



# *E-Lights: An IAJVS Publication for Executive and Professional Leadership*

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*IAJVS is a non-profit network of 28 national and international human service agencies throughout the United States, Canada, and Israel. Our member agencies provide a vast array of services that have a direct effect on the lives of hundreds of thousands of people each year: career management, skills training, rehabilitation programs, health services, and home and community based services.*

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## **Message from the President**

I am honored to assume the Presidency of IAJVS and look forward to the next two years with high expectations and great confidence. IAJVS has built a strong reputation as an international partner with leading employers, corporate foundations, and other national and international non-profit organizations. Through our work in partnership and capacity building, IAJVS plays an increasingly vital role in expanding the capabilities of our member agencies to better serve their communities' needs.

Our current partnerships with the Bank of America, CVS/Pharmacy, AARP, and the Heldrich Center at Rutgers University, are gaining momentum, and provide a range of models on which to build in the future as we identify opportunities.

On behalf of the IAJVS staff and network, I want to thank those member agencies who submitted articles for this issue focusing on Job Development and Employer Partnerships.

Sharing best practices and programmatic successes are vital to building a strong membership association.

Wishing all a pleasant summer,

Peter M. Bloch  
President

## AJFCA-IAJVS 2007 Annual Conference Feedback

In an attempt to improve service to member agencies, AJFCA and IAJVS collected evaluation surveys asking responders to rate their satisfaction with all the elements of the conference experience.

There were 90 evaluations received in total. 59 were from AJFCA agencies, 18 were from IAJVS agencies, and 13 were from agencies that are both AJFCA and IAJVS agencies. 33 were from CEOs, 5 were from Past President/Past Board-Chairs, 10 were from President/Board-Chairs, 33 were from Professionals, 3 were from President-Elects/Board Chair-Elects, and 6 were from Volunteer Leaders.

32 percent of respondents thought the conference was excellent, 55 percent thought it was good, and 12 percent thought it was fair. 55 percent thought that the joint conference was an enhancement to their conference experience, while 44 percent thought that it was not.

The majority of respondents thought that the plenaries speeches by Lawrence Zicklin and Shifra Bronznick were good, and close to 100 percent of respondents thought that the plenary remarks by Rabbi Irwin Kula were excellent.

The evaluations are very useful for informing IAJVS on ways the conference can be improved. IAJVS greatly appreciates those who took the time to share their thoughts and we look forward to seeing everyone again in Boston in 2008.

For more information on the 2007 AJFCA-IAJVS Annual Conference evaluations please contact Rachel Petru at 215.854.0233 or [petrur@iajvs.org](mailto:petrur@iajvs.org).



Pictured above: Attendees enjoy breakfast on the first day of the 2007 AJFCA-IAJVS Annual Conference.

## JVS MetroWest's *Caregiving Companions* Program: Customized Training and Job Placement for the Growing Home Care Industry

The Jewish Vocational Service of MetroWest's *Caregiving Companions* program offers unique training and job placement opportunities for unemployed, underemployed, unskilled or semi-skilled individuals interested in employment as personal care aides, while meeting a growing service need in the community. The *Caregiving Companions* program provides companionship and non-medical assistance to the frail elderly, the infirm and people with disabilities in their own homes.

Utilizing its proprietary Learning Solutions™ CD-ROM/Internet-based software platform, the JVS MetroWest's *Caregiving Companions* training program provides potential workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain and retain employment. Following eligibility determination and appropriate background checks, enrolled students progress at their own pace and learn course material through video lectures and role-play scenarios, an interactive textbook, and relevant assignments, with the option to receive additional instruction, support, and assistance from a course facilitator. Trainees who already have certification as home health aides or nursing assistants, follow a modified curriculum and utilize only those training modules they require to upgrade their skills and prepare them to become *Caregiving Companions*.

The training course covers the following units of instruction:

- Understanding the aging process.
- Learning the principles of effective communication with the elderly, people with disabilities and their families.
- Dealing with loss and depression.
- Understanding and dealing with cultural diversity.
- Basic hygiene practices.
- Nutrition and special diets.
- Understanding the early stages of dementia.
- How to respond to emergencies.
- Preventing accidents.

