

jobpath JOURNEYS

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Job Path supports people with developmental disabilities in their efforts to make choices about their lives.

Welcome to Journeys

by Fredda Rosen

Three years ago Job Path spun off from the Vera Institute of Justice. We began our independent life with what Board Chairman Dan Cunningham called a “friend-raiser” party. Since that time we have been interested in widening the Job Path community. We do that at our annual benefits, but getting together once a year just isn’t enough for us to stay in touch.

Our new newsletter *Journeys* is our way of gathering all of our friends and supporters together in one “room” for a chat. The newsletter will document the paths we at Job Path are taking, and we cordially invite you to tell us what’s happening in your lives as well. We hope to conduct a two-way conversation. That’s why we are including my email address. We encourage you to pick up your computer so-to-speak and share your questions and suggestions, and give us feedback about our work. (Look for responses in the next edition.)

Through these pages, we encourage your participation. If you’re an employer, for example, tell us how your Job Path graduate is doing. If you had a winning bid at last year’s auction and purchased any goodies or personal services, please let us know what that experience was like. (Similarly, if your services were “purchased,” let us know what *that* was like!)

Although we always appreciate financial support, we hope you become involved with Job Path in other ways. Please check out our virtual bulletin boards: Think about work opportunities for the listed people, or maybe you know of appropriate apartments for people who are looking to establish their own homes. Do you know of community activities that might interest the people we support? We always like to play matchmaker — connecting people with other people in their neighborhoods.

Please join us in our continuing journey as Job Path approaches its 25th anniversary in 2003.

Fredda Rosen is Executive Director of Job Path. You can contact her at: frosen@jobpathnyc.org.

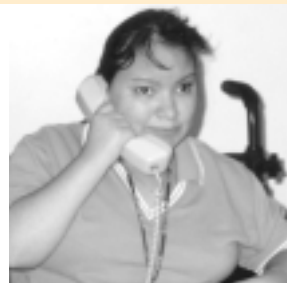
Spotlight on: Alex, receptionist

by Martha Suarez

“I just walk across the street to get to work. I answer phones: ‘Hello, Thomas Jefferson Recreation Center, how can I help you?’ I give information and answer questions. I was nervous the first day. Martha helped me learn how to use the phones and how to transfer calls. I’d like to stay here for a while.”

— Alex

Alex is a recent graduate of the Guild School at the Jewish Guild for the Blind. She attended Job Path’s mini-school program for upcoming graduates, which is supported by the Pinkerton Foundation. We helped Alex learn clerical work including answering the phone. We are hoping to get her adaptive equipment to help make her job easier. The phone can be raised up so she can see the light, and the keys can also be raised so she can feel the numbers. Alex is concerned with not being able to take messages. She knows how to



write, but we are trying to get her paper that’s raised to guide her, so she can feel the boundaries.

Alex is very friendly and has a strong desire to learn. That’s a big plus. She could be more independent. Her mom usually pushes her into the center, but I’ve told her: “Alex, you can wheel yourself in.”

We are in the process of expanding her schedule and exploring the possibility of Alex volunteering at the center’s after-school program, where she would do arts and craft activities with children. She may also do clerical work at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel National Museum of Catholic Art & History. In addition, we are trying to arrange a membership for her at the Asphalt Green Parks Department Recreation Center where they have a wheelchair accessible swimming pool.

Martha Suarez is a training consultant.

Meet Job Path Employee Sheila Kresch

I've witnessed an entire evolution since I started working here in 1990. When I first joined Job Path it was just concerned with employment, but we soon learned that people needed more than a job. This opened our eyes to the holistic approach we use now.

I've talked to hundreds of people, because I see *everyone* who is referred to us. Then I call and arrange for an intake interview. I'm the first person they meet, so it really is important to welcome them and make them feel comfortable. They are often nervous and don't know what to expect. Often they talk with tears in their eyes. For some parents, it's the first time anyone really listened to them. It's important for me to respect people for who they are.

Regardless of any disability they might have, people want what everybody else wants.

