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BUSINESS Connections

E-Newsletter | Issue 2 | January 2010

Moving Forward in 2010

Hello and Welcome to 2010!

I trust each of you had a great Holiday season. It is hard to believe we are now in 2010. The past few months have been busy and we hope that will continue throughout this year. Currently, we are working with 53 individuals and 23 of these individuals are employed. In a recent review of our placements, we show that 43% of these individuals are employed in the retail industry with 26% in the Food Service industry. The remaining 31% are employed in Hospitality, Manufacturing, Entertainment, or Government.

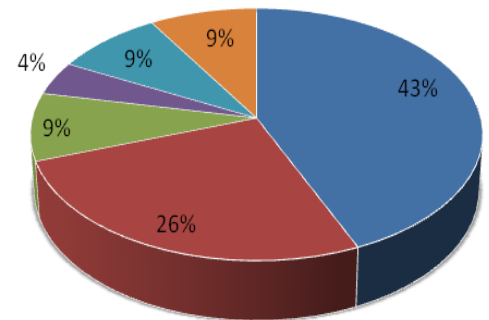
Now that you know where we are, I wanted to spend a little time to share with you our focus for 2010 as well as a few updates here at VCU. First, we have experienced several staffing changes during the past quarter. Tracey Robinson accepted a position with Virginia Supportive Housing and is working to build their employment program. She will continue to work closely with DRS and VCU-RRTC to secure employment for individuals in her organization. During January, we will fill this position as well as hire a new fulltime job coach. Also, we have brought on a new job coach, Marie Phillips, to work exclusively with Project Search at VCU Health Systems. Read more about our involvement in special projects like this one on the next page.

Our focus for the upcoming year will be two fold. First we will be more aggressive in developing our business relationships. The economy is ripe for new development and we hope to cultivate new businesses and partners especially as it relates to "Green Jobs and Careers". Second we want to maintain our new partnerships with the DRS staff here in the Central Virginia area. We appreciate all the referrals received in the past 3 months and will continue to work hard assisting our DRS clients to secure good jobs and careers.

Howard Green
Director of Employment Services
VCU-RRTC Business Connections

Industry Placements

■ Retail
■ Food Service
■ Hospitality
■ Entertainment
■ Manufacturer/Supplier
■ Government

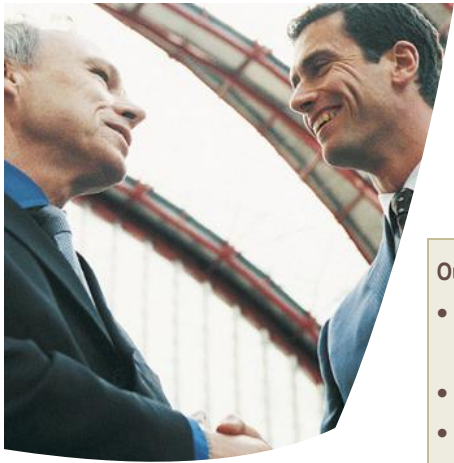


Contact Us

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Notable News for VCU-RRTC

- In October of 2009, VCU-RRTC began work with Virginia Supportive Housing on a five year grant focused on employment for individuals with Mental Illness and Chronic Homelessness. VCU-RRTC is excited to partner with VSH as well as City of Richmond Department of Rehabilitative Services on this project. See the second page for more details on this project.
- In summer of 2010 we will complete the process to maintain our accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
- We continue to work with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services to incorporate Partnership Plus within our scope of service offerings.



Special Projects at VCU-RRTC

Our involvement in special projects:

- Generates meaningful and productive relationships with business partners as well as other organizations,
- Increases our experience with specific customer populations,
- And allows us to research and implement best practices for providing progressive vocational rehabilitation services.

Project Search

VCU-RRTC has been interested in increasing our involvement with transition age youth. We have pursued this goal through our participation in a replication of the Project Search program at Cincinnati Children's Hospital within Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Health Systems. This is a one-year educational program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose main goal is competitive employment. The program takes place in a healthcare or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process through continuous feedback and application of new skills. This Project Search replication is a partnership between Richmond Public Schools, VCU Health Systems, the Richmond DRS office, and our employment services program here at VCU.

The project began in September of 2009 as VCU Staff and the teacher from Richmond schools identified internship sites such as the Ophthalmology Clinic, Patient Transportation, Women's Health, NICU, and Clinical Engineering. Employment Specialists from the VCU Business Connections staff created task analyses, developed compensatory strategy tools, and worked with coworkers and supervisors to implement on-site work supports. Currently seven students have completed the first of three (ten week) internships and we anticipate that over the next several months these individuals will enter full-time employment.

Virginia Supportive Housing Project

Virginia Supportive Housing is a not-for-profit homeless services provider and community development corporation whose mission is to provide permanent housing and comprehensive support services to very low-income individuals and families who are homeless and /or who have disabilities in order to initiate and promote their transition from homelessness to productivity and independence.

VCU-RRTC will join with Virginia Supportive Housing in a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant to provide a program of personnel training, technical assistance, and direct employment placement in Richmond, VA and Hampton Roads, VA. The primary goals of this project are to advance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of VA Housing personnel while directly improving the competitive employment outcomes of VA Supportive Housing residents. The first year of the grant will focus on the Richmond Metro area partnering with Department of Rehabilitative Services Richmond office.

SUCCESS Story



Clifton R. has a strong skill set in woodworking that spans over 18 years.

Clifton's DRS Counselor and VCU-RRTC employment specialist partnered with Clifton to locate employment that would use his experience as well as his remarkable creativity. In September 2009, Clifton began working with Old River Cabinets (ORC), as a Cabinet Maker.

Although Clifton was initially hired to build cabinets, Victor Morrisette, owner of ORC, gave him an opportunity to make dove-tailed drawers instead. "Building dove-tailed drawers is a true craft" stated Mr. Morrisette, and Clifton has excelled in this position.

**"I wish all my employees worked as hard."
– Victor Morrisette**

Mr. Morrisette noted increased concentration and focus as two of Clifton's strengths. He went on to explain that although hearing loss may be considered a disability, individuals who are deaf have an extreme edge working with loud equipment.

VCU-RRTC would like to acknowledge Old River Cabinets as a disability friendly organization and thank them for their commitment to employ individuals with disabilities.



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