- Communication and customer service skills.
- Accessing community resources.

Upon successful completion of the training program, graduates receive a certificate of achievement and are added to the roster of *JVS Caregiving Companions*. In response to requests for service, the *Caregiving Companions* Coordinator matches program graduates with the frail elderly, the infirmed, and individuals with disabilities who want to remain living independently in their own homes, but require companion and non-medical support services. *JVS Caregiving Companions* provide: light housekeeping, shopping, conversation, meal preparation, laundry, medication reminders, as well as accompaniment to appointments and errands. The Program Coordinator provides ongoing staff supervision, support, and training, and holds regular meetings to discuss pertinent information on topics of interest to the *Companions*. The meetings also provide opportunities for the *Caregiving Companions* to share experiences in an effort to help support one another and to problem solve a variety of situations.

The *Caregiving Companions* training program complements the other interactive, educational Learning Solutions™ courseware programs developed by JVS MetroWest in consultation with the National Institute for Literacy, the National Retail Federation and the National Healthcareers Association. Each of these programs enhances reading, writing, listening, ESL, and communication skills while teaching course content. Several of the courses lead to industry based certification by nationally recognized bodies. The other JVS Learning Solutions™ courses are:

- Customer Service and Communications Skills: An Overview
- Customer Service Skills for the Retail Industry

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## **JVS MetroWest's Caregiving Companions Program: Customized Training and Job Placement for the Growing Home Care Industry**

*(Continued from page 3)*

- Customer Service Skills for the Healthcare Industry
- Job Seeking and Employability Skills
- Medical Administrative Assistant

Training programs based on Learning Solutions™ courseware have led to successful job placement outcomes for JVS MetroWest clients transitioning from welfare to work, people with disabilities, at risk youth, émigrés, and displaced workers. JVS

Learning Solutions™ courseware has also been utilized by such organizations as the Texas Retail Education Foundation, the National Puerto Rican Foundation, and the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission.

For more information, contact Nancy T. Fisher, Assistant Executive Director for Education and Training, at [ntfisher@jvsnj.org](mailto:ntfisher@jvsnj.org).

## **JVS San Francisco: Employer Relationship Management Successes**

Over the last several years, JVS San Francisco has been laying groundwork for systematically increasing employer engagement in its workforce development programs. The model is based on the premise that deeper engagement with targeted employers leads to better placement outcomes for job seekers.

**The ERM Process:** JVS formalized its employer relationship process shortly after the agency adopted a sector strategy model two years ago. The agency assigned direct service staff to industry sector teams and asked them to go beyond their existing responsibilities for matching employers' open positions with clients' experiences and skills. The Employer Relationship Management (ERM) system implemented provides a deeper approach to developing, maintaining and growing strategic relationships with healthcare, non-profit, retail and business sector employers.

The ERM process is a medium- to long-term approach to relationship development. Rather than focus on a "one job-one client match," staff create quarterly plans with goals and action items for each of the ERM employers they manage. These plans provide ongoing strategies used to engage employers, not only in providing job openings and placement opportunities, but also workplace site visits, training program speakers, internship mentors, focus group participants, and financial support.

JVS San Francisco developed various tools and materials to support staff's ERM objectives. These include an ERM handbook, scripts for speaking with employers, a list of suggested engagement activities and FAQs. Also offered was a two-part training series to staff on how to have conversations with employers that focus on making introductions, discussing partnership options and setting actionable goals. Participants practiced mock conversations using the quarterly goals they had set for each employer.

**Best Practices:** Tracking the results of the agency's employer engagement efforts is a critical part of the ERM process. JVS currently uses a customized Access database (and is in the process of converting to the Salesforce CRM application) to record all activities carried out and contacts made with each employer.

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## JVS San Francisco: Employer Relationship Management Successes

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JVS also uses NAICS codes to classify employer by industry sectors. Placements and job orders are recorded as well. Managers are able to pull and analyze all of this information by staff person, program, and industry sector team, using these results to inform future ERM strategy.

**EE Model:** Another significant element of the ERM system is the Employer Engagement (EE) model. The model helps measure the degree to which employers are involved in the agency's work. It consists of five levels of engagement that range from minimal interactions like a phone conversation or a job posting (Level I) to a training partnership or an event underwriter (Level V). Each level includes specific strategies and tactics that staff can use for relating to employers and increasing their engagement. On an annual basis, staff assigns an EE Level to each employer's record in the database.

