



# Camden County Workforce Development Board

Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce

Gregg T. DeBaere, Chair  
Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

## ABILITIES & LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 1, 2016

### ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		5-Apr	10-May	7-Jun	12-Jul	2-Aug	12-Sep	4-Oct	1-Nov
<b>Brahl, Ken CHAIR</b>	Ravitz Family Shoprites	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Abrams, Barbara	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ		X	X			X		X
Beach, Patti	Camden County One-Stop	X					X	X	X
Cleveland, Jennifer	Burlington County Title II Consortium								
Dann, Carol	Camden County College	X	X			X		X	
Hicks, Rosemari	RHC Consulting								
Kalitan, Marlyn	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X		X		X	X
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Young, Jennifer	Verizon	X						X	
Swartz, Jeffrey S., Exec. Director	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Stubblefield, Lelia	WDB	X	X	X					
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB			X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB						X		
Regina Pryor	LWD-Div. of Workforce Operations and Business Services				X		X	X	
Naroden, Eric	WDB Intern			X		X	X		

### ATTENDANCE – ABILITIES COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		12-Apr	10-May	14-Jun	12-Jul	9-Aug	12-Sep	11-Oct	1-Nov
<b>Maggio, Jim CHAIR</b>	TFG/Judge Group						X		X
Abrams, Barbara	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ	X	X	X		X	X		X
Cipolla, Joe	Jewish Employment and Vocational Services	X		X				X	X
Davis, Anthony	Mental Services of Southwestern New Jersey		X	X		X			X
Deitz, Jeffery	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	X		X	X		X		
Farber, Dan	Birght Lights USA						X		
Forman, Lois	Bancroft		X	X	X		X	X	X
Geoffrey, Taylor	NJ DOL DVOP								
Lombardo, Rick	Target Stores								X
Lope, Krista	NJ Division of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services		X			X			
Lucas, Angela	Hireability		X			X	X	X	X
Newman, Jason	NJ DOL DVOP	X							
Pryor, Regina	LWD Division of Workforce Operations and Business Svcs.						X	X	
Schwengel, Laura	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ						X		
Tumolillo, Terry	Voice Print								
Walton, Marcie	VOA								X
Waltz, Julie	ARC of Camden County		X						
Welder, Laura	Jewish Employment and Vocational Services								X
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB Executive Director	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Varallo Kathleen	WDB Administrative Assistant			X	X	X	X	X	X
Naroden, Eric	WDB Intern								
Stubblefield, Lelia	WDB Administrative Assistant	X	X	X					
Williams, Leslie	WDB Comptroller								

## WELCOME

Literacy Chair, Ken Brahl called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees and asked for roundtable introductions. He thanked all attendees for joining this meeting of the Abilities and Literacy Committees. He said the intended purpose of this joint meeting was to re-cap and review the results of the “Dispelling the Myths” event. He asked for input about the event including the things that went well as well as modifications to keep in mind for planning another similar event. He and Jim Maggio, Abilities Chair, thanked both committee’s members for their time and dedication to making the event a success.

## “DISPELLING THE MYTHS -THE NEW BUSINESS MODEL”

**Location:** Jewish Federation Annex Building, 1721 Springdale Road Cherry Hill, NJ 08003.

**Date/Time:** Friday, October 21, 2016, 8:30am-11:00am

8:30am – 9:00am Registration, Continental Breakfast, Exhibit Area.

Panelist and discussions about the benefits of hiring Individuals with Disabilities.

Kathleen Varallo, WDB Administrative Assistant reported that she sent the presentations forwarded by the guest speak, Peg Monaghan, SAP America Inc., to the committees. Lois Forman, Bancroft had asked for those presentation links to be forwarded out to the committee. She also forwarded an article sent to her by Michele McKeone [michele@digitability.com](mailto:michele@digitability.com) along with an invitation for committee members to attend the launch of her new company. DigitAbility is an online training school for Individuals with Disabilities that prepares them for the workforce. The launch will take place on Wed, November 30, 2016, 6:00 PM – 8:45 PM EST; LOCATION- We Work, 1010 N. Hancock Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123. Kathleen said that Michele sounded like a good candidate as a panelist or speaker for another event.

Ken said he met a person a few days after the event that said they were sorry to have missed this year’s program. She heard from others who did attend the “Dispelling the Myths event was great. Ken informed this person that the event was video-taped and would be made available, once completed, on You-Tube and the WDB Website. Ken posed the question to the committee about continuing to plan this same kind of event. Ken said the event was gaining a following. Barbara Abrams, Jewish Federation said that the employers she spoke to are beginning to accept the concept and to hear from employers that are sharing their initiatives to hire individuals with disabilities is a very strong message. She said it was the right message at the right time of year, during the month of October, which happens to be “Disability Awareness Month” Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director, WDB, stated that promoting inclusion in the workplace is part of the mission of the Camden County Workforce Development Board.

