**Weekly Focus**

**October 12, 2012**

**Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director**

The mission of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.

Another 500 Consumers Released from Waiting List

Elimination of the waiting list continues to be a priority at RSC, and we are happy to report the release of another 500 consumers! We have now released a total of 7,500 individuals with disabilities. The current number of those consumers still waiting is 2,584. The progress we have made is outstanding. Thanks to everyone who has been instrumental in making this happen.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Kicks Off

The Ohio Statehouse provided the backdrop as RSC officially kicked off October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Joined by over 20 companies who are committed to hiring people with disabilities, the event highlighted inclusiveness in the workforce.

The event started off with songs being performed by the TAC Choir who also led the crowd assembled in the singing of the National Anthem. Children from the Ohio School for the Deaf led the crowd in signing the Pledge of Allegiance. I would like to extend a special thank you to the TAC Choir who lifted our spirits with their songs and to the children from the School for the Deaf who inspired us with their patriotism.

Keynote speakers included TyKiah Wright, founder of WrightChoice, Inc. in Columbus, and Blake Haxton, a student at The Ohio State University (OSU) who, as a high school senior, contracted a rare form of bacteria (*necrotizing fasciitis*) unofficially named the "Flesh-Eating Disease," and subsequently needed surgeries including the amputation of both of his legs. He currently is a senior at OSU majoring in Finance. Chris Moranda of OhioHealth and President of the Ohio Business Leadership Network (BLN) and Mike Gartner from Procter & Gamble, board member of the Ohio BLN, also spoke to the group as keynote speakers.

TyKiah Wright’s speech asserted that the NDEAM theme, ending in “What can YOU do?” was a direct ‘call to action.’ “I’m asking that of myself every day, ‘What can I do?’ and I’m hoping that employers are asking themselves that, too. Employers have to be more intentional about inclusion.”

Blake Haxton’s remarks supported the idea that employees with disabilities add value to their employers, and that they should be sought after. He stated,

“I think the 2 traits that people with disabilities have - including acquired disabilities such as I have - are that they have a will to succeed or overcome something, and they are problem solvers. They solve problems on a daily basis, finding new ways to do things and adapt to situations.

So, what you have is an employee with a will to succeed, who is a creative problem solver!

What could be better?”

(More pictures of the NDEAM event are on page 4.)

Picture Caption:

*Director Miller (center) with NDEAM keynote speakers Blake Haxton (left) and TyKiah Wright.*

Businesses Attend NDEAM Event

Attending this year’s NDEAM event were several businesses that have made a commitment to hire people with disabilities. Governor Kasich signed letters of appreciation recognizing them as leaders in this effort. It is important that we acknowledge them for their efforts and their participation.

Best Buy

Cardinal Health, Inc.

Chillicothe Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

Dynalab

Essilor of America, Columbus Distribution Center

Fifth Third Bank

Home Depot

Homewood Suites, Columbus/Hilliard

Manpower

Mount Carmel and Trinity Health

Ohio Industry Liaison Group

OhioHealth

Procter & Gamble

TJX Corporation

United Collection Bureau, Inc.

WrightChoice, Inc.

Special thanks also goes out to Leslie L. Wilson, M.S., President/CEO, Wilson Resources, Inc., Consultant, Ohio Business Leadership Network and the Ohio Business Leadership Network Members.

Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities Annual Meeting

On October 16, 2012, the Ohio Statehouse Atrium will be the venue of the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Ohio Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD). The event will start at 1:30 p.m. Awards to be presented at the meeting will include the GCPD Employer(s) of the Year; Advocate of the Year; Accessible Parking Enforcement; the Maureen Fitzgerald Leadership Award; the Karla Lortz Scholarship; and Legislator(s) of the Year. For more information, contact Donna Foster at (614) 438-1394.

Ohio Chapter of the Association of Higher Education and Disability at RSC

The agency’s transition grant hosted the annual meeting of the Ohio Chapter of the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) at RSC today. There were 75 college disability services directors and service providers attending the keynote addresses and sessions that dealt with assisting college students with disabilities in obtaining the accommodations that they need in order to be successful in a university setting.

