

# Division of Developmental Disabilities



June 2019

## Upcoming Events

- **Tuesday, July 30, 4:00 - 6:00 PM** — Division of Developmental Disabilities Community Forum at the **Cumberland Public Library, 1464 Diamond Hill Rd, Cumberland, RI**
- **Tuesday, August 27, 10:00 - 11:30 AM** — A Forum for Self-Direct individuals at **Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI**

## Employment Spotlight



Stacey DeCosta has held several jobs over the years, but as far as she is concerned, there's only one that's worth talking about — the job she has now.

It's in retail. And she loves it.

Since the fall of 2017, DeCosta, 46, has been working at Old Navy in Warwick. She started as a seasonal employee after a partnership with Rhode Island's Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) and Easterseals helped her apply and prepare for her job interview. Easterseals Rhode Island also provided ongoing job coaching and, within a few months, DeCosta earned a permanent job.

She now works 12 hours a week, and she couldn't be happier.

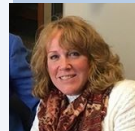
"When I started working there I didn't know a lot of people. Then, after two months, I got to know a lot of them," she said. "I just had more confidence, I just came out of my shell."

The state's efforts are impacting many other Rhode Islanders. According to RespectAbility, a Maryland-based nonprofit that seeks job opportunities for people with disabilities, Rhode Island ranked 19<sup>th</sup> last year among the 50 states for employment among working-age people with disabilities, with 30,787 of 75,806 people employed. Just one year earlier, the state was 47<sup>th</sup>.

RespectAbility says one reason for the improvement is Rhode Island's response to a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice, which required the state to transform its developmental disabilities service system to ensure full integration of day and employment services. Since then, BHDDH and its provider partners have closed all sheltered workshops, and the state is working with more than 30 providers to increase employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Director Boss's Corner

Hi folks,



We are pleased to provide this newsletter to you with your quarterly authorization letter. If you have access to the internet and email, you can sign up for electronic newsletters on our website, [http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/whats\\_new/bulletin.php](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/whats_new/bulletin.php). Be sure to click on the box for the DD Newsletter and you will receive them electronically.

Please read the article below by our Division of Developmental Disabilities Director, Kerri Zanchi. She provides a great update on the many initiatives the Division is working on.

Be assured that we are working to be responsive and create opportunities to advance our goals of a person-centered system.

*Becky*

## DDD Director Kerri Zanchi's Corner

Greetings,

While summer is finally upon us, the work of the Division of Developmental Disabilities remains in full swing on a number of exciting initiatives to advance our commitment to system transformation.

This work however, is only possible because of the continued contributions of our community partners and our dedicated team here at BHDHH.

Under the leadership of Director Boss, BHDDH has successfully reorganized many of its personnel resources to advance the Department's shared goals of access, quality and safety. In DD, this means that we now have expanded resources in the areas of fiscal management, communications, policy and quality management.

Most recently, we have worked with our stakeholders to develop person-centered standards and subsequently have implemented quality reviews.

**(cont'd on next page)**



## Helpful Information

### How do I reach BHDDH about an issue?

- There are two ways to reach BHDDH:
  - ⇒ Find the person you would like to reach and their phone number at <http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/contact.php>
  - ⇒ There is also an email that is monitored daily. Please feel free to send an email to [BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov) and receive a reply within one business day.

### Need information about?

- **Self-Directed Services: Allowable Goods and Services**

Find it on the BHDDH website at:

[http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/forms\\_provider.php](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/forms_provider.php)

- **Overtime to Home Care Workers**

Find it on the Department of Labor website at:

[https://www.dol.gov/whd/homecare/homecare\\_guide.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/whd/homecare/homecare_guide.pdf)

- **Self-Directed Supports**

Find information on the Paul Sherlock Center on Disabilities website:

<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/sds/sds.html>

- **Employment Services**

Find information about the **PCESEPP program and employment** at:

[http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/employmentfirst\\_index.php](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/employmentfirst_index.php)

- **Self-Advocacy and Support Organizations**

<http://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

<https://ripin.org/>

## DDD Director Kerri Zanchi (cont'd)

With the support and expertise of our contracted partners, we are better aligning technical assistance and training around assessed needs.

This spring, we also launched a rate review which will assess our current payment model for our Medicaid funded services. This review will also assist us in considering alternative ways we can reimburse for Medicaid services.

Finally, we share in the excitement and appreciation for the projected DSP wage increase, scheduled to take effect in the upcoming budget year. Director Boss and I continue to recognize and support these investments in this vital workforce.

As always, thank you for your support and feedback as we move forward. Your experience guides us and your voice matters each and every day!

Together, we are working hard to advance our goals for a person-directed system of supports.

*Kerri*

## Project SEARCH = Success



Project SEARCH came to Rhode Island in 2013, opening with a single location at Miriam Hospital. Today it operates at four locations. Two — those at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island and Newport Hospital — mirror the effort at Miriam and focus on young adults. The other site, at Rhode Island Hospital, is open to adults of all ages.

With input from the host entities, local school districts, developmental disability organizations and three state agencies — the Department of Human Services, the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, and the Department of Labor and Training — Project SEARCH provides an all-encompassing approach to helping people with developmental disabilities transition to work.

The program lasts roughly the length of a school year, providing hands-on training while preparing each participant to find employment. Along the way, teachers provide classroom time and help with topics such as workplace behaviors, dealing with difficult situations, writing resumes, and talking to bosses. And as the host entities welcome the participants into their midst and help them to become part of the culture, representatives from the supporting agencies meet and discuss how each participant's individual needs can be met.

The results tend to draw rave reviews. At RI Hospital, the jobs assigned to the six enrollees in this year's program included delivering specimens and weighing, sorting and delivering mail. "Just to watch them grow, to watch their determination, it was clear they wanted to succeed," said Betty Ferreira, manager of the central transport department. "We couldn't teach them enough."

Liam Shaughnessy (pictured above with his mom, Marie), completed three years at the University of Rhode Island before entering the program. He said he looks forward to working while continuing his studies part-time.

His biggest takeaway from the program? "A respect and love for work," he said. Best wishes to all the Project SEARCH graduates!