**Advisory Boards:** An ongoing means for keeping employers involved in program development and sector strategy is through industry sector and program advisory board participation. Employers are invited to join these committees to share their industry knowledge of recruiting challenges and innovations, provide a sounding board for JVS program development, offer suggestions for future programming and creative solutions to obstacles, and to network with colleagues in their field. The chairs of each advisory board also sit on the Board's Employer Engagement Committee which offers support for recruiting needs and agenda development as well as the sharing of best practices.

**Employer Engagement in the Bank Services Program:** An example of JVS's success working with employers is the Bank Services training program (part of the national IAJVS initiative funded by DOL along with JVS MetroWest and JVS Los Angeles to train clients with disabilities for customer service and teller positions). JVS has included employers in the development of the program since the beginning. In November, human resources, recruiting and training representatives from Bank of America, Bank of the West, First Republic, United Commercial Bank, Westamerica and Wells Fargo attended focus groups in which staff asked for feedback on the curriculum and program structure. During these sessions, staff explained that program participants had a wide range of disabilities which would require workplace accommodations for some candidates if hired.

Once the training program began, these employers continued to support participants by serving as guest trainers, panelists, site visit hosts and mock interviewers. They also supported the trainees' job search process by providing internal contacts who track applications and give feedback on individual candidates.

**Looking Ahead:** As we begin the second year using the ERM system, JVS SF is looking to expand the scope of the process to include both tactical and strategic level employer engagement as a result of staff feedback. We also hope to integrate some of our development and Strictly Business efforts with placement and training engagement for select strategic employers. Ultimately, by involving employers more directly in all facets of our work, JVS builds strong, long-term partners who not only hire our clients but are eager to provide them assistance throughout their job search process.

For more information please contact Katherine Robinson, Director of Employer Services, JVS San Francisco, at 415.782.6225 or [krobinson@jvs.org](mailto:krobinson@jvs.org).

## Detroit Popcorn Company Employs 25 Through JVS Detroit

JVS Detroit is proud to announce its new and fast-growing partnership with The Detroit Popcorn Company (DPC). Since February 2007, JVS Detroit's Supported Employment Program and Career Initiative Center have teamed up with the local business to provide jobs to up to 28 people with disabilities or economic disadvantages. There are currently 25 people from JVS programs working at DPC.

The Detroit Popcorn Company is a Michigan-based business that has been in the area for over 80 years. Their products include cotton candy, popcorn, slush machines, pizza, hot dogs, desserts and more. They specialize in serving treats at birthday parties, sporting events, concerts, and throughout the community.

As DPC grew, additional employees were needed. Owner David Farber understood that it would be difficult to find employees who could enjoy packaging cotton candy every day. He had heard about JVS through the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and thought JVS and DPC were a perfect fit. After Farber spoke with Sherry Schamante, manager of Community Based Services, he realized that people with disabili-

ties could take on a myriad of tasks and succeed. Farber originally wanted to hire three employees to package cotton candy. Now with 25 employees, they have been able to take on different roles, such as packaging popcorn seeds and preparing slush mix on assembly lines, janitorial work and preparing gift tins for special holidays.

If you ask a DPC employee that has benefited from this partnership, they will tell you how much they enjoy their job. The employees work in four hour shifts, five days a week, and always with a smile. The employees are never bored, and they are certainly grateful for the opportunity Farber and the JVS staff have worked diligently to provide. Farber and Schamante speak almost daily about how well the employees have integrated with the other workers and into the community. Schamante also helps Farber with new ways to market DPC and open doors to gain more local business. The two are constantly discussing how to improve the beneficial collaboration.

As the partnership grows, more employment opportunities have become available for JVS clients. During the holiday season, Farber

hires 10 to 15 additional employees to package gift tins with caramel corn, a DPC specialty. Farber is expanding beyond JVS Detroit as well.

He is currently proposing a deal to allow 30-35 people with disabilities from JEVS Human Services in Philadelphia to work at a generic drug manufacturing company that his father owns in the area. The Detroit partnership is so rewarding that Farber would like to expand it so that other JVS agencies and communities may benefit.