The committee discussed the positive outcomes and comments received at the event. Everyone agreed that the event should be repeated with the same focus along with some additional information being shared such as successes with hiring individuals with other barriers to employment such as being previously incarcerated. The committee also discussed that having a company leading the way with inclusion like SAP America Inc., was a big draw to the program and that bringing in recognized companies to speak would further boost

attendance by inquiring employers. The amount of employers attending this year's event nearly doubled over last year from approximately 12 to over 20. More employers responded to the invitation that were unable to attend due to changing schedules. Some of those employers asked for follow-up information. Ken said that getting the video footage of the event edited and shared with registrants would be a good way to promote the program and grow attendance to future events. The committee discussed the format of the video presentations. They agreed that shorter edited versions of the presentations would better serve the goals of marketing future events. Jeff suggested forming a sub-committee to meet with the video tech person for the purposes of finding out the cost and details associated with editing the presentation.

Ken re-caped the decision and discussion by the committees to look forward to making the event an annual program that would feature Autism inclusion in the workforce along with the additions of other kinds of barriers to employment being presented. Based on some of the comments received by attendees, the committee agreed that the event did meet its goal of breaking down or disbanding some myths such as companies that are thought to be hiring individuals on the Autism spectrum as a matter of conscience, not true ability. Panelists were able to point out the genuine assets these individuals provided to their workplace. The committee discussed another revelation as a result of the program which was a concept of a Buddy or Mentoring system put into place to support the success of the Autistic employee and the positive impact and retention effect it had on those persons serving this role.

Barbara Abrams suggested that a follow-up email be sent to all attendees of the event thanking them for attending and offering more information as it is shared by participating employers. Kathleen said that the volunteer from Bancroft would update the business list with the additional attendees and sent out a follow-up notice and note of appreciation for attending.

The committee discussed dates and program ideas for repeating the event on an annual basis. Barbara suggested keeping the third Friday in October open since it is Disabilities Awareness Month. It was decided to make Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 the date for the next event. Ken said that once the videos are edited, they could be sent to the employers on the 50 Plus business list. He encouraged everyone to continue to forward employer contacts to the WDB office to add to this list. Kathleen said there are currently 400 business contacts on that list. A "Save-the-Date" notice will be sent along with the video links. The committee agreed that the venue and continental breakfast were sufficient for the event. The next event will take place at the Jewish Federation Annex Building. The event set up worked well and will be repeated. It will be catered by the "Soups and Sweets" Culinary Training Program. It was suggested that a little more could be said about this program that provides culinary skills to individuals with disabilities during the event. All agreed to include a brief presentation in the program. A thank you note will be sent to all attendees. An event notice and video links will be sent to the invitation list of 400 plus employers. Thank you letters will also be mailed to the speaker and panelists as well as the event sponsors.

Ken suggested keeping the Facebook page updated with links to the video presentations that will be produced about the event. He said the committee should be sharing the posts when possible. Marlyn said she posted the event to her Facebook page. Kathleen asked about the protocol for posting pictures of the event to the Facebook page. The committee shared their own business policies regarding posts and agreed that signage will

be placed at the next event alerting attendees that the event will be photographed and posted to the Facebook page. Anyone having a problem with that should check at the registration desk.

The committee discussed the concept of having another panel discussion included in the program. All agreed that the panelists of this year's event were interesting and added different perspectives to the event. Jim suggested that the panelist be given a little more direction or talking points about format and agenda for the panel. Lois said a guideline would have helped her a panelist. It was suggested a member or Committee Chairs reach out to the panelists, by phone, in advance of the event to review the proposed agenda. Kathleen said she sent a flyer and press release to all the panelists but talking points would clear up any possible confusions about topics and the program. Possible candidates for next year's panel were discussed. Angel Lucas, Jewish Vocational Services agreed to speak more about the Schedule-A event at the next event. Jeff said that Project Search is just launching in the area and may provide a panelist candidate by the time the event takes place in October. This on-the-job training program for general hospital positions is being held at Kennedy Hospital. It was also suggested that a presentation for educators could be made about how to start an Autism to Work program or high school and employer partnerships.

All agreed that having name badges that identified employers was important. It was suggested that color coded name badges be given out at the registration desk. The exhibit tables were visited by attendees and should be included again as well as offered to the speaker/panelists.

The committee extended thanks to Barbara Abrams and the staff at the Jewish Federation. They also thanked the staff of the Workforce Development Board for the behind the scenes work that supported the event.

Ken suggested that a joint planning meeting be scheduled early in the year to begin plans for the October 2017 event. It was decided to schedule a joint meeting on Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Meeting Adjourned at 10:16am.

#### NEXT MEETING

The Literacy Committee will meet Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 8:30am and the Abilities Committee will meet Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am.

Submitted by

*Kathleen Varallo*

Administrative Assistant