

# jobpath JOURNEYS

Volume 3, Issue 1 Spring 2004

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

## Our 25th Anniversary Honorees

*Job Path is celebrating its 25th year of supporting people with developmental disabilities. At this year's May 6th benefit/auction, we will be honoring a leading disability rights pioneer and Job Path's founder.*

### Bernard Carabello: "Up from Willowbrook"

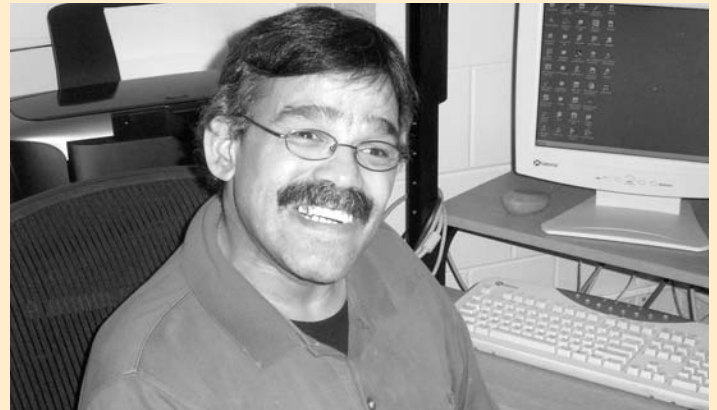
*"You don't program people, you program computers."*

Perceptive, articulate and funny, Bernard Carabello, now in his 50s, is a ground breaking disability rights activist and recognized national leader of the self-advocacy movement. But for the first 21 years of his life, his voice was ignored. Bernard, who has cerebral palsy, was misdiagnosed at age 3 and labeled retarded. He spent his next 18 years as a resident at the Willowbrook State School, which was more prison than school. Bernard, working with Geraldo Rivera (the TV reporter who "discovered" him in 1972), is often credited with exposing the conditions which led to the closing of Willowbrook.

Bernard observes April 30 as the red-letter date when, in 1975, the Willowbrook Consent Decree was signed, beginning a new era for people with disabilities. He founded the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State in 1986.

Bernard is intent on people being treated as people and not as their disability, which is why he is a long time supporter of the work of Job Path. He explains, "It's a unique organization because it recognizes that people with disabilities are people with their own individuality." By contrast, he says, Willowbrook was a place that saw its clients as "little more than paychecks."

Today, Bernard works out of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities' (OMRDD) regional office. That's when he is not jetting around the country as a consultant. He lives on the Upper West Side with his electronic support system, which helps him navigate the world. He also shyly admits to being something of an Internet shopaholic but won't divulge which web sites he's most addicted to. Let's just say, he often gets deliveries from Bed, Bath and Beyond.



▲ Disability rights self-advocacy movement leader Bernard Carabello

### Founder Emily Menlo Marks: The Origins of Job Path

Until the mid 1970's, most people with developmental disabilities either lived with their families or in large institutions. But when New York State implemented the 1975 Willowbrook Consent Decree, people in institutions began moving into community-based group homes, but they spent hours in segregated, facility-based day programs. These sheltered workshops did not prepare participants to gain jobs in the outside world.

The Vera Institute of Justice, a not-for-profit organization established in 1961, had been developing a set of strategies called supported work, designed to help people with little or no successful work history become employed. Emily Menlo Marks worked at Wildcat Services Corporation, created by Vera as its first supported work program. Wildcat helped ex-offenders and former substance abusers move into the workforce. With the support of Barbara B. Blum, then director of the Willowbrook Implementation for the State OMRDD, and Herb Sturz, then

Check out our new web site:

[www.jobpathnyc.org](http://www.jobpathnyc.org)

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## Job Path Employer: **Modell's**

You can set your watch by Modell's worker Larry Kinley. Since April 2003, every weekday he can be found from 7 to 11 AM at Modell's on 86th St in Manhattan. Wearing work boots, a Modell's jersey and jeans, Larry is the maintenance worker responsible for cleaning the bathrooms and break-rooms and hauling out garbage. He also spends about half an hour a day near the front of the store giving directions to customers.

As his supervisor, assistant manager, Cesar Abreu notes, "He interacts with staff, enjoys himself, and the job gets done. There are no complaints about him. He's cool." Cesar is considering giving Larry more responsibilities—like increasing the time he spends with customers.