Farber says of JVS Detroit and DPC: "Both organizations are providing a valuable service to the community as a whole, and more businesses should consider getting involved in programs like this. We are able to provide jobs to people who need them most, and we are very happy to be a part of the JVS Detroit programs."

For more information on this partnership, please contact Sherry Schamante at [sschamante@jvsdet.org](mailto:sschamante@jvsdet.org) or 248.233.4370.

This article was written by Julie Schechter, Marketing and Communications Intern, JVS Detroit.

## **Jewish Family Services and Ohio Business Leadership Network Partner Toward Common Goal**

Jewish Family Services (JFS - Columbus, Ohio) offers trainings annually to businesses and community-based organizations educating them on best practices of hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities. The workshops are made possible through a grant from the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities.

Lynn Aspey, JFS' Director of Business Relations and Coordinator of the Ohio Business Leadership Network (Ohio BLN), a partnership of Ohio's businesses initiated by the Governor's Council of People with Disabilities and the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, finds businesses to host and speakers at no cost to share information about disability-related topics. Topics include, but are not limited to, recruitment, retention, insurance, tax incentives and assistive technology.

"Being able to offer these educational workshops to Ohio's businesses is important in helping to create an understanding about a 'win-win' situation that could exist for businesses willing to hire individuals with disabilities," said Aspey. "Working with the Ohio BLN enables us to reach out to more businesses."

JFS' Career & Workforce Development department trainings during 2006 and 2007 have included such workshops as Scott Warrick's "Intolerance of Intolerance: Diversity Tolerance Training" that talks about why "Diversity/Tolerance" should be a part of businesses workplace violence program and why people with disabilities are the most discriminated against group in the U.S.

An Ohio BLN training, "Act Now: Learn How to Attract Creative Young Talent," discussed how youth with disabilities attend workforce development programs to make them prepared for the workplace and strategies for hiring individuals with disabilities. "Market Forces: Reshaping Accessibility" looked at which access-focused laws, standards and guidelines may relate to any business. The "Project Search" trainings educated businesses, showing that through the combination of low and high technical accommodations and adaptations, even people with significant disabilities are able to work in complex environments, such as banks and the health industry. "Providing Reasonable Accommodations for Disabled and Pregnant Employees" was the topic of a workshop that discussed what a reasonable accommodation would be for a pregnant or disabled employee and how much time off should pregnant employees receive.

A "Panel Presentation for Round Table Learning" was developed to discuss diversity etiquette when working and talking with people with disabilities; employment laws regarding individuals with disabilities and opportunities for this population, particularly in an aging workforce.

"What most people don't know is that there is a 68 percent rate of unemployment among Americans with disabilities, the highest rate of unemployment among any demographic in the U.S.," commented Aspey.

For more information about Jewish Family Services' partnership with the Ohio BLN or the agency's workshops, contact Lynn Aspey at 614.559.0117 or [laspey@jfscolumbus.org](mailto:laspey@jfscolumbus.org).

## Investing in the Future: JVS Los Angeles Partners With Local Banks On Career Training

Jonnique Rush got into trouble in high school, was chronically truant and running with a dangerous crowd. Instead of graduating with her class last year, she dropped out. Her story might have ended there, except for JVS Los Angeles' new partnership program BankWorks.

BankWorks, a free career training program in collaboration with local area banks, prepares clients for entry-level jobs as bank tellers as a first step on the career ladder in the financial services industry. The eight-week program offers job training, job placement assistance and ongoing coaching for career advancement, with starting salaries between \$20,000-\$35,000 plus benefits. Coordinator Lisa Meadows has more than 25 years experience in the banking industry, as well as teaching and working with a crisis hotline.

“When we see a need in the community, we try and meet it. What we were constantly hearing from some of our business partners was the high turnover rate in the banking industry. With the help of one of our longtime supporters, Les Biller, we devised BankWorks,” said JVS COO Claudia Finkel.

JVS LA has been promoting this opportunity through various venues, including its two Work-Source Centers in West Hollywood and Marina Del Rey, where Jonnique first saw the flyer that would change her life. By this point, she had completed her GED, but like many clients, had no direction. To be eligible, participants must be at least 18, speak and write English, and have basic computer skills.