"I want to get married."
"I want to have a home."
"I want to have a car."
"I want to travel."
"I want to help my parents."
"I want to pay the bills."
"I want to take care of my child."
"I want to be responsible."
"I don't want to be bored."

Each and every person I've met is special. On payday, I see many participants. When I ask, "How are you doing?" you can see their faces light up. Payday means they have worth, are valuable.

I would tell the next person who has this position: Always keep cookies in the cookie jar and a box of Kleenex on the desk.

Sheila Kresch, Director of Intake, recently retired.

Meet Chairman of the Board, Daniel P. Cunningham

Board Chairman, Dan Cunningham was introduced to Job Path in 1998 by Fritz Schwarz, chair of the Board of Trustees of the Vera Institute of Justice, over lunch with Fredda Rosen. Dan was looking for a worthwhile organization to give his time to and knew that developmentally disabled people were, in his words, an "underserved population." Having a mildly handicapped son, he felt the meeting was "serendipity," and he has been involved with Job Path ever since.

Considered one of Wall Street's most senior corporate lawyers, Dan was formerly a partner of Cravath, Swain & Moore for 18 years. He was recently recruited to be the head of the New York office of Allen & Overy. Dan graduated from Harvard Law School where he was an editor of the *Harvard Law Review*.

Extremely active on the Board, he was an auctioneer at this year's auction/benefit, where he said "going, going, gone" when his wife was one of the winners of two tickets to the *Sports Illustrated* party, which takes place after the closing of the swimsuit issue. Working both sides of the gavel, Dan donated an "adventure weekend for two" in Connecticut where he spends weekends. This year's winner, from J. P. Morgan Chase, will hike an 18 mile section of the Appalachian trail on October 4th with Dan as his personal guide. (Dan can "practice" when he goes to Switzerland in late September to hike around the famous Matterhorn.)

Looking to Job Path's 25th anniversary and beyond, Dan would like Job Path to find a way to reach more high school students with developmental disabilities and start them on the Job Path journey earlier.

Described by other board members as "enthusiastic," "wholehearted," and "committed" he has all the perfect qualities for a chairman of the board.

Spotlight on: The Manhattan District Attorney's Office

by Emily Ellis

"Working with Job Path is one of the best decisions we have ever made. This venture has provided us with quality employees. It makes us all shine."

— Dayrell Taylor, Director of Operations

Job Path started in the DA's office about 10 years ago. When we recruit an internship site for work experience, we look for good places where people can learn skills for the workplace. Initially, the DA's office had reservations about whether we were the right fit. They had so many questions, I felt like we were turning ourselves into pretzel shapes. I wondered if they were going to *hire* people? Yet we felt there were real possibilities because we were struck with the commitment of Dayrell Taylor, then the assistant manager of operations.

The key is they held us accountable to follow up with support. Dayrell Taylor has a real commitment to quality.

His approach is, if something is affecting an employee's work performance, let's come up with solutions, let's come together and talk about it, when necessary let's find ways to accommodate their needs. The bottom line is: **"Let's make it work."**

It's been a very successful partnership. They have hired over 20 people for exceptional jobs which all pay over \$23,000 with full city benefits — from clerical positions to maintenance, delivery, mailroom — all over the map. It was an internship site that turned into an employer! Dayrell Taylor's position has been: if people are reliable, working really hard, why hire people from outside?

Sure there have been bumps along the way — tons of issues. We work through them. They are in it for the long haul.

Emily Ellis is Deputy Director of Job Path.



Clement is one of the participants in our new customized employment project. We are grateful to the Altman and Warner Foundations for supporting this project.

Spotlight on New Hire: Clement

by Annika Bengtsson

Clement is an artist. He does color drawings of action figures from Nordic and Greek Mythology. Initially we got to know Clement who recently graduated from a special education high school. We spent time with him, visited his community, did a home visit and met his family. We got a feeling for what kind of person Clement is, his hobbies, interests and skills.

