



# INTO THE WORLD OF WORK

## News for Families and Supporters

401 Columbus Avenue, Valhalla, NY 10595 914-741-JOBS (5627)

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Number 32 **Almost 400 still working & over 30 new jobs so far this year!** Spring 2009

## Beating the Odds

CAREERS' clients, with the support of our dedicated staff, are once again beating the odds. We all know that the economy is down and unemployment is up, but our motivated and dependable clients are continuing to work despite the challenging business climate. While Westchester's unemployment rate has risen above 8 %, less than 1 % of our clients have recently been laid off. Even though job growth declined in Westchester and Putnam Counties in 2008, CAREERS secured 110 new jobs for people with disabilities - a 9 % increase over the previous year.

**"Our services are needed now more than ever because people with disabilities are often among those hit the hardest during difficult economic times,"** CAREERS' Executive Director Tina Cornish-Lauria said. "Our unique personalized support services enable us to successfully meet the needs of each of our clients and their employers. We are thrilled that our current clients continue to be successful and that we can provide new jobs for people with disabilities -- even in this difficult economy."

In addition to increasing job placements last year, CAREERS also provided services to over 500 people – a 10% increase over last year. While we are financially stable, the possible decline in federal and state funds available to nonprofits, along with an overall decline nationally in donations, makes it more imperative than ever that individuals and businesses support us so we can continue to provide our services now, when they are needed even more than ever.



*Robin Baldera is thriving at her job as a service clerk with Stop & Shop, White Plains. She is one of 110 people CAREERS successfully placed in new jobs last year.*

**A one-time \$250 economic recovery payment will be delivered to Social Security and SSI recipients this year under a provision of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by President Obama in February.**

### CAREERS JOB PLACEMENTS UP IN 2008:

#### Supported Work Program:

- ⇒ Placed 110 people in new jobs – a 9% increase over the previous year.
- ⇒ Provided services to 509 people – a 10% increase.

#### High School Transition Program:

- ⇒ Collaborated with 55 area high schools.
- ⇒ Placed 33 students in new jobs – a 10% increase.

#### Community Transition Program:

- ⇒ Provided services to 119 individuals with psychiatric disorders – a 31% increase.
- ⇒ Placed 22 of those individuals in new jobs.

#### Corporate Outreach Program:

- ⇒ Met with 227 local businesses – a 75% increase.
- ⇒ Placed 35 people within local businesses – a 66% increase.



**Into the World of Work**

Published by  
CAREERS for People  
with Disabilities, Inc.

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Valhalla, NY 10595  
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*CAREERS is a  
private non-profit  
organization that  
finds productive  
employment for  
individuals with  
disabilities by  
providing placement,  
on-the-job training  
and ongoing  
support services.*

**\* \* BRAVO! \* \***

**News of Achievements in the Workplace**



**Bravo to Richard Giamelli** – Richard received the Employee of the Month Award from Staples for two consecutive months. It pays to be such a great employee – along with each award he received a \$20 gift certificate. *Go Richard!*

**Bravo to Michael Harley** – Michael, who works as a librarian assistant at the Larchmont Public Library, has been recognized by his supervisor for excelling at his position during a recent library transition. Michael moved seamlessly from working in the children's room to the adult section by taking on additional tasks. *Way to go Michael!*



**Words of Praise — Letters to CAREERS**

Dear Ms. Cornish-Lauria:

My purpose in writing this letter is to bring to your attention the high level of professionalism and expertise of a job developer/job coach in your agency. I have had the good fortune to converse with Rebecca Appleyard and witness her perseverance and determination in making the Wal-Mart job a success for my son, Craig. I appreciate Rebecca's attention to Craig's needs and her dedication in helping him transition back into the "world of employment."

I suspect that our experience is not a unique one with Rebecca, and I would like to commend her for her commitment!

Sincerely,

**Linda Haviland** – *Linda's son, Craig, has been a CAREERS' client since 1998.*

Dear Ms. Cornish-Lauria:

I am taking this opportunity to let you know what a great experience it has been to work with Mary Filipponi. Over the last seven years, I have observed Mary at work, and she has always been completely professional. She has always been patient with her client, kind but firm when necessary, yet always patient.

Mary has always responded promptly when my staff or I have had questions or problems regarding her client. She did everything possible to make this a successful work experience for both the client and the library . . . .

My staff and I have nothing but the highest praise for Mary Filipponi. She has been a tireless advocate for her client, caring, concerned and dedicated to making this experience a success. We feel fortunate to have had the chance to work with Mary.

