

STAR Conference Boosts Association

ACCSES New Jersey's inaugural two-day STAR Conference, held in September, was a resounding success. This was the first time we staged the conference as a two-day event. It was part of a milestone for the Association, as we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of our founding. Over 200 people attended, covering 25 of our member organizations. There were 21 exhibitors and 34 speakers and presenters.

In his welcoming remarks, President and CEO Mohsen Badran said: "We expanded the conference to two days and moved it here to Atlantic City on the belief that this enhancement is representative of the advances we have made as an Association. It gives us the opportunity to share our success

and to lay the groundwork for even greater achievements as we move forward. The challenges we face are daunting but we have overcome difficult circumstances before."

After the Tuesday morning welcome segment, keynote/motivational speaker Josh George, a Paralympic gold medal winner, electrified the audience with his "Maximize Your Potential" message. The Conference then featured a host of training sessions, awards ceremonies, networking opportunities and celebrations of our collective hard work to serve people with disabilities throughout the state of New Jersey.

Added to the photo below, some key moments from the Conference are highlighted on page 4.



Consumer award winners (from left) Kareem Lazarus, CarePlus; Lamar Adrian Vargas, Inspiritec; Rasheed Johnson, Career Opportunity Development; Vincent Sereni, The Arc of Mercer County; and Lenny Padilla, Center for Vocational Rehabilitation; flanked by ACCSES NJ President & CEO Mohsen Badran (left) and Chairperson Mark Boyd.

WIOA Issues Unresolved

The quest to revise regulations governing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and to eliminate guidance that was written in support of them has morphed into a long-term endeavor with no end in sight. The regulations and guidance are threatening the jobs of thousands of individuals with disabilities and severely limiting job choices for many others. ACCSES New Jersey is continuing its multi-faceted effort on this front, along with national ACCSES, the State Use Programs Association (SUPRA) and others.

The regulations and guidance have been

advanced by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), a unit of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). The regulations themselves impose significant obstacles on the capacity of people with disabilities to find meaningful jobs and remain employed. But the guidance that RSA attached to the regulations could be devastating. It says that jobs in the federal AbilityOne program and State Use programs cannot be considered as Competitive Integrated Employment and are therefore ineligible for federal funding.

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January 18, 2018

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MESSAGE

FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

By Mark Boyd

This final CAPITAL VIEW issue of 2017 gives me the opportunity to comment on the highlights of what has been a very eventful year for our Association, as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our inception.

The year began with the installation of our new CEO, Mohsen Badran, and ended with favorable results from a series of initiatives that he has launched. I expressed views on the initiatives in my previous column and Mohsen has reviewed them with you extensively in his Weekly Information Summaries.

One of the major happenings this year was the first-ever two-day ACCSES New Jersey STAR Conference in Atlantic City. The September event was a significant enhancement of our prior EXPO and ACCSES NJ Annual Membership meeting. It was gratifying to see over 200 people in attendance, including a solid majority of our member CRPs. You can read more about it in the article that starts on page 1.

My welcoming remarks to the Conference included some thoughts I would like to share with those of you who could not attend. Serving as ACCSES New Jersey Chairperson, while also heading one of the member-agencies, Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia, gives me a unique perspective on our mission. It enables me to fully appreciate how crucial we are to one another. That is a big part of why we held the conference: to celebrate our shared success and to help us prepare for the important challenges that lie ahead. The conference was designed to equip us with knowledge and the information that is essential to our ongoing success. We are already planning next year's event, which will be bigger and better.

We are maintaining healthy sales and job figures in our State Use Program while also working on a relatively new effort to develop the same kind of success in the commercial business sector. We encourage members interested in participating in this endeavor to attend the Business Development Commission meetings that are held immediately following all of our General Membership meetings.

One final thought: At its core, ACCSES New Jersey is focused on the dignity of a job, a paycheck and strong support services for individuals with disabilities. This is what we pursue with our member-agencies located throughout the state. I look forward to working with all of you on these goals in the year ahead.



Mark Boyd

**The Mission of ACCSES New Jersey is to
provide leadership and support to members
who advocate for and serve persons with
disabilities through community-based
programs located throughout New Jersey.**

MESSAGE

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Mohsen Badran

This is the first CAPITAL VIEW issue that features the new ACCSES New Jersey logo, which we began using at the STAR Conference in September. It is one of the initiatives I undertook this year to modernize our Association and to enhance communication with our family of member organizations and outside entities.

The STAR Conference itself was one of our biggest success stories in 2017. Chairperson Mark Boyd has commented on it in his column on the facing page and you can view some of the highlights on other pages of this issue. I extend my thanks to everyone who was involved in making this event so successful.

