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**ANGELA
MARIE
VASQUEZ**

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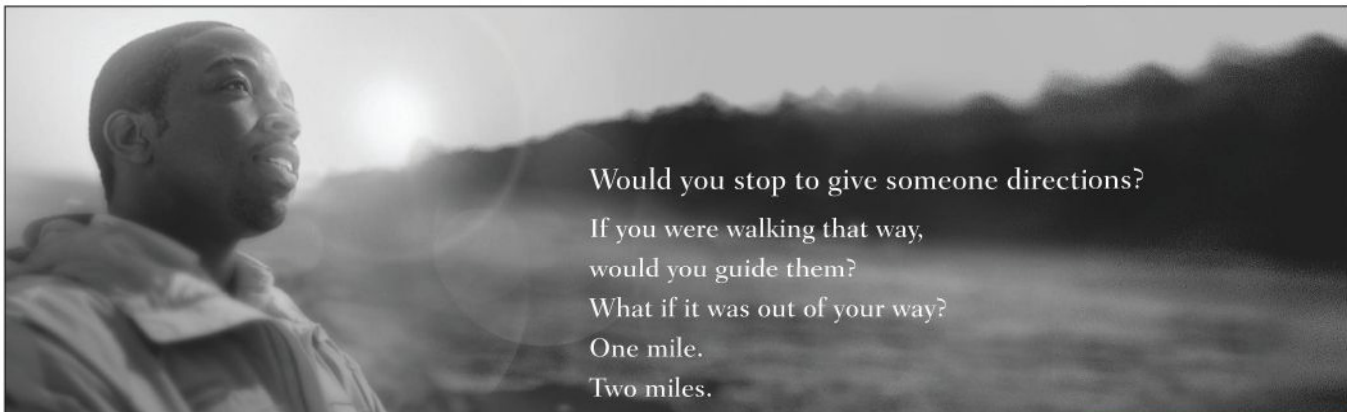
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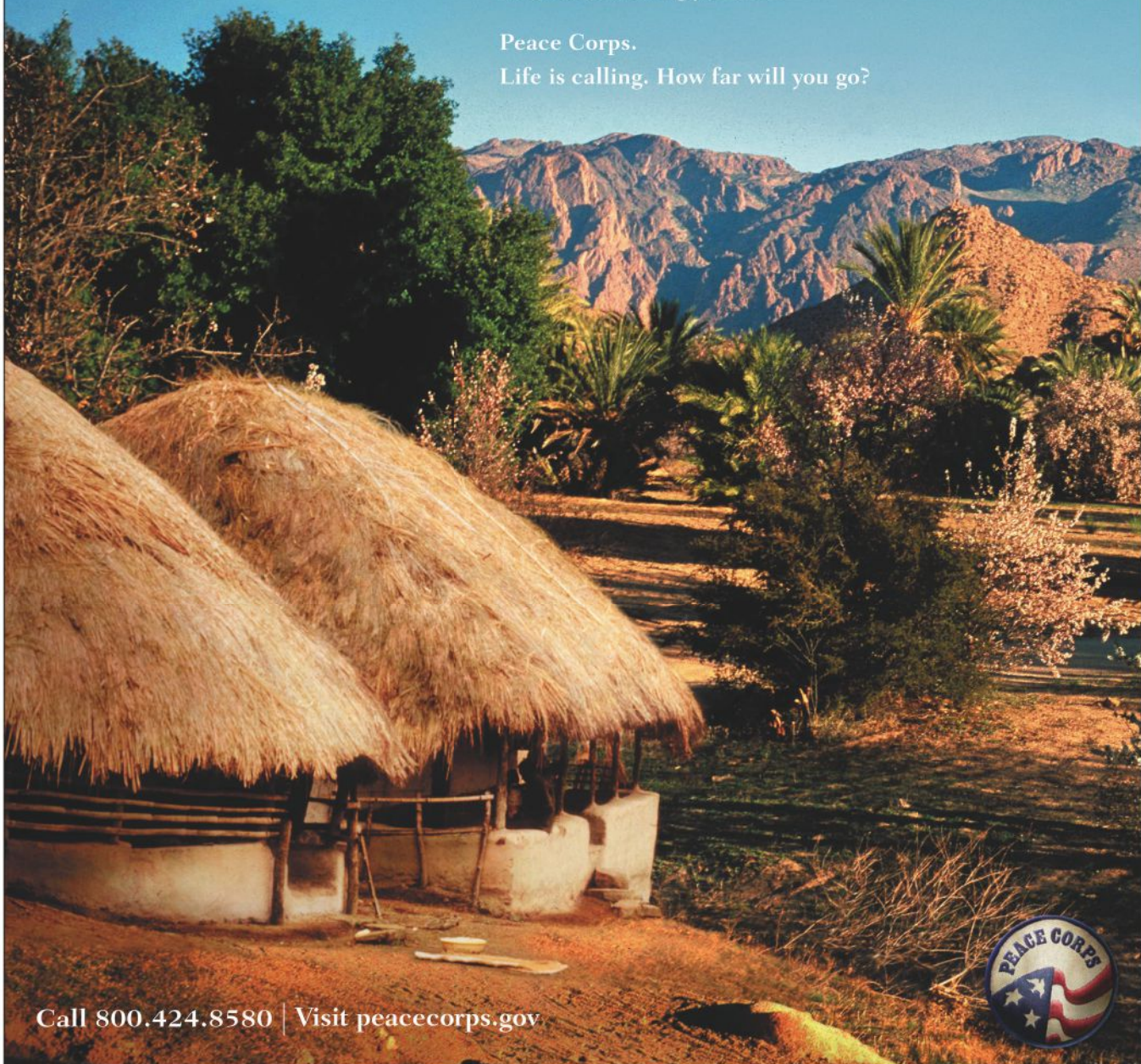
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ON THE COVER:

As a mission support specialist in the office of the director of USCIS, Angela Marie Vasquez, who is deaf, plays an important role in supporting the mission of the agency.

Discover what that role is and why she's so proud to support the mission of USCIS on page 18.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Exploring Educational Aspirations

The job market is strong for job seekers, and so is the economy. In fact, according to a new Gallup poll, Americans' confidence in the U.S. job market is the highest in Gallup's trend originating in 2001, with 71% in May 2019 saying now is a good time to find a quality job. This signifies a substantial improvement from March and April 2019, when 65% each month rated the job market favorably. The latest level is similar to February 2019's 69% reading, according to Gallup.

However, another new study shows that recent college graduates feel a little differently. MidAmerica Nazarene University recently surveyed 2,000 graduates from around the country, and found that only 45% of graduates feel positively about the current job market.

This related to their choice of major. Students had regrets when selecting a major, with 22% of respondents sharing their intended major isn't the one they pursued. However, many (55%) indicated they'd still stick with the major they originally chose if money wasn't a factor. And 62% said the job market influenced the major they ultimately chose. And only 37% had a job lined up after graduation.

All of this undoubtedly leads to a natural wariness of the job market and an uncertainty about what career path and major to pursue for the nearly 22 million students currently enrolled in American colleges and universities.

Having a disability can add additional layers of stress when seeking the right college or university for the undergraduate or graduate program that you want to pursue.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, approximately 11%, or 2.4 million, of all post-secondary undergraduates reported having some form of disability.

Having some guidance and resources to follow your educational and career aspirations is even more necessary and helpful. To that end, in this issue on page 8, find some resources and scholarships to help you on your path to higher education and beyond, as well as a listing of colleges and universities that are inclusive, and welcome students with disabilities.

If you're still unsure about what educational and career journey to take, then take a cue from the top 10 Employees of the Year honored for their work as trailblazers and advocates in the disability community at *CAREERS & the disABLED*'s 27th Annual Employee and Employer of the Year Awards Ceremony in April.

Take a look back at this year's ceremony,

which also honored the Private-Sector and Public-Sector Employers of the Year, on page 14.

We also highlight several sectors in this issue that are brimming with employment opportunities, and actively welcome, recruit, retain, and promote people with disabilities.

One, for example, is government and military, which always needs qualified candidates to fill vital positions. Among those candidates who is proud of and thriving in her mission-critical position with USCIS is Angela Marie Vasquez, who graces our cover.

Her role as a mission support specialist in the office of the director of USCIS is key in supporting the mission of the agency.

"My job varies day to day; I support agency leadership's human resources, budget and operational needs," says Vasquez, who is deaf. "Every day is unpredictable, and presents challenges in ways to learn and support the mission."

She does this with the support of USCIS, which has provided career development opportunities, and accommodations such as devices and on-site American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for her daily functions at work and for her to communicate.

This has allowed her to grow, and become simply, as she puts it, "Angela, a dedicated employee and team member."

Find out more on page 18 about the career journeys of her and her fellow government and military employees featured in this issue.

Then turn to page 24 to meet a few individuals working at companies on the forefront of the tech acceleration, which features the advent of 5G, in telecom and networking.

On page 34 shop for a retail career that can evolve with changing consumer demand as online options push brick-and-mortar locations to shift in response. And on page 40 learn what welcoming career signals the hospitality and hotel management sector are putting out to people with disabilities.

In addition, be sure to log onto EOP's website, eop.com, to access our Diversity and Inclusion Career Center, and sign up for free at eop.com/expo for the next *CAREERS & the disABLED*'s Career Expo, which is July 11, 2019 in Washington, DC at the Ronald Reagan Building. Happy job hunting!

Barbara Capella Loehr

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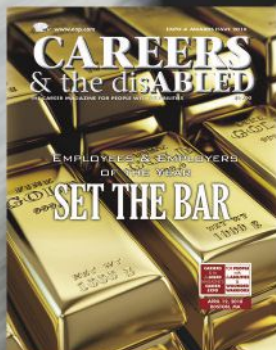
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EXPLORING HIGHER EDUCATION



FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CONSIDERING COLLEGE OR GRADUATE SCHOOL, THE QUINTESSENTIAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE MAY SEEM LESS THAN INVITING. EXPLORE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO GUIDE YOU ON THE PATH TO COLLEGE AND BEYOND.

Starting college is stressful enough. However, when you're a student with a disability, college may seem almost impossible, no matter what your age is. Having a disability can add additional layers of stress when seeking the right college or university for the undergraduate or graduate program that you want to pursue.

Here you'll find some resources and scholarships to help you on your path to higher education and beyond, as well as a listing of colleges and universities that are inclusive and welcome students with disabilities.

Photo credit: Pinterest.com



ON THE RIGHT PATH

THE GOOD NEWS IS YOU'RE NOT ALONE AS YOU BEGIN THE PROCESS THAT WILL TAKE YOU FROM APPLICATION TO ACCEPTANCE - AND ULTIMATELY GRADUATION AND A FRUITFUL, SATISFYING CAREER.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, **approximately 11%** of all postsecondary undergraduates reported having some form of disability.

In addition, nearly **22 million** students are currently enrolled in American colleges and universities. That means

Photo credit: bestcolleges.com



TOP DISABILITY-FRIENDLY COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

The **Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973** was a landmark achievement for everyone from those suffering from discrimination in the workplace due to mental or physical disabilities to those struggling with equal access within the realm of higher education at the time.

As a result of the law, many college campuses began to rethink their facilities, programs and curriculums in an effort to begin the slow process of better accommodating students with learning disabilities and special needs.

Today most mainstream students may notice indicators of these accommodations being prevalent on their college campus with the addition of powered accessible doors, wheelchair ramps and elevators in all multifloor buildings.

However, a 2015 survey by *College Magazine* concluded that although **86%** of universities enroll and educate students with disabilities, only **24%** of the schools polled indicated offering those students assistance "to a major extent."

So CollegeChoice.net decided to examine universities that have strong programming and solid support services for students with needs including, but not limited to, learning disabilities, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), visual and hearing disabilities, and those with physical needs that require special access, accommodations, service animals, and/or alternative transportation.

The schools that made its ranking have shown a consistent value and priority for meeting the physical, social, and academic needs of students with learning disabilities and special needs. See accompanying list.