Larry enjoys his weekends off and often goes to movies. He just saw *Scorpion King*. He lives with his grandmother just a few train stops away and is learning to cook. Show up at dinner time, and you might be invited to have spareribs and macaroni.

Niguel Murray, general manager of the 86th St. store, which currently employs 36 workers, considers himself a long time friend of Job Path. In his eight years at Modell's, and before that at Pushcart, he has always hired Job Path participants. He describes the relationship as "win/win" and recommends it to other employers. Would he be interested in more workers? Because Modell's business activity is seasonal (they are really busy on Father's Day, for example), it uses many part-timers. So, he answers, good naturedly, "Sure. Call me."



▲ Cesar Abreu and Larry Kinley



▲ Susan McHenry in front of Leon McCutcheon's painting, "Red Boy," which is for sale at this year's auction. (See article facing page.)

## Spotlight on: **Board Member Susan McHenry**

For more than 25 years, veteran magazine journalist Susan McHenry has been a key editor at pioneering magazines that have identified and captured untapped reader sensibilities among African-Americans and women. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, in the segregated South of the 1950s, she considers herself fortunate in her African-American family of

teachers and successful farmers who owned their own land. As she says, "My family shielded me from the worst and prepared me for the best."

A graduate of Harvard-Radcliffe, with a master's degree from Boston University, McHenry is now a contributing editor at *Essence* magazine. She also helped launch the five-year-old bimonthly *Black Issues Book Review*, where she is currently editorial director.

She brought her seasoned communication skills to Job Path's board in 2002. She was guided to Job Path through her network of activist friends that originated in the nine years (1978–1987) she spent as an editor at *Ms.* magazine. Although Job Path is her first formal connection to an organization that works with people with developmental disabilities, she vividly remembers her mother's older brother, Charles Holmes, who spent his life working the family farm outside of Memphis, Tennessee. "Uncle Charles was developmentally disabled, but Gran used to say he was just another one of God's children." Because her family had the farm, McHenry says, "they were able to provide Uncle Charles with his own 'supported work program and person-centered planning.'" He eventually married and lived with his wife on the homeplace (in his own house which he helped to build) until he died of a heart attack in his 40s.

So, McHenry says, she was primed by her own childhood experiences to really appreciate and identify with Job Path's participants and their families: "Job Path's mission is consistent with what I learned from Uncle Charles and Gran. It's a privilege to work on Job Path's communications strategies during this significant anniversary era."

## "Gotta Go to Mo's"

Almost as long as there has been a Job Path, there have been people we support working at a Modell's. The sporting goods chain has partnered with Job Path since 1978 and have hired our "graduates" as porters, stock workers, and shipping clerks to fill positions in Brooklyn, Harlem, the Bronx and Manhattan. Store managers, supervisors and employees have been supportive and taken on mentorship roles (not unlike Cesar and Niguel). They have also been willing to customize jobs when necessary to meet the needs of the individuals we support. Best of all they offer good salaries, flexible hours and benefits. Way to go, Mo!

## Support Worker Patrick Facey

Most days you can find Patrick Facey in the Bronx doing laundry, helping to make dinner, grocery shopping and balancing a checkbook. And then in the evenings he's in Brooklyn doing laundry, helping to make dinner, grocery shopping and, yes, balancing a checkbook. Does Patrick lead a double life? Sort of. Patrick has been a support worker at Job Path for three years. He spends his days assisting people with the ordinary events that make up most of our daily lives. So ordinary that Patrick gets to repeat them at night when he goes home to his own family in Brooklyn.

Since last February, Patrick has been assisting Robert Cardona who lives with a roommate in a two-bedroom apartment in the Bronx. Prior to that, Robert had lived most of his life with his grandmother. When she died, he was without family support and lived in a run-down building. He had no connections to his community, ate poorly and had to scrape together enough money for rent each month. Enter Job Path. With Patrick's assistance, Robert has been learning how to be less disorganized ("disorganized" is Robert's description of himself when he first met Patrick), how to do his laundry, budget money and how to cook. Together the two young men (both are 33) make healthy meals—no frying. Since they started working together, Robert has lost more than 20 pounds. Patrick enjoys supporting Robert so he can fulfill his dreams. As he says, "Robert has come a long way in meeting his goals. I tell him, 'Stay focused.' It's one step at a time." Right now Robert is dreaming about a path that will lead him to acting school and living by himself in an apartment in Brooklyn.



