



When Everyone Works, Everyone Wins!

Work Incentive "Tips" Newsletter

Freedom To Work

July 2010

The Terry Redlin Story

Master Artist Terry Redlin and the Redlin Art Center have given their endorsement of the Employer Resource Network (ERN) project. Terry Redlin is truly one of the country's most widely collected painters of wildlife and Americana. To learn more about ERN visit <http://ftw.sd-ccd.org/employers/ernhome>.



Terry Redlin in front of the Redlin Art Center

At fifteen, Terry Redlin experienced what was, especially for an active, outdoor teenager, a devastating loss. One evening, a friend was giving Terry his very first ride on a motorcycle. A minute after the ride began, at an intersection, they were hit by the intoxicated driver of an automobile. After a few anxious days, Terry's doctors reached a difficult decision. Terry's badly damaged leg required amputation.



"I was in the ninth grade," Terry comments, "and this accident really changed my life. If it had not happened, I have no clear idea where I would be today or what I would be doing. My only clue is from my interests at the time. Maybe I would have become a forester, a gunsmith, operated a sports store in town, or run a bait shop at one of the nearby lakes."

While recovering at his home in Watertown, an official from the State of South Dakota arrived with a message. Terry was informed that South Dakota provided post-high school tuition for the handicapped.

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In August of 1956, Terry and his new wife, Helene, packed up their 1947 Studebaker and headed to the big city of St. Paul. Terry had enrolled in art school at the St. Paul School for Associated Arts. "When I learned of the high costs for art school, I understood the importance of the State of South Dakota's generous offer of four years before. It gave us a grub stake," Terry remembers.

In 1997, Terry Redlin and his family opened the Redlin Art Center in their hometown of Watertown. It is their gift back to a caring community, and a "thank you" to a state that offered a helping hand at one critical juncture in the artist's life.

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S.D. Work Incentives Planning & Assistance (WIPA) Program

221 S. Central
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voice/tty - (605) 224-5336
toll-free - 1-800-224-5336

Dept. 21 811 E. 10th Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57103
voice/tty - (605) 367-5330
toll-free - 1-800-265-9679

Division of Rehabilitation Services

Hills view Properties Plaza,
3800 E Hwy 34
Pierre, SD 57501
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Website: <http://dhs.sd.gov/drs/>

Mike Walling

E-mail: SEAWalling@aol.com
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Social Security Online

Website: www.SSA.gov

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A Success Story - Ken Barth

Working while having a disability has become an accepted part of Ken Barth's life. Ken had always taken his health for granted, but that ended in 2007 when Ken was involved in a car accident that permanently changed his life. He has nerve damage that makes it hard for him to move or do many of the things that he was used to doing prior to the accident. He did not know any other way of life but to work and so after the accident he wanted to continue that part of his life. The nerve damage causes continual pain and muscle spasms which created problems at work the last two years. Keeping a job was hard because of the pain, he would either have to call in sick or leave early from his job.

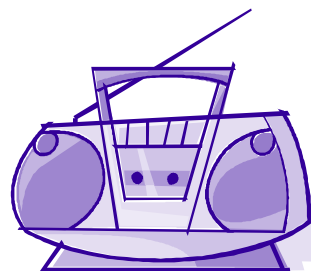


Ken Barth

Because he didn't have health insurance and wasn't able to visit a physician or pay for medication, Ken was always fighting the pain. That is, until he was told about the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program. Ken applied and was enrolled in the MAWD program in October of 2008, which gave him Medicaid coverage. Ken said, "MAWD literally saved my life. Without MAWD I would not have been able to keep my current job because of not being able to see a doctor and get the medication I needed."

After Ken's accident he worked with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), who assisted him in securing a job as an announcer at the KSDN radio station in Aberdeen. DRS was able to get Ken a specific chair that makes it easier for him to sit while he is on the job. He was also assisted by Opportunities for Independent Living who provided resources to purchase a chair lift for him. He also uses a walker which was paid for by Medicaid.

Ken considers himself fortunate, "MAWD offered me an opportunity to seek medical attention that I didn't have before." Even though it was difficult to find an employer that would take a chance hiring him, Ken did not give up. He would like other employers to know that by hiring a person with a disability, they are usually gaining a long-term employee, someone who will stay with the job.