BankWorks is funded by a grant from the Les Biller Family Foundation, along with a consortium of banks, including Bank of America, City National Bank, Pacific Western Bank, Union Bank and Wells Fargo. Due to the success of the program, US Bank also recently came on board.

Says Finkel, “We’ve just had our fifth class of students graduate, and had a one hundred percent placement rate, our most successful ever. All of the banks that attended the hiring were very impressed with the students.”

Jonique was a stellar student and after completing her training was hired by Wells Fargo. She lives a few blocks from the Wells Fargo branch where she now works and has said her problems in high school and decision to drop out caused tremendous stress and turmoil in her family -- however, everyone is very proud of her accomplishments now. With a helping hand and her own hard work, Jonnique has turned what could have been failure into success. As part of a partnership of IAJVS agencies, and with generous support from the U.S. Department of Labor, JVS is currently expanding the BankWorks program to provide services to people with disabilities, as well as supporting the career growth of individuals already working in the banking and financial industries.

For more information please contact Lisa Meadows, Manager of BankWorks, at 310.273.6633 x241.



## **JVS Minneapolis Partners with Business to Provide Targeted Training and Employment Services**

Recently, IAJVS and CVS/pharmacy signed a memorandum of understanding to work together to develop employment opportunities that will bring diversity to the CVS work force and expand job opportunities within CVS for people with barriers to employment.

JVS, the employment division of Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis, is currently partnering with local CVS/pharmacy locations to develop a unique training project that combines teaching general employment skills along with targeted, specific career-related skills.

The program is designed to train CVS photo lab technicians by combining classroom and on-the-job training created specifically for CVS/pharmacy.

Sue Wallace, JVS Grants Coordinator, worked closely with CVS to develop this program to meet CVS' recruitment, retention, and staffing needs for trained photo lab technicians.

"Through JVS' expertise in training and JVS' array of programs for job seekers I knew that we were uniquely positioned to create a specialized training program with CVS," explains Wallace.

The training begins with basic job skills taught onsite at JVS. Participants learn the skills necessary to obtain employment in a service industry position. Once a candidate successfully completes this classroom segment of the program, he or she will be placed at a CVS/pharmacy location. There the intern will take part in an intensive training program. CVS staff will teach photo lab technician skills including: terminology, camera types, film speeds, batteries, and photo processing. JVS will continue working with the trainees by teaching customer service and communication skills including assessing customer needs and working with varied customer personalities. In all, trainees will complete 120 hours of instruction.

Once the photo lab technician interns have successfully completed the training, they will have marketable skills that they can use to work at a CVS/pharmacy or other photo labs. CVS has committed to training 30 workers this year, and hiring 20 of them. The goal of the program is for all trainees to gain satisfying, unsubsidized employment.

JVS' commitment extends beyond the training. JVS will continue to provide job coaching for those trainees hired by CVS, and JVS will provide job placement services for trainees who need to find a position with another employer.

Janet Flam, JVS Community Employment Representative, says that while the JVS/ CVS partnership is unusual, it is not JVS' only business partnership. "For the past 15 years," explains Flam, "JVS has worked with Wells Fargo Bank by supporting the filing services department, providing dedicated employees, and training them specifically for Wells Fargo."

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## **JVS Minneapolis Partners with Business to Provide Targeted Training and Employment Services**

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JVS is uniquely set-up to make these long-term training and business partnerships work. Janet says, “JVS works with hundreds of prospective job candidates each year, and we offer all kinds of training, from entry-level job skills to working with management employees. This gives us the ability to create specific training programs for a diverse group of employers on varied work projects.”

The JVS/CVS partnership will begin enrolling trainees within the next several weeks. Larry Greenbaum, JVS Division Director, praises IAJVS for its commitment and coordination of the JVS and CVS partnership. “IAJVS’ dedication to forming a partnership with CVS/pharmacy stores around the country was what led our local JVS to this successful joint venture.”

For more information please contact Janet Flam, Community Employment Representative, JVS Minneapolis at 952.417.2112 or [jflam@jvsmn.org](mailto:jflam@jvsmn.org).