▲ Patrick Facey and Robert Cardona

▼ Leon McCutcheon and Deputy Director Caroline Schestag in front of the Job Path quilt.



*"I guess I was given a gift to go with the challenges."*

## Open House for Job Path's Quilt

On Thursday, November 20th, we had an open house to celebrate the official unfurling of the Job Path quilt, which was designed to help mark our upcoming 25th anniversary. More than 200 invited guests saw the quilt—which included a dozen squares representing individuals in our Job Path community—and listened as participants shared their stories. Each story had its own power. For example, Warren explained the images on his square, pointed to a colorful path and said, "And this is the road to happy." For Warren, who grew up sleeping on a couch in a relative's apartment, happy is living in his own apartment. And Keith, a bass guitarist, told us that he finds great happiness working "with my brother bass-aholics."

## Artist Leon McCutcheon

The square that Leon created for the quilt was used as the invitation to the open house. (It's the blue hand with a heart in the palm—the fingers hold a tie, guitar and house.) Leon thanked Job Path for helping him launch his career as an artist. What started out as a hobby ("a way to pass the time") has led to so much more. For Leon, success is selling his first drawing—and then, at his first group exhibit, quickly selling three more. Leon sold a total of six paintings last year and has already sold three this year. (See Leon's picture, "Red Boy," which will be available at the auction.)

Leon has been painting since age five. His father, a jazz performer, took Leon with him to clubs. As Leon says, "While he was playing, I was drawing." Self-taught, he's never taken a lesson. He originally came to Job Path to find employment, and he is hoping to secure a job again in food service. Caroline Schestag, deputy director of Job Path, visited his apartment and admired his art work. Then she connected him to Pam Rodgers of Pure Vision Arts who helped Leon realize just how good he is. He now admits, "I always thought I was kind of good."

Now, Leon spends his weekends and any free time during the week with his paints, pencils, crayons and chalks. Currently, he has an exciting assignment: he's creating an album cover design for a Mexican musician.

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director of Vera, Marks moved to Vera to test the supported work approach to help people with developmental disabilities move into the workplace.

With funding from the Ford Foundation, Job Path started as a pilot project with 10 individuals in 1978. Five people were placed as interns at Chemical Bank (now JP Morgan Chase), and five people were placed as interns at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. At the end of the ten-week pilot, five of those people were hired at their work sites. Based on the success of the pilot, Marks formulated the components of Job Path. She hired Emily Ellis in 1979 as Job Path's first job counselor and Fredda Rosen in 1980 to start Job Path's Staten Island office. Today, Emily Ellis is Job Path's Deputy Director of External Affairs and Fredda Rosen is Executive Director.

Job Path has since helped more than 2,000 people with developmental disabilities find work in hundreds of companies and in doing so, changed the way the various public and private systems thought about the potential for those labeled disabled. If there was a problem in learning a new task at a job, it wasn't considered to be the fault of the participant: Instead, staff would say, "Let's try another way." Marks is thrilled that Job Path is still going strong becoming an independent agency separate from Vera on July 1, 1999.

Marks, who has a certificate from Columbia University's School of Social Work and a masters degree from Columbia University's School of Business, left the Vera Institute in 1982 and spent the last 15 years as Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses of New York. Currently she is a consultant at Anthony Knerr & Associates where she provides executive coaching and strategic planning to leaders of nonprofit institutions.

▼ This is just one exquisitely furnished room of a six-room dollhouse that can be yours—if the BID is right!



### Auction Preview

Sports events • Broadway shows • Fine dining • Vacations • Beer tasting hosted by a world renowned brewmaster • much, much more.

This year there will be an art exhibit and sale featuring artists with developmental disabilities.

We would like to thank the sponsors committed to our benefit/auction as of March 23: Mutual of America, Geraldo Rivera, Verizon.

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

# Save the date Thursday, May 6th, 2004

and join us at our annual benefit/auction celebrating our 25th anniversary!

## jobpath

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Fredda Rosen, *Executive Director*

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