Having a job and being on MAWD gave Ken a reason to live. He "loves what he does" and "lives to go to work". Ken feels as an employee he is a functional member of society. He finds himself being part of more social events now and involved in the community. He would like other people with disabilities to know that employment gives you a sense of "self-worth and something to look forward to." Ken is not sitting at home feeling sorry for himself, he has a purpose and somewhere to go. His job takes his mind off of the pain. He said, "I know I can do something as opposed to sitting at home." Ken makes it very clear that he would not have been able to continue working without the assistance MAWD provided him. He is very grateful for the program.

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Upcoming Training Events

Employment Outcomes Training featuring Allen Anderson

Workshop for VR Professionals and Job Development Providers. The training will provide practical strategies that will lead to increased employment outcomes as well as higher quality jobs for candidates.

August 11-13 ▪ Ramkota Inn ▪ Sioux Falls
August 16-18 ▪ Watertown Event Center ▪ Watertown

☆ For more information, call (800) 224-5336

Employment and Benefits Training featuring Mike Walling

August 16 ▪ Ft. Pierre (for Benefits Specialists)
August 17 ▪ Sioux Falls (basic session)
August 18 ▪ Sioux Falls (advanced session)
August 19 ▪ Aberdeen (advanced session)
August 20 ▪ Brookings (advanced session)

☆ For more information, call (605) 945-2207

RehabACTION Fall Conference Stakes are High-Going "All In" on Employment

October 12-14 ▪ Deadwood Lodge ▪ Deadwood

For more information, visit <http://www.sdrehabaction.org/>

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Cassie's "Hints"

The New Health Care Law and Medicare

If you are a Medicare recipient, you will see some changes as a result of the new health care law. Medicare will continue to cover your health costs the way it always has, and you will not see a change in eligibility.

Some of the improvements included in the new law:

- This year, if you enter the Part D "donut hole," you will receive a one-time \$250 rebate check, if you are not already receiving Medicare Extra Help. These checks will start to go out in mid-June.
- Next year, if you reach the "donut hole," you will receive a 50% discount when buying Part D covered brand name prescription drugs.
- Over the next ten years, you will receive additional savings until the coverage gap is closed in 2020.
- The law increases the number of primary care doctors, nurses, and physician assistants to provide better access to care.
- Support for community health centers will increase, allowing them to serve more patients.
- Community health teams will provide patient-centered care so you don't have to see several doctors who do not work together.

These are some of the improvements you will see in Medicare but the law contains many more changes. Below are a few internet links to review for more information.

<http://www.kff.org/healthreform/8066.cfm>

This link deals with questions about the temporary high-risk pool.

<http://www.kff.org/healthreform/7962.cfm>

This link is a question/answer about insurance subsidies.

<http://www.kff.org/healthreform/8060.cfm>

This is a link with information on the implementation timeline.

<http://www.healthreform.gov>

This site is full of information regarding the new health care reform law.



Cassie Stoesser
Community Work
Incentives Coordinator
SD WIPA Program

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An Employer's Perspective - Scott Hoeke

For sixteen years, Scott Hoeke has been the manager of the Subway in Milbank, South Dakota. He has had the opportunity to hire at least four people with disabilities during this time. One of the employees has been at the restaurant for approximately fourteen years and another has been there for seven years. Scott says hiring a person with a disability is no different than hiring someone without a disability. Some of them work out and some do not.



Scott Hoeke

It started when Scott was approached by staff from the high school several years ago. They explained Project Skills, a program through Vocational Rehabilitation Services, which provides a paid work experience for high school students with disabilities.

Scott gave it a try and it worked out well for the students and for him as an employer. During the first several weeks of employment there is a job coach with the student to help them learn their job responsibilities. When the student is no longer eligible for the program, the employer has the option to hire them as an employee. Scott says it has been a very positive experience.

According to Scott it does take patience in the beginning but it isn't a lot different than training any new employee. He said the rewards of hiring a person with a disability outweigh other issues in the long run. He said it is great to see the smile on their face and know they are happy to be working. Scott said, "They become one of the family in a hurry." Scott gives all his employees the chance to do any of the jobs at the restaurant. Then he finds what jobs the person likes and does well. Scott says people with disabilities who want to work truly understand the value of work and don't take things for granted like some employees. They may have faced more rejections than other employees. His advice is, "Keep trying, it's well worth it. There is a job fit for everyone. Keep looking for what you like and what you would be good at."

Employers who have never hired someone with a disability probably have some fear which is normal according to Scott. He believes it is important to understand the person's disability and figure out what the person's needs are. In Scott's experience, the person's needs are not that different from a person without a disability.