The universities and colleges that made the top 10 CollegeChoice.net list include:

1. University of Michigan
2. University of Southern California
3. Northeastern University
4. Xavier University
5. University of Texas
6. College of Charleston
7. University of Connecticut
8. Marist College
9. Messiah College
10. University of the Ozarks

The universities and colleges that made College Magazine's top 10 best colleges for students with disabilities list include:

1. Landmark College
2. Beacon College
3. University of Arizona, Tucson
4. Curry College
5. University of Iowa
6. American University
7. Northeastern University
8. Lynn University
9. University of Connecticut
10. Marist College

The universities and colleges with outstanding programs for students with disabilities that made The Mighty's top 10 list include:

1. Appalachian State University
2. Auburn University
3. California State University, Fresno
4. California State University, Northridge (CSUN)
5. Clemson University
6. Curry College
7. Kent State University
8. Lesley University
9. Marshall University
10. Missouri State University

College Magazine also looked at the colleges and universities leading the charge in supporting students with learning disabilities. See accompanying list.

The Mighty also polled its community, receiving recommendations for colleges and universities with outstanding programs for students with disabilities. See accompanying list.

As you can see, there are a number of disability-friendly colleges and universities supporting those with varying abilities and needs who want to further their education. See accompanying list.

Plus, there's some heartening overlap on these three lists, with Marist College, University of Connecticut, Curry College and Northeastern University, for instance, appearing on at least two of the lists.

.....

there are more than **2.4 million** postsecondary students with a disability attending college in the U.S. This indicates the increasing accessibility at colleges and universities across the nation.

Thus, prospective college students with disabilities will find many campuses are furnished with offices and services that address accessibility, accommodation, and assistive technology for a diverse array of needs and requirements.

In fact, there are free resources offered by universities to that yield success. Resources range from having a note-taker for day-to-day classes to having a quiet environment for test-taking. Whatever the case may be, students with disabilities should look into their university student disabilities service center to help them be the best students they can be.

Student services offices and disability coordinators at many colleges also work to make campuses inclusive environments via specialized advocacy, support and academic services.

State, federal, and local laws prohibiting discrimination and requiring equal levels of access to academic services, environments, and resources further protect students with disabilities.

Among them are **Section 504, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Assistive Technology Act (Tech Act)**.

Thus, it's also crucial to learn about a college's disability procedures in advance to receive assistive services and tools ahead of starting courses.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

There are many scholarships for people with disabilities available worldwide, especially in the U.S. They provide financial assistance for students with a physical, sensory, or learning disability, or students with a mental health condition.

In the U.S. and Canada these include:

- AAHD Frederick J. Krause Scholarship on Health and Disability
- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (AG Bell) College Scholarship Program
- Baer Reintegration Scholarship
- Flora Marie Jenkins Memorial Disability Scholarship
- Hemophilia Federation of America (HFA) Educational Scholarships
- Microsoft DisAbility Scholarship
- National Center for Learning Disabilities Anne Ford and Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarships
- Google Lime Scholarship Program
- Shire Canada ADHD Scholarship Program
- DisabilityAwards.ca

In addition, scholarships for students with autism include those available from:

- Iconic Displays
- MediaWorks
- SeoSquad
- SunWise

Scholarships also worth investigating include:

- AmeriGlide Achiever Scholarship
- National MS Society Scholarship Program
- Soozie Courter Hemophilia Scholarship Program
- Organization for Autism Research
- Jill M. Balboni Memorial Scholarship
- Anders Tjellstrom Scholarship
- The Anne Ford and Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarships
- UCB Family Epilepsy Scholarship
- Disabled War Veterans Scholarship
- Craig H. Nielsen Scholarship Fund for Students with Disabilities
- Lighthouse Guild
- Lilly Reintegration Scholarship
- Jay Cutler Athletic Scholarship
- Microsoft DisAbility Scholarship
- Google Lime Scholarship Foundation



KEY LEGISLATION

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Title II protects students with disabilities who attend public colleges against disability discrimination, while students attending private and for-profit colleges must adhere to Title III. Both are enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

Most of the IDEA regulations cover primary and secondary students between the ages of three to 21. However, under IDEA, high schools are expected to provide students with certain services to “facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education.”

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT (TECH ACT)

State-run organizations are eligible to receive grant funding for assistive technology programs in a number of environments, including college campuses, to help fund the purchase of assistive technologies (AT).

FILING GRIEVANCES

If students with disabilities believe your academic institution isn’t in compliance with the legislation described here, then they have the option of contacting agencies that oversee these laws with their concerns. These include Office for Civil Rights (Section 504), U.S. Department of Justice (ADA) and U.S. Department of Education (IDEA). It’s important to thoroughly review the policies and suggestions of each agency before submitting a complaint.

WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM SCHOOL & STUDENT REGISTRATION

Colleges and universities interested in offering their students with disabilities an opportunity for federal jobs can register to be part of the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP).

WRP is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal- and private-sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to demonstrate their abilities in the workplace via summer or permanent jobs. WRP is the primary pipeline bringing college students and recent graduates with disabilities into federal employment.

Schools that would like to participate in WRP must be accredited by one of the accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Registration for schools will close on June 28, 2019. School coordinator registration is now open. Recruiter registration begins June 3, 2019. Student registration starts August 26, 2019.

To be eligible to participate in WRP, candidates must be current, full-time undergraduate or graduate students with a disability, or have graduated within one and a half years of the December release of the database. For the 2020 WRP release interviews will be held in Fall 2019. A candidate who graduated on or after April 1, 2018 would still be eligible to participate. Candidates must be U.S. citizens and be eligible for the Schedule A Hiring Authority.

More information and registration details can be found at prodwrp.service-now.com/wrp. And more information about Schedule A can be found at usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/individuals-with-disabilities.



Sources: U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)

In the Next Issue of *CAREERS & the DISABLED* Magazine

- Spotlight On Wounded Warriors
- Leaders in Military/Veteran Recruiting
- Working for the Federal Government
- Careers in STEM
- Disability Supplier Diversity Programs
- Graduate School Degrees For Post-Military Careers
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SECTION 504 FACTS

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act) is one of the earliest federal pieces of disability rights legislation. The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD), which persuaded President Jimmy Carter's administration to ensure Section 504 compliance, can trace its origin back to civil rights demonstrations in the 1970s. This paved the way for subsequent amendments.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), a part of the U.S. Department of Education, oversees the implementation of Section 504. Organizations that receive federal funding, such as academic institutions and employers, are legally obligated to provide students with disabilities equal benefits, services and opportunities. Students attending college must be provided with equal access to classrooms, and they may be deemed eligible for accommodations.



However, some postsecondary academic institutions don't receive federal funding, making them exempt from complying with Section 504. The most common reasons a school wouldn't receive funding are because it's declined funding or had it revoked.

Some private colleges choose to decline federal funding for a variety of political, religious or ethical reasons. Others may lose funding if they fail to comply with recent federal standards regarding gainful employment and loan amounts.

Section 504 covers "qualified individual[s] with a disability." The provisions define qualified individuals as those with a physical or mental condition that substan-

tially restricts one or more major life activities. If the essential admission requirements are met, a postsecondary school may not deny admission simply on the basis of having a disability.

In addition, even if a college is exempt from Section 504 requirements, the students at these academic institutions are likely covered by other disability rights legislation, such as **Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**, which extends this prohibition against discrimination to the full range of state and local government services, programs, and activities (including public schools) regardless of whether or not they receive any federal financial assistance.

The **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAA, Amendments Act)**, effective January 1, 2009, amended the ADA and included a conforming amendment to the Rehabilitation Act that affects the

meaning of disability in Section 504. The standards adopted by the ADA were designed to not restrict the rights or remedies available under Section 504.

The Title II regulations applicable to free appropriate public education issues don't provide greater protection than applicable Section 504 regulations. This guidance focuses primarily on Section 504.

Furthermore, Section 504 and Title II both protect elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students from discrimination. However, while Section 504 requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction, it doesn't require postsecondary school to provide FAPE.

Postsecondary school is instead required to provide

appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure it doesn't discriminate on the basis of disability.

While disclosure of a disability is always voluntary, to have a postsecondary school provide an academic adjustment based on individual disability and needs as well as assignment to accessible facilities, students must identify themselves as having a disability. It's also recommended that this be done as early as possible to ensure its execution.

For more information about Section 504, visit www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html.

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27TH ANNUAL AWARDS

**AND
THE
WINNERS
WERE....**



HONORING TRAILBLAZERS & ADVOCATES

AND THE WINNERS ARE: TAKE A LOOK BACK AT *CAREERS & THE DISABLED*'S 27TH ANNUAL EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY. WE HIGHLIGHT THE TOP 10 TALENTED EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES AND THE TOP PUBLIC- AND PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYERS WHO BLAZE A PATH FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

Since 1992 *CAREERS & the disABLED* has been acknowledging and celebrating the personal and professional achievements of remarkable individuals with disabilities, and the actions and initiatives of progressive employers recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees with disabilities, via its Annual Employee and Employer of the Year Awards.

This year was no different. In April, at our awards ceremony at The New Yorker, a Wyndham Hotel in the heart of New York, NY, the city that never sleeps, we revealed the deserving winners of the 27th Annual *CAREERS & the disABLED*'s Employee and Employer of the Year Awards.

There we honored 10 remarkable role models who've made prodigious contributions to the workforce in and outside of his and her respective workplace, and to the community outside of work - each one a trailblazer and advocate in his or her own right with his or her own unique expertise, spectacular career highlights and all-important advocacy for the disability community.

The diverse group of employees who earned top accolades include Nicholas (Nick) Comegna, BNY Mellon, Frank Facio, United States Postal Service (USPS), Sue Cushing, ManTech, Lauren Oplinger, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Daniel Winton, The Aerospace Corporation, Benjamin Tracy Minish, NASA Johnson Space Center, Jennifer Fugate, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, Jeffrey (Jeff) Wissel, Fidelity Investments, Kathy Martinez, Wells Fargo & Company, and Tony Lai, LinkedIn.

As usual, the awards also underscored outstanding employers' commitment to championing and furthering people with disabilities. To that end, this year *CAREERS & the disABLED* recognized MetLife with the Private-Sector Employer of the Year Award and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) with the Public-Sector Employer of the Year Award.

The reception and awards ceremony was sponsored by Lockheed Martin, the Bethesda, MD-based global security and aerospace company, and hosted by Equal Opportunity Publications (EOP), Inc.'s *CAREERS & the disABLED* magazine, the nation's leading career magazine for people with disabilities. Our award-winning magazine has now marked its 33rd year of publication while EOP has just celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018.

In this issue we share some of the highlights of this year's ceremony. Take a look back on the following pages.

B Y B A R B A R A C A P E L L A L O E H R

Every Soldier has a story to tell.

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Seated, 1 to r, the Employee of the Year winners are Daniel Winton, The Aerospace Corporation, Benjamin Tracy Minish, NASA Johnson Space Center, Nicholas (Nick) Comegna, BNY Mellon, Sue Cushing, ManTech, Frank Facio, United States Postal Service (USPS), Kathy Martinez, Wells Fargo & Company, Lauren Oplinger, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Jeffrey (Jeff) Wissel, Fidelity Investments, Tony Lai, LinkedIn and Jennifer Fugate, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, and Jose Garcia, Wells Fargo & Company, senior vice president, diversity talent acquisition strategy manager, Wells Fargo & Company, the CAREERS & the disABLED Career Expo bronze sponsor.

Standing, 1 to r, are presenter Angela Couture, The Aerospace Corporation, EOP President and Publisher Tamara Flaum-Dreyfuss, presenter Katie Damiani, BNY Mellon, EOP Chairman and CEO John R. Miller III, presenter Teresa Navarette, USPS, presenter Jim Crawford, ManTech, EOP Career Expo Division Manager Dan Castellano, EOP Administration and Events Coordinator Annette Cora and CAREERS & the disABLED Editor Barbara Capella Loehr.



Employee of the Year
Kathy Martinez (r),
Wells Fargo & Company



Private-Sector Employer of the Year MetLife



Keynote speaker John McGonagle,
Lockheed Martin chair, Able & Allies
Community, Director of Flight
Operations/Chief Pilot, Sikorsky,
Lockheed Martin company



Chairman and CEO, EOP,
Inc., John R. Miller III



Public-Sector Employer
of the Year National
Geospatial Intelligence
Agency (NGA)



Employee of the Year Sue Cushing, ManTech (c)



Quadesha Bynum, persons with
disabilities manager, National
Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
(NGA), Public-Sector
Employer of the Year



Employee of the Year
Benjamin
Tracy
Minish,
NASA
Johnson
Space
Center
and wife
Sherry



Employee of the
Year Lauren
Oplinger,
JPMorgan
Chase & Co.



