

CENTER FOR DISABILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Possibilities in Education and Training

A quarterly publication of the Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa's University Center for Excellence on Disabilities at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1011

From Creativity to Coffee The Em and Jerri's Story

"What would you like for lunch," asked the friendly voice behind the counter. Then, recognizing that I am blind, she began reading the menu. Insightful under any circumstances, it's particularly impressive when you realize that the voice belongs to a woman who has worked the Em and Jerri's coffee shop counter for only two months after years of unemployment.

The "Em" of Em and Jerri's is Emilea Hillman, a vivacious 21-year-old entrepreneur who happens to have a disability. The "Jerri" is Jerri Reisner, Em's job coach and the coffee shop's manager.

"In the fall of 2008, a group began meeting to discuss employment options for people with disabilities in Independence," said Tami Fenner, Em's mother. "The group got smaller and smaller, until the only people remaining were Em's support team."

The team consists of Tami, Em's sister Ashlea and her husband, and Jerri, then a community trainer at Goodwill. Recognizing that the traditional service system would not allow Em to reach her potential, they began to brainstorm. Em needed something which would allow frequent contact with the public. Both coffee shops in Independence had closed. The idea to create Em and Jerri's was born.

Tami set her informal network in motion, contacting a friend who works for the Iowa Department of Human Services. Her friend referred her to Sheila Stoekel, an Iowa Workforce Development benefits planner. Sheila, in turn, put Tami in touch with the father of Poppin' Joe, another entrepreneur with a disability who sells kettle corn. Armed with the knowledge that her idea was viable, Tami approached Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, securing a small business development grant. With the purchase of a building, Em and Jerri's was born.

The team's enterprising spirit then kicked into high gear. Deciding on a 1950's motif, the team purchased and received donations of materials and furniture. Em and Jerri recovered chairs. Em attended barista training in Minneapolis, and with some minor modifications to the equipment, was "ready to go" for December's grand opening.

When I arrived, Em and Jerri's was a hub of activity. Between greeting customers, answering the phone, and supervising staff, Em found a few minutes to talk to me.

"I open the shop at 5:35," she beamed, proudly showing off her key. "I get right to work doing my favorite thing--make coffee!"

With the assistance of a fellow housing board member, Tami recently secured a \$22,500 USDA grant which will assist Em to cover payroll, rent and utilities. Grant funds also purchased woodworking tools and lumber, allowing Em to launch a satellite business, Emilea's Enterprises, which will market and sell handmade wood products.

Em and Jerri's is already giving back to the community. A section of the shop, called the Newsroom, is dedicated to the Independence Bulletin-Journal, which once occupied the premises. Prominently displayed is a copy of a page from a 1921 issue. On the reverse side, we see a 2009 article featuring Em and Jerri's. The Bulletin-Journal's editor, whose brother has Down syndrome, has drawn inspiration from Em's accomplishments. So, too, has the mother of a 14-year-old boy with autism who wants to be an Italian chef. "It's all about networking," says Tami with a smile.

This writer, too, has drawn inspiration from Em. He is reminded of Ed Roberts, the founder of the Independent Living movement, who was told by professionals that he could not be competitively employed due to the severity of his disability. When Em was born, her parents were told that she would never walk or talk and that she should be institutionalized. As a teenager, she was told that her disability was too severe for competitive employment. As the old song says, "Oh, look at me now!"

Em and Jerri's is open from 6 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday, and 7 AM to 2 PM on Saturday. It is located at 324 First Street East in Independence.

When Life Throws You a Curveball: Winter Listings . . . from the Disability Resource Library

The Center for Disabilities and Development **Disability Resource Library:**
A lending library and health information center for lowans

To order materials from the Disability Resource Library, call **1-800-272-7713**

Seeing the glass half full: a facilitator's guide for teaching families positive behavior management techniques / National Institute for People with Disabilities Network (YAI).

New York: YAI, [©2008]

This five-part training DVD with a CD workbook facilitates in-home behavior management techniques proven to be successful in working with children and transition-age youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities

DVD #5373

For the child: information on mental health and advocacy for resource parents / produced by Parents Action for Children.

[Los Angeles, CA]: Parents Action for Children, ©2007.

Resource parents are foster parents. It is estimated that 80% of kids in the child welfare system have an issue that requires the attention of a psychological specialist. This DVD gives you tips on classic signs of distress, when to seek help, and how to find a qualified clinician.

DVD #5328

Give me a break: help for exhausted parents of difficult children / featuring Nancy Thomas. Glenwood Springs, CO: Families by Design, ©1999.

A resource to help parents and professionals find and train effective babysitters and respite providers for temperamental children or for those with attachment disorder.

DVD #5332

Miya of the quiet strength: the lone survivor of the University of Iowa shooting / a film by Daniel Julien.

[Berkeley, CA]: Swift Productions, ©2008.

A documentary on the life of Miya Rodolfo-Sioson, the lone survivor of the Nov 1, 1991 University of Iowa campus shooting. Miya became a quadriplegic as a result of the event, but her disability never prevented her from advocating for others less fortunate than she. The film shows Miya's life as an activist, and her battle with breast cancer, which was diagnosed in May, 2007. Miya passed away on December 3, 2008.

DVD #5321

Dakota's pride: one father's search for the truth about Down Syndrome / by Girard Sagmiller.

