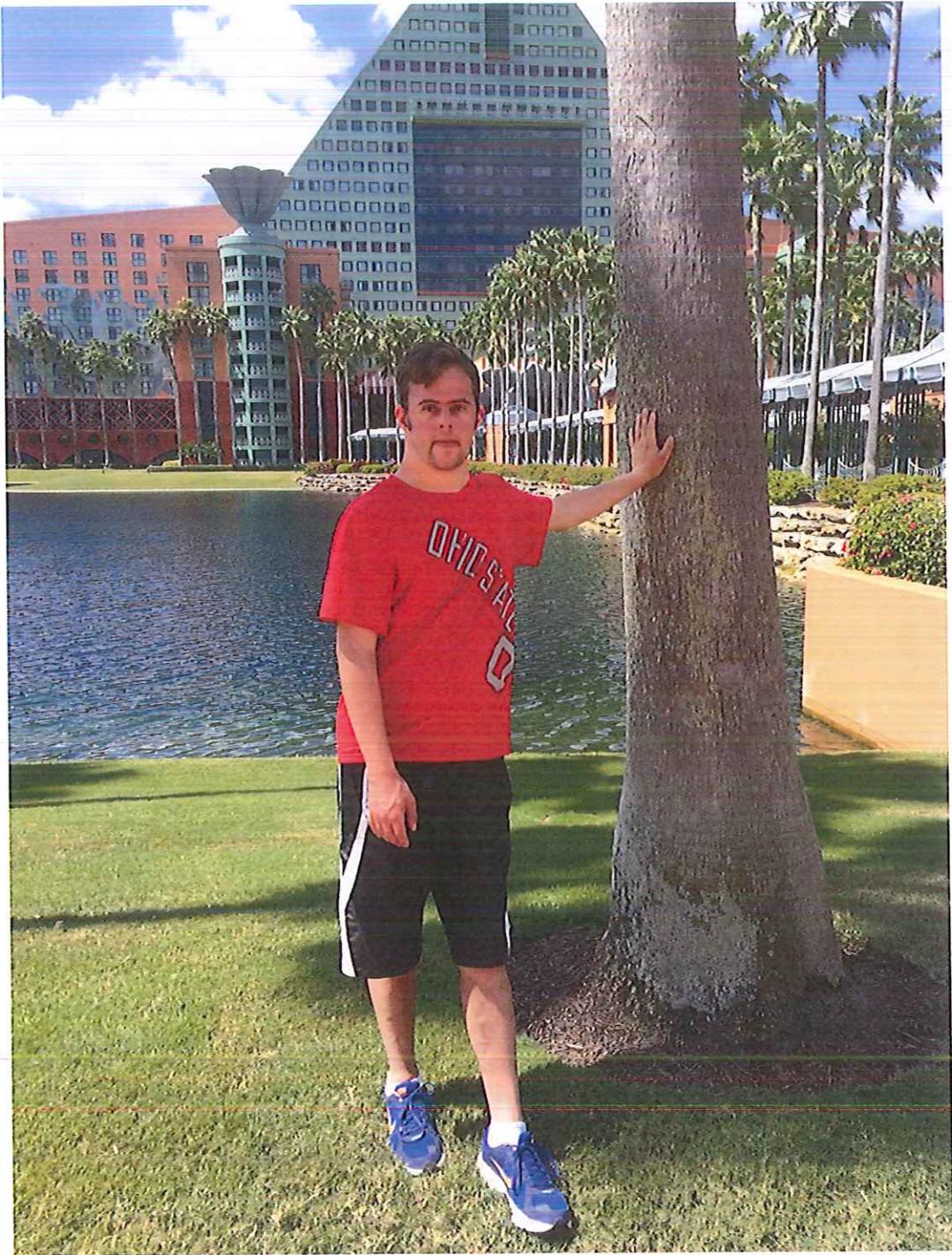
- Start cultivating talent and teaching technical skills early by expanding career readiness programs to serve youth early in middle school.