Sincerely,

**Mary C. Donnery**, *Director of the Croton Free Library*

Dear Blair and CAREERS:

Thank you for giving me and my family a very Merry Christmas. If it wasn't for you, our Christmas wouldn't have been so merry!

I appreciate everything that CAREERS has done for my family and me at work! You have been a guiding and very helpful light in my life, and for that I thank you all.

Love,

**Michele Flores**, *CAREERS' Client since 2003*



*CAREERS' client Paul Loomis and Executive Director Tina Cornish-Lauria accepted a check and honored Senator Stewart-Cousins with an Award of Appreciation.*

## CAREERS Honors Senator Stewart-Cousins

Executive Director Tina Cornish-Lauria and CAREERS' client Paul Loomis presented Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins with a 2008 Award of Appreciation in the CAREERS' Valhalla office. CAREERS honored Senator Stewart-Cousins for her work in procuring a \$10,000 Legislative Grant for the fiscal year 2008-2009.

"CAREERS for People with Disabilities is a lifeline for many deserving people in Westchester and Putnam Counties, and I commend the services they provide," said Andrea Stewart-Cousins. "I am thrilled to receive this august honor from this incredible organization."

Senator Stewart-Cousins brings many years of community involvement and public service to her office, and in her role as Senator she has continued her commitment to procure much-needed funding for social services, including support for people with disabilities. **"We thank and commend the Senator for her efforts, which allow us to continue our mission to insure that all disabled individuals achieve social and financial independence through employment,"** Tina Cornish-Lauria said.

## Partners for Success

If you've ever been unemployed, you know the first and most important step in landing a new job is having the right mental attitude. Our experienced staff spends considerable time and effort providing support services - including helping each person become more positive and realistic. However, if someone isn't mentally and emotionally ready for a job, what is already a challenging task can become monumental. For over a year, **CAREERS has partnered with the Westchester Independent Living Center (WILC) to ensure the job readiness and success of individuals with disabilities.**

"Looking for and landing a job is a time-consuming and challenging process," Jennifer Retacco, CAREERS' Valhalla Program Coordinator says. "If someone isn't ready to get a job, it can be a long, uphill climb to get work he or she is suited for and enjoys. WILC's Partners for Success Program helps individuals prepare for their job search by helping people with disabilities prepare themselves mentally and emotionally for job readiness and achievement.

WILC's Program Coordinator, Victor Clark said: "This program is about attitude change – so that when a person utilizes the services of an agency like CAREERS they are ready to be successful. Before someone can get and hold onto a job, a person's attitude has to be positive and realistic."

Each month, up to 15 people meet for six days with Victor at WILC to focus on personal awareness, responsibility and empowerment. Participants identify and set realistic goals and accept responsibility and accountability for the direction and achievement of those goals. The majority of people who complete the Partners for Success Program then come to CAREERS for job placement in their communities.

**"Our Partnership with WILC's Work Readiness Program is an ideal match,"** CAREERS' Executive Director Tina Cornish-Lauria, says. **"Their program empowers and prepares people for the job search, which enables us to concentrate on getting and keeping them employed."**

The success rate for placing people in jobs who have utilized the services of both Partners for Success and CAREERS is extremely high – 100 % of the people from the program who actively commit to working with CAREERS after going through the program obtain jobs! "Our partnership is a win-win situation for everyone," Jennifer says. "The clients that come to CAREERS are really ready to work, and we help them get employed and stay employed – for the long-term."



*Jackie James remains successfully employed at Wal-Mart as a photo clerk after using the collaborative services of both CAREERS and Partners for Success.*



## We gratefully acknowledge receipt of the following donations in 2008:

*This list includes gifts received between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008.  
If your name was omitted or listed incorrectly, please let us know by calling (914) 741-8500.*

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**THANKS TO BRIA CARTING CO.**

Thank you to **Bria Carting (914-277-8897)** who donated their services to help CAREERS move and dispose of decades-old office furniture and move in three donated desks to help make our offices more functional for staff and clients.

Bria Carting is a family-owned sanitation business that provides residential service, dumpster rentals, and has a transfer station in Somers where people can dispose of items. "We at Bria actively give back to the community, and are happy to extend our services to a worthy organization such as CAREERS," Sharon Bria says.

**IN MEMORY OF*****Mel Treco***

From Denise Treco

**DONATIONS IN HONOR OF ERIC FORBES**

Eric Forbes, brother of CAREERS' client Warren Forbes, celebrated a milestone birthday recently. Being the generous person he is, Eric requested that his friends make donations to CAREERS in lieu of gifts.