Then we compiled a vocational profile in a two-hour meeting with everyone who supports Clement — including his parents and counselor. We went into detail about his skills and *his* requirements for a job. It was clear that his artistic skills matched his passion, and we worked to find the right fit. We made a list of potential employers and visited them in person. We went to Forbidden Planet, a comic book store, and marketed Clement and Job Path. Then we set up an interview for Clement with Patrick, the store manager.

We worked closely with Clement because he's not very strong at interviews. He has a problem maintaining eye contact, sitting still, and he has a tendency to speak very fast. The day before his interview, we had him do a mock interview. It was Clement's idea that we have a sign to let him know to slow down if he spoke too fast. Clement was very focused at the interview. I sat next to him, and I did have to signal him once to slow down by lowering my hand. But he was very composed and proud of himself. About a week later, he was offered the job of store assistant. He does everything from checking on stock for customers, organizing magazines, filing comics, putting price tags on merchandise, security, to

mopping and sweeping before the store opens. He started on July 15 and was given a one week trial period. I helped train him, but after a few days he asked if he could work by himself.

Every morning there is a list of tasks he needs to do. He is being treated just like everybody else. *Each* employee has a list of daily tasks. Everyone has a one week trial period.

Clement was offered a part time job at \$6 an hour, Monday-Friday because he wanted weekends off. The manager said, "It's unusual in retail to have weekends off. But for you, Clement, okay." They are very happy with Clement who fits right in with everyone else. When I spoke to Clement, who doesn't usually express his feelings, he said: "I feel like I'm part of the family."

We will continue offering Clement support as he settles into his job. (See the next issue for an update.)

Annika Bengtsson is Coordinator of Employment Services.

BULLETIN BOARD

- ▶ **Lamont and Rafael are looking for a two/three-bedroom wheelchair-accessible apartment in Upper Manhattan.**
- ▶ **Judith is looking for a two-bedroom apartment in the Bronx for herself and her child.**
- ▶ **Nina would like a three-bedroom apartment on the Upper West Side.**
- ▶ **Roommates Wanted: Live rent-free and earn \$100 per week. Need to be available 10 p.m. through 6 a.m., six nights a week. Contact: Dahlian Porter at 212.944.0564**

Good News

- ▶ Although more than 20 Job Path participants and graduates were working in the two buildings at the World Trade Center last September 11, everyone is safe and back at work. (Job Path graduate Soki was included in an article "One Year Later" in *The New York Times* on 9/11/02.)
- ▶ Support worker Clara Cabrera reports on Osvaldo who she has been working with for two years: "He has been making wonderful progress to become independent and realize his dreams. He now has a job and travels by public transportation by himself. Recently he was given his *own* key to the apartment he shares with his family on the Lower East Side. He loves to explore his neighborhood, meet friends, and play dominoes. The future will be great for him."
- ▶ Alfonsina graduated from the Manhattan Transition Center in June 2000, but it took a while for her to get her diploma because her name was spelled incorrectly. For several months, the two schools that were involved just kept pointing fingers at each other. Finally, Alfonsina was issued a diploma. This was definitely good news.
- ▶ We are pleased to report that Ann has just found a two-bedroom apartment in Bayside, Queens for her and her son. She expects to move in soon.

- ▶ Tranet Hymon reports that Pablo is now very enthusiastic about the computer class he was reluctant to take. He started on August 1 and attends the free classes twice a week in his Washington Heights neighborhood.
- ▶ Job Path has been approved by New York University to act as a training site for students receiving their Masters in Social Work. A student, who started right after Labor Day, is here 21 hours a week.

BULLETIN BOARD

- ▶ Herman has clerical skills he learned as an intern, and he is now looking for a job. He can collate, do mailings, file, and answer phones. He would also be a good internal messenger or stock person.
- ▶ Charles finished his internship in porter maintenance and knows how to use the buffer machine. He is looking for a porter position but does not want to travel during rush hours. He prefers to work in Upper Manhattan or the Bronx between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- ▶ Shawn has clerical skills and experience with data entry. She can work independently but needs a quiet environment.

NOTE: All participants whose stories or identifying information are included have agreed in writing to participate.

Get out your day planners and palm pilots!

Save Thursday, May 8, 2003, for our next benefit/auction.

jobpath

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