Employee of the Year Nicholas (Nick) Comegna,
BNY Mellon (c)



Employee of the Year
Jeffrey
(Jeff)
Wissel,
Fidelity
Investments



Employee of the
Year Frank Facio,
US Postal
Service
(USPS)



Employee of
the Year
Daniel
Winton,
The
Aerospace
Corporation



Employee of the Year Tony Lai,
LinkedIn



Employee of the Year
Jennifer Fugate,
Lockheed Martin
with John McGangle

GUARANTEED SUCCESS

CAREERS IN THE GOVERNMENT ARE HERE TO STAY, PROVIDING AS CLOSE TO GUARANTEED SUCCESS AS YOU CAN GET FOR THOSE CONSIDERING A ROLE IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR THE MILITARY.

As sure as death and taxes, there's one other certainty: the government, and military, will always need qualified candidates to fill their vital positions. And with a large percentage of the federal government's workforce on the cusp of retirement, that leaves some big and exciting shoes to fill.

Here four professionals working for the federal government discuss the meaningful work they do for their agencies while offering career advice that can immediately be put into action.

VASQUEZ SERVES A MISSION-CRITICAL ROLE AT USCIS

WORKING FOR AN AGENCY THAT HAS A CRITICAL MISSION TO ADMINISTER THE NATION'S LAWFUL IMMIGRATION SYSTEM, ANGELA MARIE VASQUEZ PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SUPPORTING THAT MISSION.

"My job varies day to day; I support agency leadership's human resources, budget and operational needs," says Vasquez, a mission support specialist in the office of the director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a Washington, DC-headquartered agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

"Every day is unpredictable and presents challenges in ways to learn and support the mission. As an example, I might start the day working on funding issues and reviewing budgets to make sure the appropriate money is allocated for tasks, and then, at the last minute, shift focus and move to another sensitive priority."

What Vasquez likes most about her job is the chance to meet and interact with new and valued employees each day, to support the agency's leadership and to provide a resource on which her colleagues can rely.

She also appreciates the career development opportunities and diversity that USCIS accommodations provided. Vasquez is deaf, and relies on devices and on-site American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for daily functions at work to communicate.

"The reasonable accommodations provided here are great," she says. "This allows the work to be accommodated to the individual, and allows individuals to grow."



She adds: "I'm not allowing my deaf identity to impede my work or define who I am. I just want my colleagues to think of me as Angela, a dedicated employee and team member."

Employed by the federal government for six years, Vasquez came to USCIS about three years ago from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

"An immigrant myself, I became a U.S. citizen," says Vasquez, who is from the Philippines. "With my personal background and experience, I knew I could support the agency's mission. It felt like a great fit for me."

She further adds: "As an immigrant, I'm living the American dream, and that really connects me to the mission of USCIS. I'm grateful to contribute to that work."

To succeed in the workforce and in the job hunt today, says Vasquez, experience is paramount.

"Employers are looking for candidates with some experience. Start by building experience through internships, even unpaid. Those internships, paid or unpaid, will eventually help land you a job," she elaborates.

Vasquez also provides advice for those who are unsure if it's time to make a change: "I'm often asked how do you know when you're ready for a

BY AMANDA N. WEGNER



As a mission support specialist in the office of the director of USCIS, Angela Marie Vasquez, who is deaf, plays an important role in supporting the mission of the agency.

new job, or a new experience....It's time to look for new opportunities when you feel the challenges have run out or you're not being challenged. Challenges help you advance, so keep looking for new experiences. Lastly, always advocate for yourself in the workplace."

Connect with USCIS on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn, and find career opportunities with the agency at uscis.gov/about-us/careers-uscis.

WILLIS WORKS ON PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE AT ACL

KATHY WILLIS IS FOCUSED ON DATA, SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, AND TAKING THE LONG VIEW.

Willis is a program specialist, managing grants and contracts for the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), which is part of the Administration on Disabilities at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Community Living (ACL).

"I work for the office that handles projects of national significance, which means whatever is important at the time to our commissioner on disabilities and constituents. My projects range a lot," notes Willis.

For instance, one of her projects is a five-year grant to teach the public about supported decision-making, which allows individuals with disabilities to make choices about their own lives with support from a team.

"It's an alternative to guardianship," explains Willis. "Part of the project is based on doing research to find the connection between life satisfaction and supported decision-making."

She also works on the self-advocacy resource center, which seeks to give people information and teach people with disabilities how to advocate for themselves, and she manages three long-term data projects. The latter involves longitudinal studies that the government has funded for more than 30 years, looking at research like employment, where people live and more.

"It's new and innovative," Willis says of the work her employer does. "It's not like your typical government agency. I just love my job. I'm working with good people. I take pride in holding grantees accountable, making sure they're doing what we need them to do."

And she appreciates how her colleagues are mission-focused, which is supported by the fact that many colleagues, including organizational leaders, have disabilities, as well. Willis herself has cerebral palsy, which affects her speech and motor skills.

With ACL for 13 years, it took Willis 21 years to find a permanent job. When she wasn't doing contract work, she spent seven hours a day looking for work. That is, until one fruitful day when she received a follow-up call to an interview, presuming they were calling back to schedule a second interview.

"She was talking about dates I can start work!" retells Willis, remembering the call that brought her to ACL. "So a month later, we moved to the Washington, DC area."



Kathy Willis, who has cerebral palsy, is a program specialist, managing grants and contracts for AIDD, part of the Administration on Disabilities at HHS' Administration for Community Living.

Willis doesn't let her disability stop her from maximizing her impact with the Washington, DC-headquartered agency.

"I make work, work for me, by working a lot of hours, many hours that I'm not supposed to be working, but when you type seven words a minute you need to make up the time somehow. So I usually work on Sundays. With email and with grantees, you can work anywhere," she elaborates.

For those seeking a job, particularly individuals with disabilities, Willis says to be ready to compete with everyone and to work hard for what you want.

"You just got to be better than everybody else. When they say, 'Don't work,' you have to work because your supervisors don't know what it's like to type seven words a minute. Try to compete with everybody else. They don't care how you get there. It's their job, your supervisor's job, to tell you not to work on weekends, but it's your job to get the job done," she concludes.

Connect with ACL on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and find careers with both ACL and its parent agency, HHS, at hhs.usajobs.gov.

**O'REILLY SHOWCASES THE WORK OF NIST'S
ITL CYBERSECURITY PROGRAM**

PATRICK O'REILLY HELPS COMMUNICATE THE VALUE OF WORK BEING DONE IN THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY (ITL) IN THE COMPUTER SECURITY DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY (NIST), WHICH IS PART OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC).

O'Reilly's main duties at Gaithersburg, MD-headquartered NIST include editor of the *ITL Cybersecurity Program Annual Report*, a team member overseeing the Computer Security Resource Center website and administrator of an email list with more than 80,000 subscribers.

Right now, he's working on finalizing the *2018 ITL Cybersecurity Program Annual Report*, making this the 11th annual report on which O'Reilly has worked.

"This annual report is fairly comprehensive in that it provides excellent information of all of the great achievements and

highlights all of the work that was accomplished last year," explains O'Reilly.

"The annual report is a great marketing tool to help promote our cybersecurity program, and showcase all of the great work NIST's ITL Cybersecurity Program does every year."

O'Reilly didn't originally set out to work in IT and cybersecurity. Growing up, sports were a huge part of his life, so much so that he earned his first degree in sports management. He figured that once he graduated from college, he would find a full-time job working with a professional sports team in the front office, but he soon realized that was very challenging.

In the early to mid-1990s as his eyesight started to get worse, O'Reilly was discussing his frustrations of not finding a job in professional sport when his brother asked if he was working with computers. The answer was yes, and O'Reilly's brother encouraged him to go back to get a degree in information systems management.

"I thought my brother had a good point, so in 1995 I went back to college," says O'Reilly, who has hearing loss and Retinitis Pigmentosa.

O'Reilly's brother also encouraged him to consider employment with the federal government, and as he was finishing his second degree, he applied with a temp agency, where he aced all of the computer skill exams. The next day, the job counselor had three jobs available for O'Reilly to review, including a six-month assignment for NIST.

"Once the assignment was over, my NIST supervisor asked me what my future career goals were. I told my NIST supervisor that I had one more year left to complete my second degree, and



Patrick O'Reilly, who has hearing loss and Retinitis Pigmentosa, helps communicate the value of work being done in NIST's ITL Cybersecurity Program as editor of the ITL Cybersecurity Program Annual Report, a team member overseeing the Computer Security Resource Center website and administrator of an email list with more than 80,000 subscribers.

NGA PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES RECRUITMENT SHOWCASE AND HIRING EVENT

An Introduction to NGA, Networking Opportunities and Interview Sessions

Springfield, VA
August 21, 2019
8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

St. Louis, MO
July 11, 2019
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Schedule A (physician certified)
- Veterans with Disabilities (30 percent VA rating or higher)

Register Here: <https://bit.ly/2Edopxc>

Participation does not guarantee applicants will secure NGA employment



Approved for public release, 19-727



then I was hoping to find a job working in the federal government,” recalls O’Reilly, who’s now been with the agency for more than 21 years.

O’Reilly finds NIST a great place to work as his division’s management team does their best to make sure he has the proper assistive technology that he needs to do his job. Additionally, the management team also encourages him to take training courses.

“I enjoy working with all of the folks in my division, and I think the management team do their best to work with me for they know the challenges I face in terms of my disabilities. They all have been very supportive of me, and do their best to help make my job easier,” he points out.

O’Reilly advises others to ask for help if needed. “The best advice I received was to speak up and reach out to my manager if I ever face a tough challenge, and need some guidance and direction to move forward in getting the task done.”

In the IT field, as computers and technology are always improving and getting more advanced, O’Reilly recommends keeping up-to-speed by taking training courses. And because it’s a field that thrives on knowledge-sharing and collaboration, the ability to work closely with colleagues and be involved on project teams are also necessary skills.

Connect with NIST on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube, and find career opportunities with the agency at nist.gov/careers.

LESLIE SERVES THE INTERESTS OF
COMPANIES & THEIR INVESTORS AT SEC

DANIEL LESLIE WORKS TO ENSURE THERE’S A BALANCE BETWEEN THE CAPITAL COMPANIES SEEK TO RAISE, AND THE SECURITY OF THE MONEY THAT PEOPLE INVEST IN THOSE COMPANIES.

“I help companies raise money for their projects, and I help investors find investments by ensuring companies provide appropriate disclosure to the public about their operations,” says Leslie, an attorney advisor with the division of corporation finance at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Leslie further explains his role: “We want all companies to be able to access the capital they need to invest in their ideas. We want companies to be innovating new products and new discoveries that benefit everybody. But, also, we want the investing public to have a fair return on their investment. A component of that is taking some risk, but we want investors to have reliable information about those risks, so they can make informed decisions about those risks and the corresponding opportunities.”

With the commission for more than seven years, Leslie came to Washington, DC-headquartered SEC as an intern after he was directed to the agency by one of his law school professors. He joined the SEC full-time in 2011.

“I’ve really liked it here from the get-go,” says Leslie, who also has a bachelor’s and master’s degree in accounting. “I like the responsibility...and I like that I make decisions and recommendations about how to achieve the SEC’s mission.”

And Leslie, who’s paralyzed from the shoulders down after breaking his neck in 2004, doesn’t let his disability get in the way from serving companies and investors.

“My disability certainly put limits on what I’m physically able to do. Obviously I can’t open a door for myself, but...my goal isn’t to open doors - I have much bigger goals than that. My disability only affects mundane things, and the accommodations I get from the SEC help me overcome my physical limits so I can accomplish my work and perform at my potential.”

For others considering the legal profession, Leslie recommends beefing up your communication skills, working on your argumentation skills, and developing analytical and critical-thinking skills.

