

EmployABILITY

Spring 2008

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Robert Benson — a True Success Story!

Submitted by Rebeca Aguirre
Disability Program Navigator
South Bay One-Stop Business & Career Center
Inglewood

One of the pleasures of working as Disability Program Navigator (DPN) is touching and improving upon the lives of people with disabilities and having such a privilege of "Navigating" a brilliant young man through our One Stop System.

Robert Benson recently relocated to California from Washington, D.C., and found DPN through the Employment Development Department website. When he came into our office he was in a dire situation and about to be evicted from his apartment due to lack of resources.

Robert also disclosed that he was being treated for bi-polar disorder. He explained, "I've experienced the extreme highs and lows of this severe mental illness, but I'm maintaining and able to work thanks to aggressive treatment and medication. I'm doing OK now...I'm a survivor!"

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Robert Benson, pictured with his Navigator Rebeca Aguirre, was recently hired by the California Department of Rehabilitation as a Case Service Assistant.

**Congratulations,
Robert!**

Save the dates!

LEGACY Graduation Ceremony : June 18th

EmployABILITY Awards Reception: July 16th

LEGACY graduates & EmployABILITY Partnership members
will receive personal invitations to these events.



Robert Benson's Success Story, continued from page 1

After assessing Robert's immediate needs, I referred him to the General Relief Office and to the Social Security Administration for possible financial assistance, and provided him with other resources. I also informed him about the Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP) certification for employment with the State of California and how to obtain one through the Department of Rehabilitation. He followed up on his own to take the LEAP exam, and not only did he pass, but he earned the top possible rank!

It gives me great joy to confirm that the State of California Department of Rehabilitation has hired Robert Benson as a Case Service Assistant and Office Assistant! Robert is very excited, and feels that he has finally gotten his "foot in the door!" It takes great perseverance and a proactive attitude to succeed in one's job search and Robert Benson has set an example not only for job seekers with disabilities but for those without disabilities as well.



"After I was hired, and prior to my start date my new supervisor asked me if I'd need reasonable accommodations, but I didn't need any. I have tended to utilize my own personal system of coping with the work environment which includes organizational habits, music and using my breaks and lunch to get out of the office altogether so I can be refreshed and also to reflect."

Robert Benson

Editor's note: Robert Benson will be invited to the LEGACY graduation ceremony on June 18th, where he will be honored for his accomplishments. Rebeca Aguirre, Robert's DPN, will also receive special recognition at that event.

**If you'd like to submit a success story about a customer with a disability, please contact:
Michael Pearson jmichaelpearson@sbcglobal.net.**



Class Schedule

Classes are held at:

Goodwill of Southern California
342 San Fernando Road
Los Angeles 90031

To enroll contact Michael Pearson
jmichaelpearson@sbcglobal.net

LEGACY-I Classes:

April 8th: Mobility Impairments
May 6th: Vision Impairments
May 29th: Major Medical Conditions

LEGACY-II Advanced Classes:

April 29th: Intensive Services
May 22th: Training & Retention Services

“Have you done something for YOU lately?”

By Lisa Jordan



If you answered “no” to that question, you’re not alone. A more important question to ask yourself is “why not?” Having worked in the City’s Workforce Development System for the past eight years, I’ve witnessed many changes. The most striking of these changes has been the creative “outside the box” thinking of agencies committed to meeting the needs of their customers despite shrinking resources. This has also meant the donning of many new hats by staff that traditionally had very specific roles and responsibilities. Stress on the job is real, and it’s on the rise. What can you do about it?

The majority of you entered this field because of your genuine desire to help your customers move forward and advance in their careers or education. What tends to happen during times of limited resources is a shift from client centered services to a focus on performance outcomes, which are crucial to continued funding. If that balance is disrupted, it’s easy to lose sight of the passion that brought you here. Eventually you begin to feel your energy level drop, and burnout isn’t far behind.

Here are 6 strategies to help you regain your balance and reignite your passion:

1. **Take Charge.** In order to feel more in control, especially during times of change, arrange to meet with your supervisor at least quarterly to talk about your performance and your job. Take this opportunity to clarify your strengths, weaknesses, and any areas you can develop or improve upon, including discussing any concerns.
2. **Unplug!** If you carry a pager or cell phone for work, turn it off once you leave the office. Most employers do not expect you to be available 24/7 unless it’s in your job description. Set boundaries and stick to them. You need and deserve down time. This includes e-mail. Avoid checking work-related e-mail at home, unless you work out of a home office. If you do, only check it during regular business hours. Self and family time are important!
3. **Simplify.** Instead of packing your day full of tasks and activities, determine what needs to be done, what can wait, and what can be eliminated all together. Update your task list every day. For things you must complete, determine how long each will take and assign a time. It will be less overwhelming if you know how long each task will take to complete.

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EmployABILITY, please contact:
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EmployABILITY Meeting Schedule



Youth Services Partner Meetings:

Tuesday, April 8th, 12:00 to 1:30 PM, Metro North WSC

Wednesday, May 21st, 9:00 to 10:30 AM, Metro North WSC

Adult Services Partner Meetings:

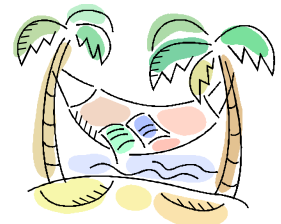
Wednesday, April 16th, 1:30 to 3:00 PM, Hollywood WSC

Wednesday, May 21st, 1:30 to 3:00 PM (Location TBD)

“Have You Done Something for YOU lately?”

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- Say NO.** Learn to say “NO” or “not right now “ to tasks that are not a necessary part of your job. If saying “no” isn’t an option, be sure to let the person know who assigned you the task how long it will take to complete and when you will be able to fit it into your schedule. Do not promise more than you can deliver – this will just create more stress. If time is limited, do the best job possible. Sometimes it doesn’t have to be perfect to still be a job well done.
- Take a Break.** Throughout the day, take a few minutes to clear your mind, especially if you’re feeling overwhelmed. Don’t forget to take your lunch break. Make sure you actually use it to do something for yourself, not to do more work. Take a walk, exercise, do some type of activity that removes you physically and mentally from work and don’t feel guilty. Stick to it, and do it now!
- Relax.** Plan a vacation at least once a year, preferably twice. Having 45 days of vacation on the books isn’t something to be proud of. Use it. If you can’t afford to go away, use the time to do some things around the house – read a book, paint a room, or visit a museum. The possibilities are endless. Force yourself to do it. You’ll be glad you did!



Lisa Jordan
Human Solutions, LLC www.human-solutions.net