Picture Caption:

*Michael Kenny, RSC rehabilitation program specialist, addresses AHEAD attendees.*

Director Miller Meets with Goodwill Leaders

I had the privilege to meet with the Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries (OAGI) leaders this week. This meeting was a chance for me to update them on a variety of issues. The discussion centered on the newly implemented fee schedule and we were able to have a conversation about next steps in the process moving forward. I am pleased that we are able to meet with groups like OAGI to find areas of common ground and to set the framework to continue to have a dialogue about how we can move forward together to serve people with disabilities.

CRP Feedback Session Scheduled

The first meeting for Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to provide feedback on RSC’s new fee schedule will take place on Wednesday, November 14, at RSC Headquarters in Columbus. We will have video conferencing and/or WebEx available as well. An e-mail will be going out to all providers next week with additional details.

CCC – In the Home Stretch

Activities for the Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC) are in full gear at the RSC Administrative and statewide offices. Area Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offices were visited by many of the charities so they could learn more about charitable giving opportunities. Events held at the area VR meetings included a silent auction, bake sale, pizza sale and sandwich sale all to benefit CCC. Staff at the 150 and 400 Buildings took part in a silent auction (items provided by staff and area businesses) and a wreath sale on Thursday, and the 150 Building staff held a bake sale the same day. We are very close to meeting our goal. We have raised $62,408 toward our goal of $68,978 and we have received 236 pledge cards toward our goal of 247.

Next week is the final week of the official Campaign! We will close out the Campaign at the 400 Building with a vendor sale (including 29 vendors), a Ping-Pong tournament and a chili cook-off. Activities planned at area VR offices include a door decorating contest and a Max and Erma’s Fundraiser. Your support at these events will allow RSC to finish the Campaign strong and meet our goal. Thank you for all your support!

Picture Captions:

*Pushing the product at the CCC Bake Sale is Budget Program Administrator Drew Cochran (right).*

*This OSU gift basket was a popular item at the Silent Auction.*

*This fall wreath was also a popular bid item.*

NDEAM Picture Captions:

Above: *Mike Gartner, Associate Director of Finance and Accounting at Procter & Gamble, addresses the NDEAM audience as RSC Executive Director Kevin Miller, Developmental Disabilities Council Executive Director Carolyn Knight, Dept. of Developmental Disabilities Director John Martin and RSC Commission Chair Jacqui Romer-Sensky listen.*

At right: *Children from the Ohio School for the Deaf lead the Pledge of Allegiance in sign language.*

*Ohio Employers who attended the event were presented with signed letters of appreciation from the Governor’s office for all they “do to employ people with disabilities in the state of Ohio...We applaud your efforts.”*

*Chris Moranda, CDMS, CCM, Manager of Disability Services, OhioHealth, speaking before the assembly.*

*The TAC Choir entertained the crowd with “Hang On Sloopy” and a number of other songs.*

*Keynote Speaker TyKiah Wright* (second from left) *backed by Blake Haxton, OhioHealth’s Chris Moranda and Mike Gartner of Procter & Gamble.*

*RSC Commission Chair speaks as Blake Haxton looks on.*

Left to right: *RSC Executive Director Kevin Miller and Commissioners Cynthia Rees, Jacqui Romer-Sensky, Chair, and David Daugherty*

*Keynote Speaker Blake Haxton, Ohio State University student*

For more information or questions on stories in this publication please call Shirley Marchi, Community Relations Liaison, at 614. 438.1477.

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**RSC’s Facebook website:**

[**https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Rehabilitation-Services-Commission/155300754532533?sk=wall**](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Rehabilitation-Services-Commission/155300754532533?sk=wall)

**RSC’s YouTube website:**

[**https://www.youtube.com/user/OhioRSCTV**](https://www.youtube.com/user/OhioRSCTV)

**RSC’s Twitter website:**

[**https://twitter.com/#!/OHRSC/**](https://twitter.com/#!/OHRSC/)