“Read things critically. Be open to new ideas. Learn to analyze arguments and to understand the merits of alternative arguments. Argue your position persuasively without getting sucked into extraneous issues,” he says. “These are good, foundational skills if you want to be a lawyer.”

Daniel Leslie, who’s paralyzed from the shoulders down after breaking his neck in 2004, ensures balance between the capital companies seek to raise and the security of the money invested in them as an attorney advisor with the division of corporation finance at SEC.



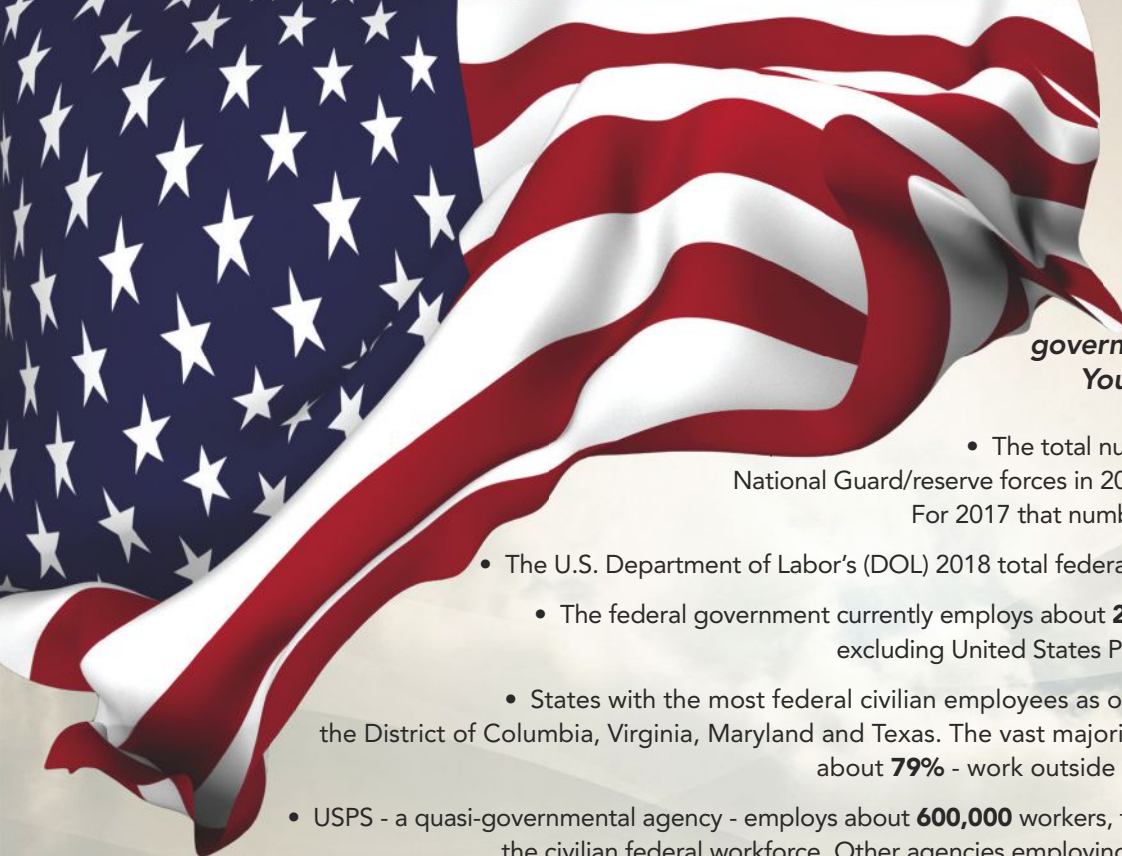
He also advises taking a diverse approach to finding your next role: “We often get complacent and single-tracking in our preparation for future jobs, only focusing on networking or education or leadership. It’s important to balance knowing the right things, knowing the right people, and knowing how to work with people.”

And most importantly, don’t be afraid to take chances, he encourages.

“Employers are more open now than ever to working with people with disabilities and are more aware of the benefit of hiring someone with a unique perspective,” states Leslie, who’s been featured in a video about Section 508, the government’s IT accessibility program.

“Be open to taking a chance on an employer. They want to provide opportunities to all people, with disabilities or otherwise. If you’ve been frustrated or discouraged in the past because of some obstacles, try again. Sometimes it might not work out - that can always happen - but you miss 100% of the shots you don’t take, so take a chance.”

Connect with the SEC on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr and Pinterest, and find career opportunities with the commission at sec.gov/careers.



GOVERNMENT & MILITARY EMPLOYMENT STATS

Considering a federal government or military career? You'll be in good company:

- The total number of U.S. active duty and National Guard/reserve forces in 2018 is reported at **2,148,392**. For 2017 that number is reported at **2,320,202**.
- The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) 2018 total federal jobs estimate is **2,797,000**.
 - The federal government currently employs about **2 million** full-time employees, excluding United States Postal Service (USPS) workers.
 - States with the most federal civilian employees as of June 2018 were California, the District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland and Texas. The vast majority of all federal employees - about **79%** - work outside the Washington, DC region.
- USPS - a quasi-governmental agency - employs about **600,000** workers, the single largest segment of the civilian federal workforce. Other agencies employing the most civilian employees include the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Sources: Governing.com and Statista.com



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ACCELERATING CHANGE

TELECOM AND NETWORKING CONTINUE TO ACCELERATE CHANGES IN THE WAY WE CONNECT AND COMMUNICATE.

Telecommunications and networking have transformed the world. Thanks to this sector, we carry computing power in our pockets and purses that surpasses NASA's when it put men on the moon.

With the advent of 5G, there will be higher data rates, faster speeds, lower lag time, energy savings, cost reduction, and massive device connectivity - plus, even more reliable, real-time connections. So the pace of change isn't abating. In fact, it's accelerating exponentially. And 5G represents that rate of acceleration.

In this feature meet a few people working at companies on the forefront of this tech acceleration, and who enable and leverage the latest tech while helping put the pedal to the metal on the changes in telecom and networking.



MCAVOY LEVERAGES TECH TO ADAPT & HELP OTHERS ADAPT AT COMCAST

MATT MCAVOY, DIRECTOR, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AT COMCAST, DEVELOPS TRAINING CONTENT FOR COMCAST BUSINESS TECHNICIANS, ENGINEERS AND OTHER SUPPORT ROLES.

With approximately 184,000 employees around the world, there are lots of colleagues to train. McAvoy also had to acquire new skills to adapt during his almost two decades with the company.

"I have Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON), which causes extreme low vision, especially in the central vision area. I can identify shapes with high contrast, and I walk with a white cane. I started having symptoms about six years ago," he shares.

His vision loss meant the Comcast teacher had to become a student. "Some examples of things I had to learn on an accelerated learning schedule include the following: touch-typing, navigating city streets as a blind person, using screen-reading software, using a computer without a mouse, and using products with Voice Over."

McAvoy has been with Comcast for 19 years, and the company had his back through all of this.

"The most difficult time was the fear of the unknown, as I was losing my sight. I did not know what I did not know, so it was the fear of the unknown. Luckily, I had lots of support at Comcast to help along the way," he elaborates.

Matt McAvoy, who has Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy (LHON), which causes extreme low vision, is director, learning and development at Comcast, where he develops training content for Comcast business technicians, engineers and other support roles.

BY KATIE MCKY



There are still challenges, but attitude helps mitigate them, according to McAvoy.

“One other challenge was, and still is, explaining to people in face-to-face meetings that I cannot see their presentation, but I will review it later in a soft copy. The bottom line is that the fear of the unknown is always frightening, and getting comfortable being uncomfortable with new things might not be fun at the time, but it’s part of learning and growing. This would have been much more difficult if I did not have the support network in place at work.”

A central element of Comcast’s culture is enabling each other, he further points out.

“Even though there may be certain tasks I have difficulty accomplishing sometimes, my team doesn’t make it seem like a burden at all. Comcast, and specifically my team, have proven to be very accommodating, as I deal with the challenge of being visually impaired.”

In a Comcast video, McAvoy encouraged his colleagues with disabilities to avail themselves of Comcast’s accommodations and technological assists.

“THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN is always frightening, and getting comfortable being uncomfortable with new things might not be fun at the time, but it’s part of learning and growing. This would have been much more difficult if I did not have the support network in place at work.”

“I explained my perspective, of Comcast providing all necessary assistive technology and training, as I transitioned to a different way of working each day. I was encouraging people, with the intention that if they identify having a disability, they can get assistive technology or adaptive devices or services, so their jobs will be much easier, and they can be more productive,” he explains.

McAvoy spoke about his recent experiences of Comcast providing adaptive technology.

“I connected with Tom Wlodkowski, the leader of our accessibility department, and formulated a plan for how I would manage my transition at work and still perform my job requirements,” he recalls.

“I learned to use adaptive technology, such as Zoom Text and JAWS screen-reading software. Comcast was very accommodating, providing any adaptive technology I needed, such as a 42" desktop monitor, Apple devices, and software.”

Another fine component of Comcast’s empowering culture is vertical and horizontal mobility, notes McAvoy. “With so many different job opportunities within the company, there are opportunities for everyone with every assortment of skills and talents.”

Comcast is also all in on a diverse workforce that reflects their diverse customers. “Comcast definitely has demonstrated a belief in strength in diversity and inclusion, to ensure that all points of view are represented. Comcast recognizes that the perspective of our customers has to be represented internally, so the best decisions and innovations can be delivered,” McAvoy concludes.

Learn more about Philadelphia, PA-headquartered Comcast through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Glassdoor, Instagram and LinkedIn. Check out what positions are open at jobs.comcast.com.

DIMARIA'S ADAPTIVE MOBILITY DEVICES HEIGHTENS HIS JOB FOCUS AT CENTURYLINK

MICHAEL DIMARIA, DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS FOR CENTURYLINK, DRAFTS LEGISLATION AND NEGOTIATES REGULATORY CHANGES TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR CENTURYLINK TO DO BUSINESS IN ARIZONA, BUT HE REVELS IN CENTURYLINK'S TECHNOLOGY.

"Our focus on future technologies, which will enhance the lives of our customers worldwide, makes CenturyLink an exciting place to work," declares DeMaria, who also enjoys his role. "I appreciate the flexibility my role offers, and the ability to make a difference."

DiMaria also appreciates how CenturyLink and its 45,000 global employees treat him. "CenturyLink and my coworkers have treated me no differently than any other employee. Though I may not have the physical abilities I once had, I'm still expected to succeed in my role as any other employee. I appreciate I'm judged solely on my ability to support the company's mission and deliver on my objectives."

DiMaria was diagnosed with Becker muscular dystrophy (BMD) in 1981, when he was 13, but adulthood delivered a new set of challenges. "Four years ago, I began to realize that I was losing my ability to stand and walk. I realized that doing my job was going to become more complicated."

Technology helped. "Over the next few months, I was able to get adaptive mobility devices and a personal vehicle needed to continue my career," he elaborates.

There was also an unexpected upside, according to DiMaria. "After years of worrying about falling, and having a catastrophic injury, I found the adaptive mobility devices allowed me to focus fully on my role for the company because the worry of falling was no longer an issue."

Adapting a new philosophy in addition to incorporating adaptive mobility devices further helped DiMaria heighten his focus on a job he loves at a company he loves.

"Since my diagnosis, I've lived by two ideas. One, you must live 'one day at a time,' and two, always plan, but don't let the future control your life because it's not something that you can control," he shares.

CenturyLink also lives by two ideas, which is that, combined, diversity and inclusion work. "CenturyLink understands the value of diversity and inclusion, and the relevance to our customers and prospective customers," notes DiMaria.

CenturyLink puts its money where its mouth is, too, he maintains. "During my transition from walking to use of adaptive mobil-



Michael DiMaria, who has Becker muscular dystrophy (BMD) and uses adaptive mobility devices, is director of legislative and regulatory affairs for CenturyLink, where he drafts legislation and negotiates regulatory changes to level the playing field for CenturyLink to do business in Arizona.

ity devices, CenturyLink made some changes to help me at the office. The company put in automatic doors to the office suite in which I work, and it adapted a restroom facility to assist my limited ability to transfer in and out of my wheelchair. The company has always been helpful and has aided anytime they were asked."

Being able to fully focus on his job without a fear of falling is a big boost because DiMaria's job is demanding.