*Thank you to Eric for his generous gesture, and to the following friends and family who made contributions in honor of Eric's birthday:*

Irwin &amp; Marjorie Berger

Melissa Brod

Michael &amp; Melinda Dolinsky

Albert &amp; Phyllis Forbes

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Herbert &amp; Gail Glick

Jacob &amp; Jill Gordon

Staci Krell

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Michael Schansinger

**CAREERS' CLIENT RECEIVES LONGEVITY AWARD**

**Patty Polacek** received the prestigious Employee Longevity Award at the National Disability Employment Awareness Month Breakfast held in October. Patty, the sole recipient of the award, has successfully fulfilled the demands of her job as a courier at the Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla for 24 years.

Through the years, CAREERS has provided job support and assistance to Patty as her employer, supervisor and job duties have changed. "Patty has overcome challenging obstacles and circumstances and remained a dedicated and loyal employee of the Medical Center for two and a half decades," Tina Cornish-Lauria, says. "She truly deserves this award."



*Patty Polacek, right, with her CAREERS Employee Longevity Specialist, Cassie Monahan.*



## COLLABORATION BENEFITS EVERYONE!

Bryan Reilly already knew that employees with disabilities perform as well or better than other workers even before research conducted by DuPont was published. DuPont's study shows that employees with disabilities equal or exceed coworkers without disabilities in job performance, attendance, and attention to safety. Reilly's knowledge comes first-hand: as Vice President of Operations at Photo File, he has hired four CAREERS' clients within the past two years. Photo File, located in Mt. Kisco, is a leading manufacturer of sports photography in the nation. "The people we have hired from CAREERS have all been extremely punctual and considerate – really ideal workers," Reilly said.

CAREERS' client Ken Lyons began working at Photo File in July 2007 doing warehouse production. From the outset, Ken impressed his co-workers and management with his dedication. "Ken is a good, hard worker who is here every day, is always on time, and cares about and wants his job," Reilly said. "He is a gentle, kind soul who gets along with everyone beautifully – his positive outlook is infectious." Ken is extremely happy working at Photo File and has recently taken on additional responsibilities in both the boxing/packaging and shipping departments. He is also the designated "Fire Marshal" for the company, checking every fire extinguisher in the building monthly to make sure each one is functional. Like many companies this past year, Photo File has laid off some employees because of the difficult economy. "Ken was not even remotely considered," Reilly said. "He made the cut based on merit."



*CAREERS client Jason Emery, Photo File VP Bryan Reilly, CAREERS' client Ken Lyons and CAREERS' Employment Specialist Blair Wilson at Photo File in Mt. Kisco.*

According to Employment Specialist Blair Wilson, another CAREERS' client has done so well at his job at Photo File that he was recently promoted to a supervisory position. Jason Emery began working at Photo File in 2007 as a Picker/Packer at the same time he was enrolled at the Rochester Institute of Technology National Technical Institute for the Deaf program. In order to complete the program, he needed to obtain an internship within a company. Photo File didn't waver in providing him with a paid internship, as well as a full-time position after he graduated. "Jason is irreplaceable," Reilly said. "He is a bright, articulate young man with a terrific future ahead of him." Six months ago, Jason was promoted to Assistant Assembly Manager earning a salary increase and additional responsibilities.

Blair has worked with Photo File over the past two years, and is impressed with the company, its facilities and its commitment to people with disabilities. "It has been a real pleasure working with and developing a positive relationship with Photo File; they have always been so kind to CAREERS and to our clients who have joined their team," Blair said.

Bryan Reilly is also impressed. "CAREERS has a great program. We're honored and thrilled that we've been able to build a relationship with them," according to Reilly. "When the economy turns around we will definitely be interested in interviewing more people from CAREERS – they've been terrific."

*People with disabilities are adversely affected more than most and our services are needed now more than ever. It is imperative that we continue to fundraise throughout the year. **Every dollar we receive enables CAREERS to get people jobs and provide the long-term support they need to keep them.** Be assured that your donations are well spent, and that **there is absolutely no "pork" in our budget – the majority of our funding goes directly toward providing needed services.***

***CAREERS has once again earned the Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity Seal -- only given to charities that meet rigorous standards. We are truly dedicated to our mission and proud of our fiscal responsibility. Please send your tax-deductible donation to CAREERS today. Together, we can help individuals with disabilities become – and stay – employed.***

**Thank you for your contribution to our supported work program!**  
*Your contribution is tax-deductible to the limit allowed by law.*