For Scott, the job coach setup made it a lot easier for him as an employer. To him, it was sort of like an icebreaker and helped develop the comfort level for everyone. He said hiring people with disabilities opens your eyes to other people's situations. He encourages employers to "take the chance" and find out what an enjoyable experience it can be.

Lastly, Scott would like to see more information made available about hiring people with disabilities. He believes that employers are not always aware of the available resources when they hire someone with a disability. Scott's opinion is that agencies working in the disability field need to find more ways to get the word out so employers are less hesitant about the process.

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Work is Therapy

Nathan* called to tell me that his interview late yesterday afternoon went well. "He hired me, Teryl!" he exclaimed. "I got a job!" I was really pleased, but not surprised. Nathan was well prepared for the interview. We even talked about covering his tattoos. Nathan said, "He told me that he didn't trust people without tattoos and I can even wear my cap at work!" This was a great job match, according to Nathan. This information was good to hear. But what Nathan said next was not expected. "I was so excited about having a job, I went grocery shopping. . . at Walmart!" I paused, almost speechless. "Walmart?" I said. Nathan went on to say, "Yes, and I went alone."

You are probably wondering why this seemed to amaze me. You see, Nathan has paranoid schizophrenia; he is severely and persistently mentally ill. His anxiety and fear of large crowds almost cripples him to the extent that grocery shopping is extremely difficult and to shop at Walmart is unheard of for Nathan, especially alone. His paranoia convinces him that everyone is talking about him and his only recourse is to leave immediately. Perhaps the concept of an individual such as Nathan finding employment on his own is new to you as well. Let me explain.

Employment for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness includes the philosophy that work is therapy. For recovery to prosper, we need to empower clients, by allowing them the opportunity and providing them with the tools to seek and accept employment of their choice in the community. Individuals with mental illness can and should work. It gives them the opportunity for hope, for self-esteem building, for a future. Work allows them to step out of the role of being a patient and gives them the opportunity to find independence, self-awareness and confidence. Employment has proven to reduce symptoms and the frequency of hospitalizations. They are happier. Their lives no longer revolve around medication, doctor appointments, or therapy!

Nationally, only 15% of adults with a major mental health diagnosis work. At Employment Options, a vocational program in Rapid City, the employment rate is approximately 38%. Granted we would like to see more of our clients working; we have more lives to touch. We believe strongly that work truly is the best medicine! These are the services and approaches that have helped job seekers find and keep work and to make awesome, client-centered changes in their lives:

- 20 hours of pre-employment training
- Job Shop-daily intensive job search assistance/support
- Transportation services to search for jobs/transportation to and from work
- Follow-along for 6 months after employment is secured
- Job Club-group meets for client support/recognition for those looking for work/those employed
- Annual Awards Banquet
- Company/Case Manager buy-in to vocational program
- Successful relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors/support for clients
- Great working relationships with local employers

* For confidentiality purposes, Nathan is not the real name of the client discussed in the story.

Written by Teryl Pickard, Employment Specialist with Employment Options, Rapid City, South Dakota. Teryl is also a member of the Freedom to Work Leadership Council.

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Project SEARCH

Transitioning Students with Disabilities to Work

Project SEARCH is a unique business-led transition program for students with disabilities. It provides students who want to work a chance to explore careers and develop transferable job skills.

The ultimate goal: independent adults working in a competitive environment.



Designed as an internship program, **Project SEARCH** places students in real-world situations where they learn all aspects of gaining and maintaining a job. Large organizations—such as banks, hospitals, or universities—host the program. This process of involvement facilitates the teaching and learning of new work skills on-site.

Individualized job development and placement occurs based on the student's experiences, strengths, and skills. A series of job rotations lasting up to 10 weeks allow students to seek positions that best suit their interests and skills. They receive support with accommodations, adaptations, and on-the-job coaching.

Students who have completed all academic requirements for graduation from high school may apply for enrollment in **Project SEARCH**. Participants may be 18 to 21 years old.

The East Dakota Cooperative in Sioux Falls provides Project SEARCH through a partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services and Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Avera McKennan Hospital. The Aberdeen School District provides Project SEARCH through a partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation and Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Avera St. Lukes Hospital.

Check out the new look of the Freedom to Work website at <http://ftw.sd-ccd.org/> The website offers information for people with disabilities, family members, providers and employers as well as a resource list and links to a wide variety of employment related sites. Personal stories of people with disabilities who are successfully employed are featured. Check it out!!

AND...

See the newly launched "Think Beyond the Label"

National Media Campaign!

<http://www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com>