"I'm responsible for interaction with all elected officials and staff of the Arizona state legislature; Arizona governor's office; Arizona state agencies and the Arizona public service commission, including working directly on legislation and regulation that affects CenturyLink," he outlines.

5G Facts

By 2020 it's thought that 50 billion to 100 billion devices will be connected to the internet. Thus, connections that run on different frequency bands will be established to cope with demand.

Enter 5G, a wireless networking architecture that aims to increase data communication speeds up to 20 times faster than its predecessor, 4G. It also allows connections for more than 200 additional devices per square mile than 4G. Many carriers are starting to launch 5G networks this year.

5G will be a dramatic overhaul and harmonization of the radio spectrum. That means the opportunity for properly connected smart cities, remote surgery, driverless cars and the Internet of Things (IoT), among other things.

5G reportedly will be able to boost capacity by four times over current systems by leveraging wider bandwidths and advanced antenna technologies.

The goal is to have far higher speeds available, and far higher capacity per sector, at far lower latency than 4G. The standards bodies involved are aiming at 20Gbps speeds and 1ms latency.



DiMaria has been in the telecommunications industry for more than 27 years, and with CenturyLink for the past decade, and, with CenturyLink's support, his decades of wisdom continue to help CenturyLink and its customers.

Explore Monroe, LA-headquartered CenturyLink through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. Explore opportunities at jobs.centurylink.com.

BINGEL TAKES THE LEAD, OPENING A DIALOGUE ABOUT DISABILITIES AT VERIZON

RHONDA BINGEL, SUPERVISOR, BUSINESS OPERATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY, LAW AND SECURITY (PPLS), SPEAKS EMPHATICALLY ABOUT HER WORK AT VERIZON: "I'M TREATED LIKE A PERSON WHO HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER THE COMPANY. I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M JUST A DISABILITY NUMBER TO THEM. THEY VALUE MY TOTAL BEING, MY WHOLE SELF. I'M AN EMPLOYEE WITH A JOB TO DO, AND I'M DAMN GOOD AT IT."

Bingel worked mightily hard to master her work, holding a master's degree in business administration with a minor in project management, as well as master's degree in science for human resources with a minor in generalist. Her can-do attitude continues far beyond her education, as she manages the gifts and entertainment process for PPLS, and is currently president of Disabilities Issues Awareness Leaders (DIAL), a Verizon employee resource group, and is involved with several groups on accessibility issues.

The cherry atop her towering sundae of achievement is that she mentors college students with disabilities.

She now relishes her job at Verizon managing a team of 19 legal assistants who support attorneys within the PPLS group. However, as one of 144,500 worldwide Verizon employees, Bingel was a little unsure when she first arrived.

"Before I joined Verizon, I was used to working at small companies, and so coming to

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Rhonda Bingel, who has spina bifida, is supervisor, business operations for public policy, law and security (PPLS) at Verizon, where she manages a team of 19 legal assistants who support attorneys within the PPLS group, and where she is president of Disabilities Issues Awareness Leaders (DIAL), a Verizon employee resource group.

such a big company like Verizon was scary because I wasn't sure how accepted I would be. As it turned out, it was the best thing to happen," she shares.

"ONE THING I WANTED TO DO AS PRESIDENT [OF DIAL] IS OPEN the channel of communications. How is a company going to learn about disabilities, visible or invisible, if they can't ask the right questions to individuals willing to answer them openly and freely? How can a company learn what processes to put in place when it comes to new hires with disabilities?"

"The best thing" might not have happened if it weren't for a persistent sister, though. "My sister was tired of me working for small companies. She pushed me until I applied to Verizon," she points out. Bingel has never forgotten the importance of a push. "The

reality is that when you have a disability, sometimes you are too scared to leave your current job because you feel safe."

She's been in the workforce long enough to remember when advancing was more problematic for people with disabilities.

"I was born with spina bifida, so most of those around me described me as 'crippled.' I came up in the world without the ADA, so I had to work twice as hard to show I could do the job, and didn't use my disability as an excuse," she recalls.

Bingel carried that work ethic into Verizon. "When I came to Verizon, I worked hard because that's who I am, but I never felt like I was judged for my disability," she remembers.

Which is why she took the lead at Verizon, becoming first the vice president and then the president of DIAL. As such, she leverages her platform. "One thing I wanted to do as president is open the channel of communications," she elaborates.

"How is a company going to learn about disabilities, visible or invisible, if they can't ask the right questions to individuals willing to answer them openly and freely? How can a company learn what processes to put in place when it comes to new hires with disabilities?"

DIAL also connects entities. "DIAL helps employees deal with everyday challenges and opportunities, e.g., workplace accommodations, networking within state/county systems, support groups, and simply learning from each other," she details.

Verizon's ERGS are change agents, leading to a more diverse, reflective workforce, but in the end, it's all about the individual, according to Bingel.

"Verizon has allowed me to be me without any judgment of my disability," she concludes.

Verizon is headquartered in New York, NY, with operational headquarters in Basking Ridge, NJ. Learn more via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

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AL HADIDI JOURNEYS FAR TO CHANGE THE WORLD AT CHARTER

DON'T SAY, "NO, YOU CAN'T DO THAT," TO NOAH AL HADIDI, AN ACCESSIBILITY ARCHITECT AT CHARTER. IF YOU DO, HE'LL PROVE YOU WRONG, AGAIN AND AGAIN. AL HADIDI LOST ALL OF HIS SIGHT AS A YOUNG CHILD, NECESSITATING A MOVE BEYOND THE KEN OF MOST CHILDREN.

"I had to leave my family and country to attend school in Bahrain because Oman did not have the resources or faculty available to handle proper education for a blind student. I spent 10 years in Bahrain before I had to transfer again to finish out my education," he recalls.

He had to move again. "In 2005 I traveled to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and lived there for three years to complete my education. In the Middle East, it's believed that blind people cannot do science or math, and I wanted to prove this belief wrong," he shares.

So, while in Riyadh, Al Hadidi worked for Nattiq Technologies, which develops new technology, devices and software for the blind, which left him hungry for more knowledge.

"I wanted to pursue a degree in computer science, but the only way for me to be able to study was if I was granted a scholarship by my country. After many months of writing letters and others com-



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ing to my aid, my scholarship was finally granted,” he reveals.

An anonymous donation came forward to cover the rest of his living expenses. Al Hadidi’s hunger for knowledge didn’t abate.

“I later decided to continue my studies in the U.S. despite not speaking much English. I sold my mobile phone, my main medium of communication with friends and family, to pay for my visa, and began the treacherous journey of traveling to the U.S. as a blind, non-English speaking immigrant in pursuit of college education,” he relates.

In 2010, at Colorado State University, Al Hadidi took an intensive English program, earning a bachelor’s degree in computer science, and then a master’s degree in computer information systems. His achievements changed his country.

“I was the first blind person from Oman to study a science subject ever,” he states. In fact, as a result of the progress I made, Oman sent more people with disabilities to study in the U.S.

Al Hadidi’s progress also put him in the perfect place.

“My turbulent education journey paid off when I landed with a job at Charter as the first blind accessibility architect. While this, too, posed some initial challenges, I’m thrilled to be contributing to what I hope will become the number-one company in accessibility for employees and for customers,” he enthuses.



Noah Al Hadidi, who is blind and who, through his educational journey, has changed the minds of many in his home country Oman about the abilities of people who are blind, is an accessibility architect at Charter, where he’s serving as the lead architect on all projects involving the accessibility of internal tools.

It’s challenging to upgrade established technologies, according to Al Hadidi. “Accessibility is fairly new to most companies, [and], therefore, integrating into already mature software development lifecycles is a big challenge.”

Al Hadidi has to upgrade more than just technologies. “My responsibilities not only encompass technical consultation, but also spreading education and awareness. While challenging, the education piece is also very rewarding because I get to experience and benefit from the changes that result from the new values and technical knowledge that I was able to influence.”

Effecting change is made easier by the fact that accessibility is central to Charter. “Charter has adopted universal design and inclusive experience to be at the core of everything internally and externally,” he explains, adding how he loves being able “to innovate in design/development of our products, hardware, and software to ensure inclusiveness for our customers and employees.”

This is a story with a fairy-tale ending. “Charter has enabled me to fulfill my dream to work in accessibility and make a difference in people’s lives, through tools like Aira, an app-based service that connects a blind user to a remote assistant,” he points out.

And for its part, Charter buttresses Al Hadidi’s world-changing work with accommodation.

“Charter has also insured that my environment is accessible by providing accessible labeling systems in the workspace, and supporting me and other coworkers with disabilities with assistance in moving toward more accessible internal tools,” says Al Hadidi.

“This year, the primary role that I’ve been assigned is to serve as the lead architect on all projects involving the accessibility of internal tools. This means that not only do I have the support of my leadership toward promoting accessible internal tools, but I also get to drive the necessary changes in a way that reflects the end-user.”

Charter Communications, which powers Spectrum, is headquartered in Stamford, CT. Learn more through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn. Explore job openings at jobs.spectrum.com.

**GOPALRATNAM IS PROUD OF CISCO’S
INCLUSIVE CULTURE**

ONE MIGHT THINK BEING CISCO’S CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER FOR INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE AKIN TO KEEP A MULTITUDE OF PLATES SPINNING, BUT VC GOPALRATNAM SIMULTANEOUSLY JUGGLES A FEW BALLS, TOO.

You see, he also serves as global executive sponsor of Cisco’s Connected Disabilities Awareness Network (CDAN) and Cisco’s Special Children’s Group, as well as Cisco’s operations leader for India with additional focus on leadership for Cisco’s priorities of inclusion and collaboration, university relations, corporate social responsibility and compliance.

“MY TURBULENT EDUCATION JOURNEY PAID OFF WHEN I landed with a job at Charter as the first blind accessibility architect. While this, too, posed some initial challenges, I’m thrilled to be contributing to what I hope will become the number-one company in accessibility for employees and for customers.”

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It's the latter roles that give Gopalratnam the authority to assert this: "At Cisco we believe all organizations should ensure people of all physical and cognitive abilities have the opportunity to have not just a job, but also a career."

To achieve this end, Cisco recruits a diverse workforce. "Diversity is an integral part of our recruiting strategy," elaborates Gopalratnam. "In our candidate searches, we make an up-front commitment to create a diverse candidate slate, using technology to craft job postings that neutralize bias."

The technology that neutralizes bias is called diverse talent accelerator. "It's a suite of tools that helps us leverage the power of data and analytics to drive breakthroughs in fair and inclusive decision-making to find, attract, select, and hire diverse top talent," he explains.

Once diverse talent is hired, Cisco seeks to advance said talent to a position that enables the realization of full potential. "Through the multiplier effect, leaders can commit to sponsoring a diverse individual to the next level in their career," he notes.

The multiplier effect is just the beginning of Cisco's support initiatives, according to Gopalratnam.

"We also have a robust portfolio of learning and development opportunities, both for individuals and people leaders, including Accessibility and Disability Awareness, Unconscious Bias, GlobeSmart and Next Generation Leaders programs. Plus, our more than 243 employee resource organization chapters and inclusion leadership teams help us to create an environment of inclusion and collaboration."

Cisco, as an innovator company, also leverages its internal, inherent, high-tech assets "Cisco LifeChanger is about leveraging our own technologies to assist people with disabilities so they can be more efficient and productive. It combines novel applications of Cisco's voice, video, and collaboration technology with process improvements to transcend location, accommodation, and mobility issues," he states.



VC Gopalratnam serves as Cisco's chief information officer for international operations and senior vice president of information technology, as well as as global executive sponsor of Cisco's Connected Disabilities Awareness Network (CDAN) and Cisco's Special Children's Group, and Cisco's operations leader for India with additional focus on leadership for Cisco's priorities of inclusion and collaboration, university relations, corporate social responsibility and compliance.

Cisco's investments in a diverse workforce come from its values. "At Cisco we believe the true promise of inclusion and collaboration is to create a culture where all people are welcomed, valued, respected and heard. Diversity, inclusion and collaboration are fundamental to who we are, and how we will succeed in this age of digital transformation," describes Gopalratnam.