## **JEVS Human Services Philadelphia: “Cross-Selling” is Key**

With several dozen job developers marketing as many as a dozen different programs that serve thousands of job seekers each year, JEVS Human Services believes that “cross selling” is the key to better employer relationships. The challenge is just how to help dozens of job developers see beyond their own placement goals, cultivate relationships with employers beyond the scope of their own program, and “sell” JEVS Human Services as the “go-to” agency for workforce needs.

Centralized and strengthened under the new position of Director of Corporate Employer Services, this is a strategic shift toward taking a holistic approach to marketing the entire organization, underscored with, what Gail Zukerman, COO, Employment and Training, describes as a “philosophy of sharing.”

This newly created position reflects the “JEVS imperative to create stronger employer partnerships with the goal of becoming the agency of choice to

meet the staffing needs of employers in the region,” explained Joe Cipolla, M.Ed., who has been in this position since June. The impetus for making this change lies in the fee-for-service atmosphere which, as Zukerman pointed out, has created “an era of accountability – beyond anything that we have seen in the past.”

In addition to more “traditional” job placement services, as part of this overall strategy, JEVS Center for Sales and Service Excellence (formerly JEVS Customer Service Training Collaboration) recently began partnering with CVS Pharmacy to provide customer service training that is tailored to its needs and industry specific to the pharmaceutical industry. This program is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

This initiative is part of the IAJVS network that has created partnerships with national employers that

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## JEVS Human Services Philadelphia: “Cross-Selling” is Key

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can be accessed and supported at the local level. JVS Boston has partnered with CVS Pharmacy and JVS Minneapolis has begun partnering with CVS Pharmacy, and now JEVS Philadelphia.

JEVS customer service training and job placement began in earnest in 1998 when it began operating the Retail Skills Center, created by the National Retail Federation and located at the King of Prussia Mall. JEVS customized customer service employer partnerships have included industry specific trainings designed for taxi drivers with the Philadelphia Parking Authority; the employees of ShopRite; and customer service representatives with the King of Prussia Mall. JEVS is also providing customer service training to the Mall’s maintenance staff.

Prior to this, JEVS has a longer history of customized training through its vocational school, the Orleans Technical Institute. For the past 15 years, these partnerships have included skills training for the employees of the Philadelphia School District, the Philadelphia Gas Works; PECO Energy; Stone Container Corporation; Albert Einstein Medical Center, and the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation. These partnerships have grown largely through word-of-mouth, with little concentrated

marketing effort—until now. It is anticipated that a new staff position will be created to market customized training services.

All of JEVS job placement activities will now be centralized under the newly created position of the Director of Corporate Employer Services. The goals are to develop new corporate relations and a system of account representatives who will be trained to represent the entire organization of JEVS.

The result will be that employers are presented with an understanding of how JEVS can meet a full-spectrum of their staffing needs – from customized training and consulting to providing employees who are skilled in different areas and from various backgrounds, including welfare to work, and those with intellectual/developmental disabilities and mental illness.

This shift has its underpinnings in the JEVS Core Principle of Collaboration—internally and externally – and a philosophy that views the region’s employers as the customers of JEVS.

For more information, contact Gail Zukerman at 215.854.1856 or [gail.zukerman@jevs.org](mailto:gail.zukerman@jevs.org).

## JVS Toronto: REACH for Success

Recent statistics compiled by Statistics Canada point out that some 2 million Canadians (10 percent) between the ages of 15 and 64 live with some type of disability. Current figures indicate that roughly 55 percent of people with disabilities are unemployed. This number represents a tremendous source of untapped workplace potential. “With shortages of labor and skilled workers as a result of an aging population, engaging people with disabilities in a sector that makes up over 21 percent of the labor force just makes sense” said Andrew Seigwart, Retail Council of Canada.

### ABILITY STRIVES

JVS Toronto’s new REACH (Retail Employment Action Career Hub) program offers an interactive way of engaging persons with disabilities in a ‘work and learn’ retail and customer service training program to maximize their potential and assist them on a path to work. Over an initial six-week period, carefully screened candidates participate in a combination of activities geared to preparing them for success in a retail environment. JVS combines classroom work, tours, job shadows, independent learning, job preparation and provide one-on-one coaching with job developers and a brief job trial with a reputable retail organization. At the work practicum, participants are able to utilize the skills they have attained in class and develop real life work experience that only this opportunity can generate. This is followed by a 13-week paid employment with an employer of the participant’s choice. In order to support the participant in the workplace, job coaching, on-the-job training and arrangement of accommodation, if needed, is identified and addressed on an individual basis in collaboration with all parties involved.