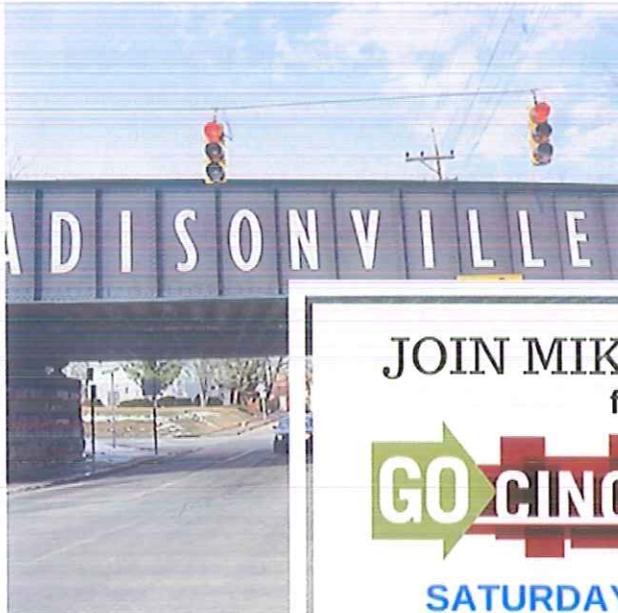
³ Luecking, R., & Fabian, E. S. (2000). Paid internships and employment success for youth in transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 23(2), 205-221

⁴ Jacob, Andrew et al. "The Costs and Benefits of Employing an Adult with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Systematic Review." Ed. Nouchine Hadjikhani. 2016.

⁵ Jacob, Andrew et al. "The Costs and Benefits of Employing an Adult with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Systematic Review." Ed. Nouchine Hadjikhani. 2016

- Strengthen and increase accessibility of career and technical education programs for secondary school students and ensure that schools are providing support services for students with autism so they can fully participate, gain technical skills, and transition into employment.
- Increase access to work-based learning and work experience for secondary school students to raise employment and independent living aspirations of youth with autism and their families while demonstrating to local employers the value individuals with autism bring to the workforce.





JOIN MIKE'S TEAM
for
GO CINCINNATI
SATURDAY, MAY 14th
(early afternoon--more info TBA)
looking for 8-12 volunteers
to help build a community garden
in Oakley/ Madisonville
REGISTER TODAY at
crossroads.net/go-volunteer/cincinnati



once registered, email
ben@starfirecouncil.org

Your launch site: **Oakley**
Arrival time: **7-7:30am** (doors open at 7am)
Check in with your project leader here: **Kids' Club Room 220**
Your project leader: **David Ooten & Mike Ames**
Your project leader's contact info: [ooten.dm@pg.com/5133134148](mailto:ooten.dm@pg.com) or [0010hotrod@gmail.com/](mailto:0010hotrod@gmail.com)
You are connected to your project through: **Ames, Mike**

After you check in with your project leader, head to the Auditorium for a rockin' launch service from 8-8:45am. At 8:45am, we'll head to our projects to do the work from 9am-1pm.



Your project name: **Welcome Home Collaborative**
Project address: **461 Dayton St, Cincinnati, OH 45214**
Project type: **Landscaping**

Notes about your project: **Long pants and closed toe shoes critical!**
When you arrive at the project site, parking instructions: **On the street nearby**