Cisco's CDAN is another way its employees with disabilities feel "welcomed, valued, respected, and heard," he adds. "CDAN promotes inclusion across Cisco by supporting the value of difference."

Outside entities agree that Cisco succeeds in its efforts, as Cisco was recently ranked seventh on *Fortune's* 2018 100 Best Workplaces for Diversity, made Disability Equality Index's (DEI) 2018 Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion list, and was named a 2018 Disability Matters Europe Honoree.

"THE MOST INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT IS THE STREET OUT there - we should all strive to make the workplace as diverse and as inclusive as the street! That's my passion and is what motivates me at Cisco."

"Being an inclusive organization is a strategic differentiator in the world today. As the workplace evolves and gets younger and younger, it's been established that Gen Y and Millennials opt to work for organizations that have a greater purpose of impacting society positively," Gopalratnam points out.

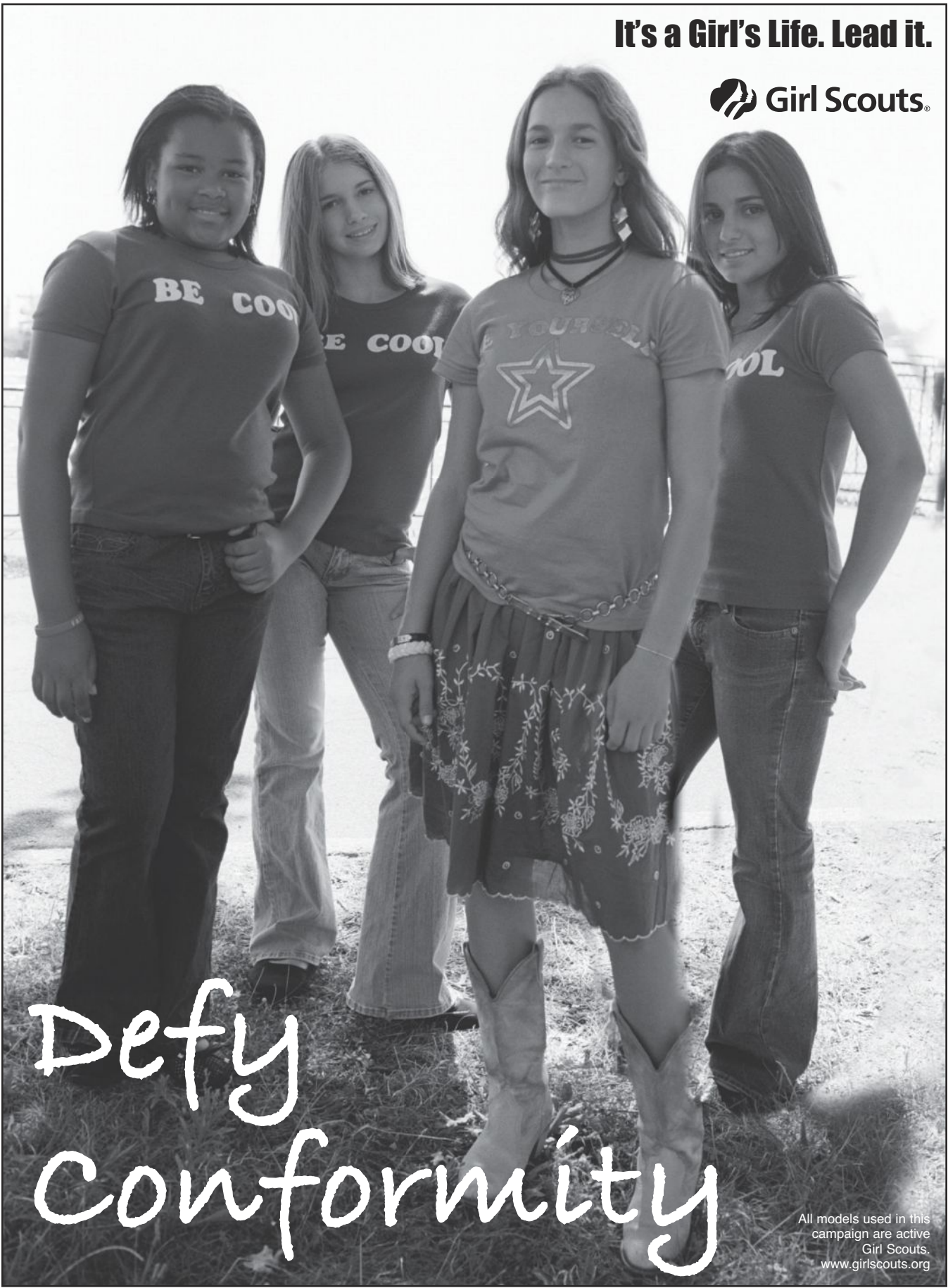
Thus, Cisco wants its workforce to mirror the myriad people outside its doors. "The most inclusive environment is the street out there - we should all strive to make the workplace as diverse and as inclusive as the street! That's my passion and is what motivates me at Cisco," he enthuses.

Of course, money is another motivator, and Cisco strives, as always, for fairness.

"Our commitment to pay parity helps build a trusting environment that drives the best teams, allows us to retain the best talent, and positions us as a top employer," he adds.

You can learn more about San Jose, CA-headquartered Cisco via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. Explore career opportunities at jobs.cisco.com.

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CAREER SHOPPING

LOOK TO RETAIL TO SHOP FOR A CAREER THAT CAN EVOLVE WITH CHANGING CONSUMER DEMAND.

Today nearly 16 million people work in retail, accounting for more than one in 10 workers. And while the retail industry is experiencing major shifts with the ever-increasing demand for online commerce and stores going out of business, it remains an important industry. In fact, it's one with many career opportunities that will evolve with the shifts in consumer demand.

Here four individuals working in retail discuss their roles and responsibilities, what makes their respective companies great, and how to find career success.

LINDLEY HELPS KEEP THINGS MOVING AT DOLLAR GENERAL

DAVE LINDLEY HELPS ENSURE MERCHANDISE IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME AS AN EQUIPMENT OPERATOR AT DOLLAR GENERAL'S FULTON, MO DISTRIBUTION CENTER.

He assists the receiving department by moving incoming merchandise throughout the distribution center by hand truck or forklift equipment.

"Receiving can be a constant project," he points out. "When receiving, dock employees unload merchandise from the trailer and then a checker receives and checks in the items for the equipment operator. From there, we deliver the merchandise to the reserve locations, so it's available to employees fulfilling orders and delivering to our store and our customers."

What drew Lindley to this career was a love of driving. "I grew up riding and driving a variety of equipment, so I felt operating equipment would be a good career for me and something I would enjoy doing."

Originally from Springfield, MO, Lindley, who was born with a hearing impairment, had difficulty finding a job in that area. But since moving to Fulton, MO, "I feel as though I belong," he shares.

"My hearing loss can be a barrier, but since I began working with Dollar General in 2004, the company has always made me feel comfortable with my surroundings."

Lindley is able to hear with his hearing aid and is able to speak. "With the solid understanding I have of my job function and the support I have at Dollar General, there's really no effect on my work."

What Lindley appreciates about his job is constantly working and showing what needs to be done each day as a role model to others.

"My team members and I learn new things every day. I love challenges, both physical and mental. I find it to be a rewarding challenge to meet daily production goals," he admits, adding, "It's an opportunity to work for Dollar General. Plus, I can build a career where I know my future will be stable."

"IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO TAKE THE initiative to find my career path on my own.

When I first walked into Dollar General, I was focused on finding the right job for me, and they helped me find it. For nearly 15 years I've been able to excel at my job and love what I do while knowing that Dollar General appreciates my work and input."

For others looking to build their career, Lindley shares what was crucial for him: "It was important for me to take the initiative to find my career path on my own. When I first walked into Dollar General, I was focused on finding the right job for me, and they helped me find it. For nearly 15 years I've been able to excel at my job and love what I do while knowing that Dollar General appreciates my work and input."

Find career opportunities with Dollar General at careers.dollargeneral.com, and connect with the company on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn.

BY AMANDA N. WEGNER



Dave Lindley, who has a hearing impairment from birth, and uses a hearing aid and is able to speak, helps ensure merchandise is in the right place at the right time as an equipment operator at Dollar General's Fulton, MO Distribution Center.



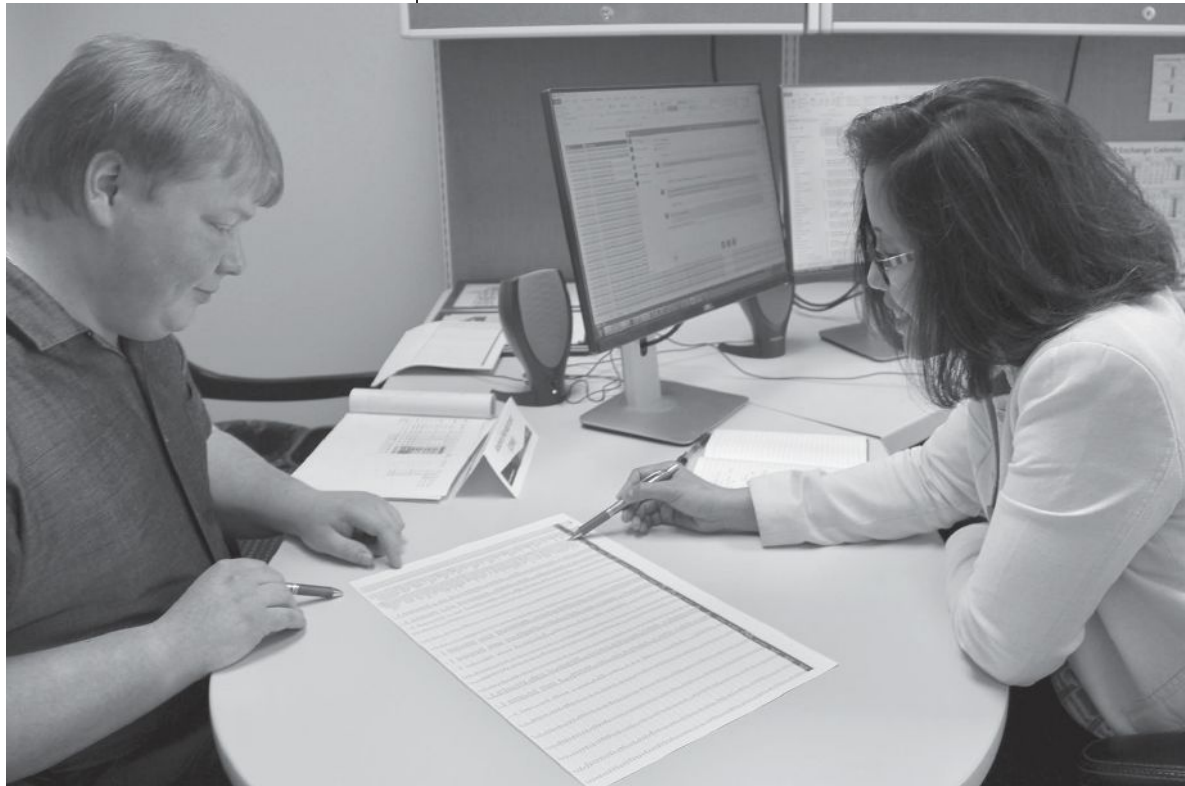
PRASIFKA USES DATA TRENDS TO ENHANCE
THE EXCHANGE'S CUSTOMER RELATIONS

BY LOOKING AT THE DATA, JORDAN PRASIFKA WORKS TO ENSURE ARMY & AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE'S MARKETING INITIATIVES ARE EFFECTIVE AND REACHING CUSTOMERS.

Prasifka is a data analyst in the customer relationship management (CRM) department at the Exchange. He assists in customer list maintenance and communications targeting, as well as pre- and post-analysis of different marketing communication initiatives in regard to their effectiveness.

"By analyzing data I'm able to look at trends and patterns that exist between our customers and our organization from a multifaceted perspective, which, in turn, sheds light on the complex dynamics that exist in a corporate-customer relationship," he explains.

He was recently involved in a customer-retention project, focusing on a process to relay specific messaging to customer segments that haven't completed account creation. He explains it's "an attempt to remind them of the steps they have left to take and the benefits of joining."