### ABILITY CONQUERS

JVS’ partnership with the Retail Council of Canada assists with facilitating additional retail employer relationships, promotion and marketing to its members and the community, while ensuring that the candidates meet the employment standards through the Canadian Retail Institute certification program. This interactive and practical approach to learning retail and customer service concepts has opened the door to participants who are looking to gain employment and begin careers in the retail sector.

### ABILITY WORKS

The retail industry offers a variety of tasks that fit a range of aptitudes and abilities. The REACH program recognizes that this combination makes for a good fit because of the flexibility and variability of positions. The ability to modify work objectives and make accommodations to meet the needs of people with various barriers to employment is often very realistic for retail employers.

In the Closing the Gap discussions and resulting report, “Strategic Directions for Improving Outcomes of Persons with Disabilities” there is compelling evidence to support our program:

- Employers hire on the basis of ability and the right fit. Sometimes employers find it difficult to focus on the individual’s abilities and see only their disability.
- Many employers do not know how to recruit people with disabilities and need help.
- Most companies are supportive of co-op and work experience initiatives.

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## JVS Toronto: REACH for Success

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Employers in focus groups unanimously indicated that their most important requirements were:

- Well screened and qualified individuals.
- Guarantee and supports for performance.
- Understanding of individual employer requirements and culture.
- Understanding of core competencies and essential skills for the job.

The REACH program meets these expectations and provides an exceptional opportunity for those retail employers who recognize that working with people with disabilities can bring great rewards. By engaging through unpaid placements and paid employment, employers offer an opportunity for people with a range of disabilities a chance to become competitively employable in the retail sector while gaining reliable and hardworking employees who display positive attitudes towards their work. Having diversified, dedicated employees can be their company's single greatest asset and can have an almost immediate positive impact on their workforce and patrons. The program is committed to providing the most comprehensive program to help people with disabilities achieve inclusion, employment, and independence.

Participants who access the program need additional support to make them competitive in the retail industry. The REACH program provides this support and insight into retail procedures and practices combined with practical application through employer partnerships. However, the support of influential people and businesses is crucial in moving this project forward.

The REACH program goal is to truly ensure a win-win situation for the graduates and the employers. The program REACHES for excellence so that the participants can REACH for success.

For more information please contact Carol Hacker, Director Disabilities Services, JVS Toronto, at 416.787.1151 x246 or [chacker@jvstoronto.org](mailto:chacker@jvstoronto.org).

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# Socially Responsible Leadership for the 21st Century

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**WHO WE ARE:** The International Association of Jewish Vocational Services (IAJVS), a not-for-profit membership association, links 28 social service agencies in the United States, Canada, and Israel that provide a wide range of educational, vocational, and rehabilitation services.

**WHAT WE DO:** Through our member agencies, individuals seeking to improve their lives gain access to a vast array of services such as career management, skills training, rehabilitation programs, and health services. Each year, the IAJVS family of agencies—with a combined budget of over \$395 million—serves more than 350,000 individuals from across the social strata, including persons with disabilities, dislocated workers, people changing careers, recent college graduates, welfare recipients, refugees, older workers and the elderly. Since its founding in 1939, the IAJVS network has assisted over 16 million individuals, from both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

**OUR MISSION:** The International Association of Jewish Vocational Services strengthens the capabilities and capacity of its member agencies to increase economic self-sufficiency, independence and build a productive work force of its constituent clients.

## SAVE THE DATES

2007 IAJVS Board of Directors Meeting  
and  
*Alfred P. Miller Executive Leadership Forum*  
The Biltmore Hotel, Phoenix  
November 3-5

2008 IAJVS Annual Conference  
Royal Sonesta Hotel, Boston  
June 1-3

For more information contact Rachel Petru at  
215.854.0233 or petrur@iajvs.org.