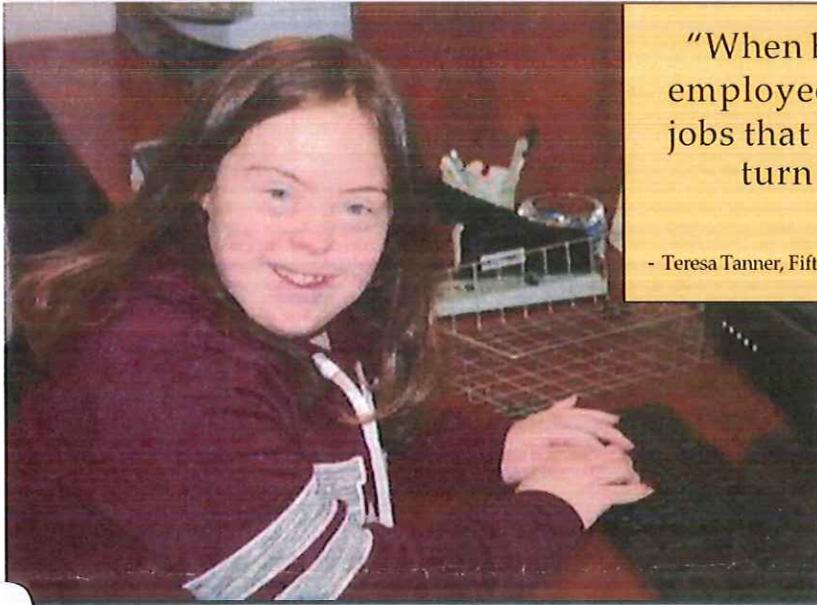
*OR JUST
SHOW UP
9:00 A.M.*

A great way to prepare for the day is to Google the organization you'll be serving and pray for them! So excited to bless our region with you on **Saturday, May 14!**

Questions : DAVID 513 - 313 - 4148

EMPLOYMENT FACT SHEET

EMPLOYMENT FIRST is a national movement to assist job seekers with developmental disabilities (DD) to work in competitive, integrated employment. In March 2012, Governor John Kasich signed an Executive Order making community employment a priority for people with developmental disabilities. Since that time, there has been a 16% increase in the number of people with developmental disabilities who are working in the community. Employers recognize that employees with DD are reliable and perform equal to or better than non-disabled employees.



“When businesses identify the strengths of employees with disabilities, then put them in jobs that match their skills, those employees turn out to be faithful, low-turnover, hard-working employees.” ✓

- Teresa Tanner, Fifth Third Bank, Executive Vice President, Chief Human Resource Officer

QUALITIES OF EMPLOYEES WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Stay in jobs longer

- 62% of individuals with disabilities have remained in the same job for three years or more.¹
- 48% lower turnover rate than those who do not have disabilities.¹

Come to work on time and when scheduled

- Individuals with disabilities have lower sick time use than those who do not have disabilities.³
- 73% of time off expenses are lower for individuals with developmental disabilities.³

Are reliable

- Are rated average or above average in work performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility to demands, attendance, and safety.¹
- 90% of individuals with disabilities performed equal to or better than nondisabled individuals.³

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF HIRING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Costs of hiring employees with disabilities are comparable

- It will NOT cost more to hire an individual with disabilities.
- Most accommodations (66%) cost less than \$500. For every dollar an employer spends for a disability-related accommodation, a company can save \$34 in other job-related expenses such as training and recruitment.⁴

Insurance Rates will not increase

- Insurance and workers' compensation rates for the company will not be affected by hiring an individual with a disability.⁵

HIRING JOB SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

- Job seekers with developmental disabilities and their families control \$2.1 billion ANNUALLY in spending.
- These individuals demonstrate brand loyalty to businesses that hire individuals with disabilities.
- 87 percent of all U.S. adults prefer to spend money at businesses that hire individuals with disabilities.¹
- Hiring job seekers with DD adds to diversity of the workplace environment and may lead to a more diverse customer base.
- There are over 1.5 million Ohioans who have a disability and they represent 13% of the market.²
- Their quality and quantity of work, flexibility to demands, attendance, and safety are equal to those employees who do not have DD.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US:

<http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/>
employmentfirst@dodd.ohio.gov

30 E. Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43215
614-466-6612

References: ¹Institute for Corporate Productivity (I4cp). (2014). Employing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. ²United States Census Bureau. (February 5, 2015). State and county quick facts: Ohio. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/39000.html> ³American Training. (December 12, 2012). New data substantiates benefits of hiring people with disabilities for assembly and distribution jobs. Retrieved from <http://www.americantraining.com/hiring-people-with-disabilities-for-assembly-distribution-jobs/> ⁴AskEarn.org. Retrieved from <http://askearn.org/BusinessCase/> ⁵Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. Retrieved from <http://www.ood.ohio.gov/Employers/Employer-Resources> ⁶The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Retrieved from <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/accommodation.html>