Prasifka notes that he particularly likes the department and the people with whom he works. He points out how the Exchange's CRM department is relatively new: "It's exciting to be involved with it from the start."

To succeed in data analysis, Prasifka believes determination and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances are key. In

Jordan Prasifka, who has dyslexia and dysgraphia, ensures Army & Air Force Exchange Service's marketing initiatives are effective and reaching customers as a data analyst in the customer relationship management (CRM) department at the Exchange.

**"FIND SOMETHING THAT YOU TRULY ENJOY DOING,
even in times when things can be tough. It's also important to
set goals every day. Doing so helps to refresh and realign your
mindset to the tasks currently at hand."**

With the Exchange for a little more than a year, he was drawn to the organization via participation in its Workforce Recruitment Program.

"The Exchange has been a great place to work," he shares. "From the beginning I've been given excellent guidance and support from everyone I work with. The work environment is very dynamic, and new ideas are welcome."

general, a strong statistical background and experience with large data sets are also important.

A bit of caution and a hefty dose of persistence are also helpful, as Prasifka, who has dyslexia and dysgraphia, has personally learned.

"In learning to manage the struggles associated with dyslexia and dysgraphia, I feel I've become a more cautious and persistent individual, which is important in data analysis.

To succeed in your career, Prasifka shares the best advice he has received: "Find something that you truly enjoy doing, even in times when things can be tough. It's also important to set goals every day. Doing so helps to refresh and realign your mindset to the tasks currently at hand.

Find career opportunities with the Exchange at aafes.com/about-exchange/exchange-careers, and connect with the company on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.

**DUTTLE DELIVERS QUALITY SOFTWARE FOR
WALMART'S INTERNAL CUSTOMERS**

JENNIFER DUTTLE'S WORK ENHANCES OTHERS' ABILITY TO DELIVER VALUE. DUTTLE IS A QUALITY ENGINEER WITH WALMART,



Jennifer Duttle, who has Asperger's, enhances others' ability to deliver value as a quality engineer with Walmart, where she's responsible for the quality of internal software applications.

AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE QUALITY OF INTERNAL SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS.

Involved from start to finish, by keeping the user in mind, Duttle not only helps prevent critical negative impacts on user activities and business functions, but also ensures the application or tool on which she's working is ultimately providing a quality solution.

"I GET GREAT SATISFACTION KNOWING THAT MY expertise in finding inconsistencies with the product will ultimately result in ease of use and efficiency for someone else."

"It's my job to ensure a quality product for users, so the solution my team provides, through the art of technology, enhances their ability to deliver in their given field," outlines Duttle.

"I get great satisfaction knowing that my expertise in finding inconsistencies with the product will ultimately result in ease of use and efficiency for someone else."

With a degree in management information systems, Duttle came to Walmart six years ago. While at a conference to receive its Rising Star in Technology award, Duttle "reluctantly" opted

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to miss one of the sessions to attend the conference's career fair as she had brought copies of her resume.

"I was exhausted as it was the second day of the conference, and I had already spoken to several companies at the fair and was maxed out on human interaction," shares Duttie, who was diagnosed with Asperger's, a high-functioning form of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), at age 30.

"In true Jenny-fashion, instead of leaving, I forced myself to walk the entirety of the room as I didn't want to leave the conference with any regrets. In the very back of the room, I saw a booth for Walmart. After some small talk, the recruiter asked me if I'd be interested in traveling to Arkansas. I said, 'Yes,' gave her my resume, and was on a plane to Arkansas for an interview the next week."

While having Asperger's impacts her work in many positive ways, such as attention to detail, which is a great asset in software quality, it also comes with some major drawbacks. "Keeping myself motivated and 'on my game' given the amount of stress in my field is my biggest challenge," she reveals.

"I believe it's well-known that the autistic brain is underdeveloped in the area that controls emotions, so high stress for an autistic person causes a pressure-cooker in the brain. If the pressure isn't able to be released, then it's bound to explode. Most days, I'm able to keep my composure, but I've been known to have an angry outburst here and there, or to cry unexpectedly in situations where I would prefer I had not...If a person has never actually experienced the autistic brain, then he or she would have no idea how truly out of our control it can be."

Duttie helps others understand her challenges as a part of Walmart's inABLE Associate Resource Group, which advocates for inclusion, spreads awareness about apparent and non-apparent disabilities, and sponsors events for learning and support. Through this group she's been featured in a short video to raise awareness of her disability.

"It feels really good to be alive in a time when action can be taken - as an advocate and personally disabled - without significant consequences. As autism is invisible for those on the spectrum who are higher-functioning, there will always be individuals who won't have the capacity to understand or be understanding. But when your employer is there to back you up, it feels less scary."

As such, what makes Bentonville, AR-headquartered Walmart a great place to work, says Duttie, is its people.

"I strongly believe people define the likeability of a workplace, and because I work with great people, I enjoy going to work."

To succeed in information technology, Duttie identifies a number of skills needed to be successful, including the ability to keep cool under pressure, working with little direction and thinking outside the box. Confidence in your abilities and ideas, a thick skin, being able to speak up and collaborating with others are also key.

"I didn't have most of these skills when I first started working in the corporate world, but I worked hard to gain these skills, which has been very rewarding for me as an autistic person," notes Duttie.

"It's my belief that corporate skills are the most difficult for my disability, and I've conquered many of them. I feel proud of myself for that."

Find career opportunities with Walmart at careers.walmart.com, and connect with the company on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Glassdoor and YouTube.

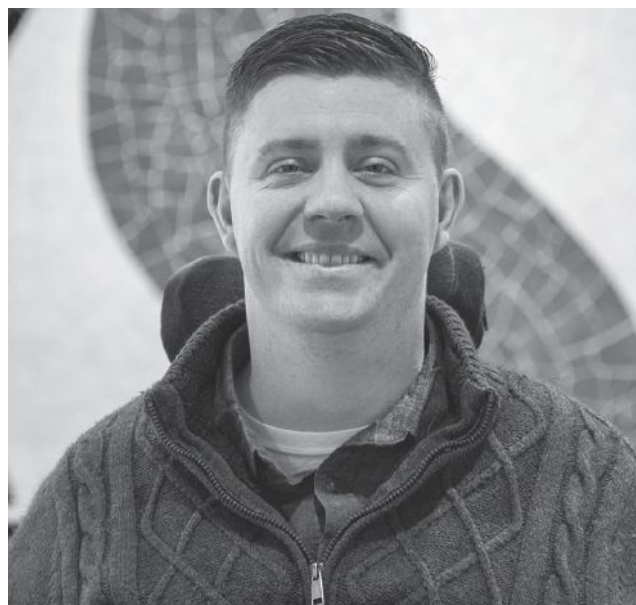
GUSTAFSON ANALYZES SAFEWAY'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

SPENCER GUSTAFSON HAS A ROLE WITH DUAL FUNCTIONS THAT HELPS ENHANCE THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF SAFEWAY, A DIVISION OF ALBERTSONS COMPANIES. ONE IS MARKETING ANALYST. THE OTHER IS CLAIMS ANALYST.

"As a marketing analyst, I run financial reports and give analysis, such as sales and profit reports down to the item level for specific time periods and/or promotions," Gustafson explains.

"As a claims analyst, I audit promotional allowances submitted by the vendors to make sure we're capturing all monies due to us for performance, and ensure those allowances are booked to the correct periods."

For instance, he recently created a report to analyze the success of a weekly section of the company's ad called \$5 Friday, a one-day promotion on specific products spanning across all departments within the store. The report provides a number of critical metrics to Safeway's marketing team.



Spencer Gustafson, who has quadriplegia from a spinal cord injury, has a role with dual functions that helps enhance the financial performance of Safeway, a division of Albertsons Companies: one is marketing analyst and the other is claims analyst.

Gustafson was no stranger to the grocery industry when he started his career with Safeway eight years ago, as his father worked in the industry for most of his career. In fact, it's what drew him to the grocery industry.

"'Work talk' was always spoken at my house. This made my transition into the grocery industry very easy because it was familiar to me," states Gustafson.

And it was his father, a former company employee, who helped him connect with Safeway, which was acquired by Albertsons in 2015.

Retail Workforce

Holding steady with changing consumer demand for more online retail options, nearly 16 million people work in retail, accounting for more than one in 10 workers.

“He was in a company meeting, and an executive shared their desire to provide more job opportunities for people with disabilities,” explains Gustafson, who has quadriplegia from a spinal cord injury.

“Since I was trying to find employment with a company willing to give me a chance on my skill set, my dad contacted the executive.”

Gustafson applied and was interviewed for a temp position, which, he says, is how most entry-level employees started at Safeway. He became a permanent employee in January 2013.

What Gustafson enjoys most about his job is analyzing, problem-solving and communicating with his teams to ensure financial data is accurate, and that it helps the company develop future promotions. He also enjoys the process of handling vendor allowances to make sure they’re received and booked correctly.

With various teams and partners involved in the reporting process, it can be a challenge to manage priorities, but it’s a challenge he welcomes. “Time is of the essence, and we’re all pulled in different directions. Luckily, we know that, ultimately, we’re all trying to create the same great outcome for our company. It’s a balancing act.”

What makes Safeway a great place to work is the people, notes Gustafson, because his colleagues and supervisors look beyond his disability, and focus on the many skills he can bring to the table.

“My coworkers are more than willing to teach or train me in a new process, which helps me grow my skills. I’ve been blessed with good bosses who have encouraged me to set stretch goals, and have given me the confidence and support to reach those goals.”

To that end, to succeed in your career, he advises working hard and having a good attitude can go a long way.

To work as an analyst, strong analytical and communication skills are a must. It’s also important to be very detail-oriented and be able to multitask.

A good sense of humor also helps, says Gustafson, “which is great for me because I like to have fun.”

Find career opportunities with Safeway and other stores in the Albertsons family of companies at albertsonscorporation.com/careers, and connect with Safeway on Facebook and Twitter.



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WELCOMING SIGNALS

HOSPITALITY IS A GROWING SECTOR, WITH MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO FIND A HOSPITABLE CAREER.

Unlike many other sectors where jobs have been replaced by automation, the hospitality industry is, by necessity, people-focused.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), jobs in lodging and foodservice management are expected to rise 6% and 9%, respectively. BestHospitalityDegrees.com, too, classifies hospitality as a growing industry.

Given the importance and need for genuine inclusive interaction between employees in the field and the recipients of that service, hospitality - along with hotel management - is a field where employees and guests must be treated with respect, dignity, acceptance, and fairness. It's also a sector where persons with disabilities are finding welcoming signals, as well as inclusion and opportunities for a life-long career.

KELLY-DRUMMOND & COLSON
 CHAMPION INCLUSION, OPENNESS &
 POSITIVE IMPACT AT DENNY'S

APRIL KELLY-DRUMMOND, HEAD OF DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION, TOUTS DENNY'S COMMITMENT TO EMBRACING THE UNIQUE QUALITIES EACH EMPLOYEE BRINGS TO THE TABLE. THE SPARTANBURG, SC-HEADQUARTERED COMPANY HAS A WORKFORCE OF MORE THAN 8,700 EMPLOYEES, OPERATING MORE THAN 1,700 LOCATIONS. NEARLY 93% OF THOSE LOCATIONS ARE FRANCHISED.

"Denny's has successfully worked to build a diverse and inclusive workforce that demonstrates its commitment to making diversity top-of-mind - and celebrates it every day," notes Kelly-Drummond, adding that Denny's internal and external culture promotes openness by encouraging the ideas and perspectives of people - all people, including those with disabilities - by highlighting the company's commitment to diversity and aligning it with corporate strategy and core values.

For Dorothy Colson, this concept is particularly impor-

tant. A Denny's employee for seven years prior to her disability - and 15 years post-disability - she applauds the company's concern for, and support of, employees with disabilities.

"DENNY'S HAS SUCCESSFULLY WORKED TO BUILD A diverse and inclusive workforce that demonstrates its commitment to making diversity top-of-mind - and celebrates it every day."

A graduate of the University of Louisville with high honors in finance, an MBA from Gardner Webb and credentials as a certified management accountant, Colson came to Denny's with several years of business service as a marketing analyst at corporate headquarters of other major restaurant chains.

