



# Oregon Competitive Employment Project

Oregon Department of Human Services — Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## Leadership Council

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Social Security Administration

### Lucy Baker

Oregon Business Leadership Network

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### Doug Zeh

Oregon Advocacy Center



## Help us to welcome our newest project team member, Molly Sullivan!

Hello, my name is Molly Sullivan and I'm pleased to be working with the Competitive Employment Project. I'm a northwest native, originally from the Seattle, Washington area. While in Seattle I worked as a job developer/job coach assisting people with disabilities to secure and maintain employment. In that position I also had the opportunity to begin developing my knowledge of Social Security Work Incentives and started a small benefits counseling service.

I moved to Bend, Oregon in 2000 and continued to provide supported employment services through my employment at the Opportunity Foundation. Shortly after moving to Portland, Oregon in 2003 I began working at Oregon Advocacy Center as a Benefits Specialist through the SSA funded Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach grant. Over the years I have developed a keen interest in understanding the myriad of benefit program work rules and a strong passion about the importance of untangling the rules so that people with disabilities can pursue employment and achieve the quality of life they desire. I'm excited to be heading up the project's Work Incentives Network (WIN) which will expand the availability of Benefits Counseling and work incentives planning services to Oregonians with disabilities.

*Feel free to contact me with any questions you have about the project's Benefits Counseling and Work Incentives Planning system: [molly.a.sullivan@state.or.us](mailto:molly.a.sullivan@state.or.us)*

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## **Project participates in supported employment conference**

The Johnson and Johnson – Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program sponsored a national supported employment conference in Charleston, South Carolina on April 3-4, 2007. Damon Terzaghi, a Policy Analyst for the Project joined Oregon representatives Stephaine Parrish-Taylor (Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services), Mike Moore (Addictions and Mental Health Division), Sandy Reese (Lifeworks Northwest) and Crystal McMahan (Options for Southern Oregon) and professionals from across the nation for this conference. Attendees discussed pressing issues for supported employment programs for persons with a mental health diagnosis including appropriate ways to fund services, provide training and technical assistance and create local collaborations between Mental Health providers and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies. Sessions were held on Social Security efforts to promote employment for SSDI recipients with mental health diagnoses and statewide efforts to more appropriately engage the business community. Next year's national conference will be held in Portland, Oregon, on May 7th and 8th of 2008!

*For more information about the Johnson and Johnson – Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program or this conference contact Damon Terzaghi at [damon.terzaghi@state.or.us](mailto:damon.terzaghi@state.or.us)*

## **“Options for Success” employment conference is a success**

Project staff traveled to Ashland in April where they participated in Options for Success! a two-day conference for people with disabilities and their families. The Project was one of the co-sponsors of this event, and had a display table that included information about our initiatives and partners.

Conference participants were treated to a powerful and inspiration speech delivered by featured speaker Geri Jewell. Geri talked about her path to employment as an actress and comedian with a disability and the many twists and turns she has taken to be successful in the entertainment business.

The two day conference was packed with great information for people with disabilities, the professional staff who serve them, and family members. The Project did a co-presentation on benefits counseling and work incentive planning with Doug Zeh from Oregon Advocacy Center's Planning for Work (the Social Security Work Incentive Planning and Assistance program in Oregon) and Janet Stevely from WorkAble Solutions. Maureen Bozeman and Randy Yoshida, two of our partners from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Medford hosted a session on Vocational Rehabilitation and Work Readiness Alternatives Workshop (WRAW). Sheila Hoover from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Administrative offices in Salem facilitated a special focus group session for deaf and hard of hearing customers. Other sessions included information on self-employment,

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Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and person-centered planning tools.

Welcome to all our new readers who signed up for this newsletter at the conference! We hope you enjoy the information, and welcome your comments.

*For more information about this conference, contact Paula Fitch at [paula.fitch@state.or.us](mailto:paula.fitch@state.or.us)*

## **Building futures: Transition to education and employment conference draws over 400 people**

On May 14, 15 and 16 Oregon Parent Training and Information Center in partnership with the Project, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, Oregon Department of Education Office of Student Learning and Partnerships, Oregon Council of Developmental Disabilities, the ARC of Multnomah and Clackamas counties, and the Jean Baton Swindells Resource Center for Children and Families put on a statewide conference on transition to education and employment.

Over 400 people from across the state including youth with disabilities in transition, family members, advocates, teachers and other professional staff and many other stakeholders were treated to informational sessions that ranged from benefits counseling and work incentives planning to building a bridge to independent housing.

Speakers included Joyanne Cobb, the Social Insurance Specialist and Policy Analyst for the office of Project Development and Research at the Social Security Administration and Jonathan Mooney, the co-

founder of Eye-To-Eye, a mentoring program for students with disabilities.

The Project's new Program Analyst, Molly Sullivan presented information on benefits counseling and work incentives planning on May 14 to over 112 participants.

Welcome to all our new readers who signed up for this newsletter at the conference! We hope you enjoy the information, and welcome your comments.

*For more information on "Building Futures" contact Paula Fitch at [paula.fitch@state.or.us](mailto:paula.fitch@state.or.us)*

## **Project SEARCH at Southwest Washington Medical Center in Vancouver**

Lucy Baker, the Executive Director of the Oregon Business Leadership Network and one of the Project's Leadership Council members recently hosted a tour of Project SEARCH at Vancouver's Southwest Washington Medical Center.

Project SEARCH provides employment and education opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. The program is dedicated to workforce development that benefits the individual, community and workplace. Project SEARCH started at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital and is now being replicated nationwide.

Project SEARCH at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center has been identified as a model program by several national organizations including Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation

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Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports, the University of Iowa Employment Policy Group and the National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities.

Southwest Washington Medical Center has been honored by the Clark County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board for their efforts to hire and retain workers with

disabilities through Project SEARCH.

Several companies are exploring the possibility of expanding Project SEARCH to Oregon, and will be attending their national conference in Cincinnati this July.

*More information on Project SEARCH can be found at: [www.cincinnatichildrens.org/svc/alpha/p/search](http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/svc/alpha/p/search).*

## GOOD INFORMATION!

### TripCheck.com – Transportation Options

Find statewide public transportation information on Oregon Department of Transportation's TripCheck.com

**Step 1:** Visit [www.TripCheck.com](http://www.TripCheck.com) and click on the Transportation Options tab.

**Step 2:** Search by:

**City or county** – allows users to search for transportation providers within a specific city or county. Users can refine the search with filters for wheelchair accessibility, service days and by travel mode, such as bus, train and taxi.

**City to city** – allows users to search for intercity public transit connections. Services can be filtered by wheelchair

accommodations. General information about transportation providers, including contact information and Web site, is also available. Travel from Medford to Baker City using public transportation.

**Special accommodations** – allows users to find transit services that accommodate mobility devices or provide door to door, curb to curb or other specialized services, including those not open to the general public.

**Step 3:** Contact the providers listed via telephone number or visit their Web sites for more information.

TripCheck is a service of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

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