Lee's Summit, MO: the Gifted Learning Project, ©2007.

The goals of this fact-finding documentary, inspired by young Dakota Sagmiller, are to: 1) Increase understanding of individuals with Down's syndrome; 2) Reduce underemployment for people with Down syndrome, and 3) Reduce post-depression for new parents of children with Down syndrome.

DVD #5208

Audism unveiled / Dawn Pictures: a Black Mountain Film.

[San Diego, CA]: DawnSign Press, ©2008.

Audism is discrimination against people who are deaf; it is alive and well in America today. This documentary depicts real life experiences of deaf people from various social, racial, and educational backgrounds showing how audism does lasting damage to the psyche and how a different kind of civil rights movement is evolving in the community.

DVD #5397

Entrepreneurship, self employment and disabilities / narrated by Cary Griffin.

[Missoula, MT]: Rural Institute on Disabilities, the University of Montana, ©2002.

Self-employment is an option for people with significant disabilities. This program is intended to energize viewers to explore the many opportunities that business enterprise holds for people facing unemployment due to disability.

DVD #5369

The Toolbox CD: agricultural tools, equipment, machinery and buildings for farmers and ranchers with physical disabilities / Breaking New Ground Resource Center.

West Lafayette, IN: the Center, Purdue University, [©2006]

A software directory that contains over 750 products that can help farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities. Under each product a description is given on the need, the solution(s), and the supplier's name and general contact information.

Education and Training Events

“What Works and Why?” – Brain Injury Association of Iowa Annual Conference

March 4-5, 2010

Sheraton West Des Moines, West Des Moines, IA

Join professionals from around the Midwest for the 18th annual "Best Practices in Brain Injury Service Delivery" Providers Conference. CEU's available. More information: <http://snipurl.com/biconference>

Making Play Accessible for Children with Disabilities

March 8-10, 2010

Chicago, IL

Designed for parents, educators, and other professionals working with children with disabilities, the conference will focus on disability awareness, integrating technology into the play session, and adapting toys for accessibility. To register, go to http://www.lekotech.org/services/educators/training_fam_play_spec.html or email domahen@lekotech.org

Customized Employment featuring Rob Hoffman

March 10, 2010, 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM

Governor's Office Building, Jefferson City, MO

The presenter will share strategies for structuring employment opportunities to meet the needs of employers while accommodating employees with disabilities. For more information, contact Christy Coslet, ccoslet@chs-mo.org; 888-826-4401 or visit www.apsemo.org

Mental Illness and Autism Spectrum Disorders in Children

April 1-2, 2010

Sheraton West Des Moines, West Des Moines, IA

The April 1 training will provide an overview of the most common childhood psychiatric conditions and look at real world behaviors children who experience these conditions may exhibit in the classroom, home and community. Entitled "Building Social Relationships in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders," the April 2 workshop will offer strategies for teaching social interaction skills to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. CEU's available. For more information, visit <http://www.spectrumtrainingsysteminc.com/westdesmoines.html>

The Pacific Rim International Forum and Conference on Persons with Disabilities

April 10-13, 2010

Honolulu, HI

It's not too late to escape the Midwest winter by planning to attend this exciting and engaging conference. The editor speaks from experience in saying that the many workshops, seminars, and networking opportunities all offered in a comfortable conference environment provide a once-in-a-lifetime learning experience. Even if you are not able to attend this year's conference, bookmark the website and plan to attend next year: www.pacrim.hawaii.edu

Disability Policy Seminar

April 12-14, 2010

Hyatt Regency, Washington, D.C.

This seminar is jointly hosted by six national disability advocacy organizations. After learning about critical issues such as health care reform, employment and education from top national experts, participants will join fellow advocates for a day of educating their members of Congress on Capitol Hill. For more information, visit www.disabilitypolicyseminar.org

National ADA Symposium

June 20-23, 2010

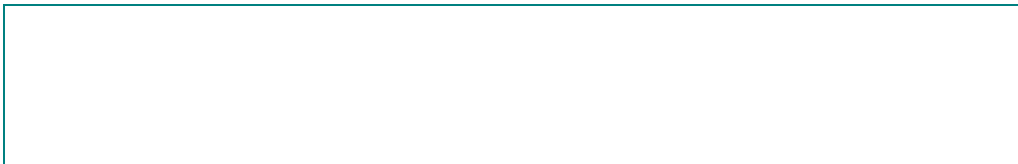
Hyatt Regency Colorado Convention Center

Denver, CO

This training symposium targets persons with disabilities, human service professionals, architects, state and local government officials, and human resource professionals. Workshops will cover such topics as Emergency preparedness, effective communication, advocacy, transportation, health care, and the complaint process. For more information, visit www.adasymposium.org

If we are to achieve a richer culture...we must weave one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.

Margaret Meade



How to get in touch with POSSIBILITIES:

Mail

Center for Disabilities and Development
100 Hawkins Dr. Rm. 376
Iowa City IA 52242-1011

E-mail

<mailto:michael-hoenig@uiowa.edu>

FAX 319-384-6241

Phone 319-353-6448

Disability Resource Library

PHONE: 800-272-7713

EMAIL: <mailto:disability-library@uiowa.edu>

WEBSITE: <http://www.healthcare.uiowa.edu/CDD>

click on "Disability Resource Library"

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