BY BARBARA WOODWORTH



April Kelly-Drummond is head of diversity, equality and inclusion at Denny's.

“THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR MY JOB INCLUDE CONFIDENCE, presentation skills, a love of math and the ability to excel at model-building. A wheelchair does not define who you are. It's only a mode of transportation.”

“As a neighborhood gathering spot, we help support the diverse causes our communities care about - from education initiatives to minority businesses to childhood hunger programs and to meaningful fundraisers,” Kelly-Drummond points out.

Primary to the company's mission, vision, and values is an emphasis on diversity, equality, and inclusion. Denny's mission is to build, nurture and grow its culture.



Dorothy Colson, who's experienced a T-12 spinal cord injury resulting in paraplegia, serves as project manager at Denny's, as well as a financial analyst analyzing various marketing tests to determine profitability based on menu mix shifts.

Today Colson, who's experienced a T-12 spinal cord injury resulting in paraplegia, serves as project manager, as well as a financial analyst analyzing various marketing tests to determine profitability based on menu mix shifts.

“The skills needed for my job include confidence, presentation skills, a love of math and the ability to excel at model-building,” underscores Colson.

Her advice for others with disabilities seeking work is to believe in themselves. “A wheelchair does not define who you are. It's only a mode of transportation.”

Colson finds her job both interesting and rewarding. “No two analyses are the same,” she states. “There's always something new and interesting.”

A member of the board and treasurer for the South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Association, she also leads a SVI peer support group in Spartanburg and serves as a peer mentor for the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

Colson clearly makes a positive impact on the community just as Denny's does. In fact, it has a long history of impacting communities, serving by giving back, supporting and participating in efforts that celebrate, promote and embrace the cultural diversity of its employees and customers. It has, for more than 60 years, made its restaurants gathering places for local families and communities across the country.

“With a wildly diverse, demonstrably inclusive, and unquestionably inclusive and unquestionably fair and equal workplace environment, Denny’s presents an opportunity for all - a place that employs all, promotes all, serves all, and supports all as a natural extension of its employees and customers,” remarks John Miller, Denny’s CEO and president.

According to Kelly-Drummond, Denny’s vision - to become an industry leader in all areas of diversity, equality and inclusion - will lead employees and grow business results for all stakeholders. Regarding values, Denny’s highlights the importance of embracing the openness of its guiding principles of diversity, equality and inclusive as a mandate for employment at all of its restaurants.

For more information about Denny’s, visit dennys.com, careers.dennys.com, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Facebook.

DONALD: DIVERSITY OF THINKING IS KEY TO INNOVATION & COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AT CARNIVAL CORPORATION

AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF MIAMI, FL-HEADQUARTERED CARNIVAL CORPORATION, ARNOLD DONALD HAS, FOR THE PAST FIVE AND A HALF YEARS, PRIORITIZED DIVERSITY OF THINKING.

“Diversity is a business imperative, and the key to innovation is diversity of thinking. Having people from different backgrounds and cultural experiences, who are organized around a common objective, are far more likely to create breakthrough innovation than a homogeneous group,” he contends, adding, “That same diversity of thinking is a powerful advantage.”

Since becoming CEO in July 2013, Donald has never veered from this business view, and, as a result, Carnival Corporation has earned the distinction of being named one of the most diverse companies in the world. With 120,000 employees, who hail from more than 150 countries, diversity is abundant, meaningful and recognizable.

In fact, Donald is an active and valuable member of CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion, the largest CEO-driven business commitment to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace.



Arnold Donald is president and CEO of Carnival Corporation.

“DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IS IN [CARNIVAL CORPORATION’S] DNA. It’s been a priority for me ever since joining this company, and I’ve made it a priority to promote diversity of thinking throughout the organization, proactively engineering it as a competitive advantage.”

The company has also been named one of America’s Best Employers for Diversity in 2019 by *Forbes*, including being ranked number one employer in the cruise industry, number five employer in the travel and leisure industry, and number 114 among the 500 top employers with more than 1,000 employees.

In addition to making diversity of thinking a core part of the business, Carnival Corporation embraces a variety of worthy causes through its Carnival Foundation, which works closely with

organizations such as the Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Ronald McDonald House Charities, St. Jude Children’s Hospital and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

Stressing that D&I is reflected in Carnival Corporation’s team members, brands, ports of call and customers, Donald says: “Diversity and inclusion is in the company’s DNA. It’s been a priority for me ever since joining this company, and I’ve made it a priority to promote diversity of thinking throughout the organization, proactively engineering it as a competitive advantage.”

This leverages different points of view, which, in turn, creates various solutions that better serve employees, including employees with disabilities, and guests.

It’s also reflected in some of the company’s

organizational changes, with several new roles and functions being implemented by dynamic new leaders with a wide array of backgrounds and careers added to the management team.

Carnival Corporation operates with the core principle that managing a diverse workforce promotes an open, tolerant and more positive work environment where everyone's different talents and strengths are utilized.

Under Donald's direction, the corporation has continued to drive diversity of thinking as a business imperative by making it a priority to provide forums for employees from all levels of the organization to contribute ideas that are considered and often implemented.

Based on its D&I accomplishments, Carnival Corporation and its leadership and nine global cruise line brands are regularly recognized by top independent sources around the world.

For additional information about Carnival Corporation, go to carnivalcorp.com, jobs.carnival.com/corporation, LinkedIn and Twitter.

AHLA'S ROGERS STRIVES TO INCREASE INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE INDUSTRY

AS A MAJOR PART OF THE FOUR-SEGMENT HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY - LODGING, RECREATION, FOOD AND BEVERAGE, AND TRANSPORTATION - HOTELS ARE THE FOCUS OF THE AMERICAN HOTEL AND LODGING ASSOCIATION (AHLA).

For more than 100 years, this Washington, DC-headquartered association has been the foremost representative and advocate for the U.S. lodging industry. The only national association that represents all segments of an industry that's among the 10 largest business sectors in America, AHLA advocates for members - allowing them to do their best with what matters most while serving employees, guests and communities.

As a major part of this vast industry, that includes more than 8 million employees and millions of guests, hotels are there to serve - and serve they do.

"Despite its long-time success, the hospitality industry is striving to do more by creating additional opportunities and supporting communities," says Chip Rogers, AHLA president and CEO.

"At its core, hotels are about people - all people - and basic to that is the fact that diversity and inclusion are very much a necessary factor in achieving success."

With hotels the center of communities across the country, creating long-term careers and opportunities for upward mobility spurs economic growth for all, including individuals with disabilities.

Vibrant, innovative and full of dynamic opportunities that power America's economy, hotels range from global brands to small inns, and, as such, AHLA provides a singular voice that



Chip Rogers is president and CEO of the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA).

"DESPITE ITS LONG-TIME SUCCESS, the hospitality industry is striving to do more by creating additional opportunities and supporting communities."

brings together the industry's multitude of constituents, creating incredible diversity.

Showcasing career advancement opportunities, Rogers points to AHLA's recent Hospitality Is Working campaign, hospitalityisworking.com, designed to create and sustain career opportunities, community commitment and economic importance. Downloadable fact sheets, infographics and other helpful documents concerning hotel and lodging priority issues are contained within Hospitality Is Working's resource page.

Rogers mentions, as well, that multicorporate/community-funded grants via this program are expected to train and certify 8,000 Opportunity Youth in this high-demand market, and connect them to potential employers in the hospitality sector within the next five years.

For more information about AHLA, go to ahla.com, ahla.com/hcareers, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

MUÑOZ OVERSEES COMPREHENSIVE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AT HILTON

JON MUÑOZ, VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, PROUDLY POINTS OUT THAT HILTON HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY *FORTUNE*, *FORBES*, THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN AND THE NATIONAL BUSINESS INCLUSION CONSORTIUM, AMONG OTHERS, FOR ITS EFFORTS AND INITIATIVES AIMED AT CREATING AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING

THOSE WITH DISABILITIES.

Responsible for leading external engagement with diverse strategic non-profit partners, Muñoz consults with internal diversity stakeholders, integrating across HR functions, and overseeing team member resource group governance and strategies.

As part of these efforts he's led, Muñoz mentions that Hilton launched a number of Team Member Resource Groups (TMRGs) at its corporate offices, including the Abilities TMRG, in 2012.

"Team members voluntarily collaborate to promote professional growth through networking and development, and to support business by tapping into key insights from each group's vantage point," explains Muñoz, who, prior to joining Hilton in 2011, served in diversity-related roles at several major corporations in varying industries.

He continues to serve in diversity roles at several non-profit organizations such as the Conference Board Diversity Center advisory board, the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association - where he serves as vice chair of the board of directors - and

the U.S. Chamber of Commerce senior executive corporate advisory board, to name a few.

Muñoz further notes that each TMRG is sponsored by a member of Hilton's executive committee, which provides visibility and networking opportunities.

Sponsored by Chris Silcock, executive vice president of commercial services, the Abilities TMRG drove the creation of an e-learning course, available via Hilton University, on disability inclusion and etiquette designed to create great work environments for members with disabilities.

Recent events have included a panel discussion on disability hiring and inclusion along with recruiting strategies for attracting more talent who identify as having a disability, a Lunch & Learn in Hilton's McLean, VA headquarters with Best Buddies to share information about the organization's mission and purpose, and recognizing and celebrating team members who identify as having a disability throughout National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

Hilton further partners with Project Search, an organization that provides a research-based, total-immersion internship program for persons with disabilities.

"Team members in this program participate in three, 10-week job rotations in three different hotel departments so students are able to acquire a variety of transferable skills," elaborates Muñoz, who holds a Bachelor of Science in communications and advertising from the University of Texas at Austin.

He further points out that the host hotels have the chance to gain in-depth exposure to potential job applicants, creating a barrier-free, positive work environment, where many interns are then offered permanent positions.

For more information about Hilton, visit hilton.com, jobs.hilton.com, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Flickr and Google+.



Jon Muñoz is vice president, global diversity and inclusion at Hilton.

SANDONATO: AN AGILE L&D PROGRAM IS KEY TO INNOVATION AT WYNDHAM DESTINATIONS

WITH DIVERSITY A PILLAR OF THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AT ORLANDO-FL-HEADQUARTERED WYNDHAM DESTINATIONS, THE COMPANY PROUDLY EMBRACES A CULTURE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION THAT SUPPORTS ALL ASSOCIATES OF ALL BACKGROUNDS, CULTURES AND ABILITIES.

Believing that diversity enriches the entire Wyndham organization, the global hospitality provider offers a variety of programs, including leadership training, mentoring opportunities and educational support.

And because of the company's strong belief in innovation within learning and development (L&D), findcourses.com, which is designed for professionals seeking corporate training and continuing education in the U.S. and North America, featured Wyndham in its 2019 L&D report as an example of how companies can drive innovation through training programs.

With D&I training no longer optional, its L&D virtual reality and multimodal, next-generation training goes a step further, focusing on unconscious bias and cultural competence.

"AN AGILE L&D PROGRAM IS KEY to supporting innovation, especially at Wyndham with its massive workforce of 25,000 employees in 110 countries."

According to Anthony Sandonato, SPHR, vice president, learning and development at Wyndham Destinations, "an agile L&D program is key to supporting innovation, especially at Wyndham with its massive workforce of 25,000 employees in 110 countries."

Continuing, he explains that Wyndham's L&D team structure is built on a flexible framework, designed to remain nimble, and adjust to continuous organizational changes without compromising either the speed or quality of existing talent development strategies.

Cautioning about finding the right and most appropriate training vehicle, Sandonato adds: "An overly planned L&D program is less likely to adapt with any changes in business strategy....Therefore, in order for innovation to occur, company programs must tailor themselves to the individualized present - and future - needs of its employees."

In fact, training is the catalyst for people to grow and organizations to evolve, and the right training is the one that transforms people within an organization into an innovative, diverse and inclusive workforce well-prepared to lead the industry.

More information about Wyndham Destinations is available at wyndhamdestinations.com, wyndhamdestinations.com/careers, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Sources: BestHospitalityDegrees.com and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Hospitable Growth

Hospitality is a growing, people-focused sector with lots of opportunities. In fact, for example, jobs in lodging and foodservice management are expected to rise **6%** and **9%**, respectively.

Welcome



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