The election of Phil Murphy as New Jersey's next governor, along with many changes in the State Legislature, will bring us new challenges in 2018. Floyd Nesse and I met recently to begin developing a plan of action for the new year. We are confident we will be able to establish the same level of effective relationships that we enjoyed with previous administrations and legislatures. One new element we are adding for 2018 is an "ACCSES NJ Day at the State House," which will be held in late winter or early Spring. The event will be designed to give our organization a higher profile on the state government scene; enhance lines of communication with executive branch and legislative officials; and advance state support for job programs and services for

people with disabilities.

We continue to receive favorable comment on our new interactive website that was launched in September. I urge you to take advantage of its expanded capabilities and ease-of-use. The address is www.accsesnj.org.

In closing, I thank all you for your cooperation since I became President and CEO early this year. The enthusiasm with which you accepted me and the cooperation you have extended makes me feel as if I am a veteran member of our team. We have worked well together in this short time and made progress on several fronts. I am confident that, by pursuing our goals together, we will continue to make notable progress with our shared mission of providing employment, services and supports to people with disabilities. I extend my best wishes to you for a happy holiday season.



Mohsen Badran

WIOA

Continued from page 1

Approximately 7,000 jobs that either are currently employing people with disabilities or could be employing them but are going unfilled because of this overreach are at stake in New Jersey. The average wage for AbilityOne contracts in New Jersey is more than \$15.00 per hour, while the average wage for State Use jobs is more than \$12.00 an hour. (New Jersey's minimum wage is \$8.44 per hour.) Many of these jobs also come with benefits.

In response, the primary message that ACCSES NJ and our partners have been conveying is that both the guidance and the regulations are contrary to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act itself, the intent of which is to help individuals with disabilities find jobs and keep them. We have made that argument to RSA and have been focused on gaining support in Congress to press the RSA to eliminate the guidance and revise the regulations. National ACCSES is pursuing the same goals and monitored the following action:

- Earlier this year President Trump signed an Executive Order, "Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda," which established a Federal policy "to alleviate unnecessary regulatory burdens" on the American people, including regulations and guidance that may

be appropriate for repeal, replacement, or modification. The DOE's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is currently reviewing regulations and guidance in phases, which includes analyzing input submitted by the public. ACCSES will be closely watching all of OSERS' follow-up.

- ACCSES attended a Congressional briefing sponsored by the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD). The briefing focused on the WIOA Advisory Committee Report that recommended the regulations to which we are opposed. Much of the briefing centered on support for the regulations. ACCSES Vice President of Government Affairs Kate McSweeney reports that no panelist indicated that a variety of choices and options are critical to achieving self-determination, a central principle of federal disability policy for all Americans with disabilities and a core principle supported by ACCSES NJ. Nor was there a panelist to represent the interests of people working in center-based employment who would like to keep their jobs.

ACCSES NJ will continue working at the federal level to present our side of the issue to congressional representatives, the RSA and the DOE.

Photo Highlights From STAR Conference



Seated in front, four CEO's from our family of member organizations were part of the audience at the ACCSES NJ Annual Membership meeting held during the STAR Conference. Clockwise from left: Matthew Putts, Employment Horizons; Susan Perron, Abilities Solutions; Joe Brown, Hudson Community Enterprises; Peggy Englebert, The Arc of Camden County.



Keynote/motivational speaker Josh George



Assemblyman Anthony Bucco speaks after receiving the Government Champion Award.

Attention ACCSES NJ Members

We are pleased to announce a "members only" area on our website and online store. Take a minute and register at www.accsesnj.org and you will be able to take advantage of exclusive pricing on all our members' products and services, along with periodic special offers. You will also receive "member perks" updates when we initiate new functions to the website exclusively for our member agencies.

Each purchase you make demonstrates your support for your fellow ACCSES NJ members. You will truly be "Purchasing with a Purpose." Current products and services available include Toner Cartridges, Air Filters, Hand Soap, Gloves, and more. Please check the website for a

complete listing. In addition, we are working on offering Janitorial Services and any products or services you offer that you would like us to help you sell.

Our representatives will be calling all member organizations soon to learn more about your regular purchases so we can facilitate bulk purchase discounts that will save you money on something you are already buying and provide additional employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In the meantime, visit www.accsesnj.org and register. Every purchase you make supports our efforts to grow sales and improve services for all members.

Jobs Tied to Expanding Guard Site

ACCSES NJ participated in ribbon-cutting ceremonies at the New Jersey Army National Guard's Regional Training Institute in Sea Girt. We were invited to attend the festivities in recognition of the important role ACCSES member CVR (Center for Vocational Rehabilitation) played in getting the Billeting Facility prepared for the grand opening. CVR has performed janitorial and special services at Sea Girt for the past several years.

New Jersey Congressman Chris Smith joined Brig. Gen. Michael L.

Cunniff, Adjutant General of the New Jersey National Guard, and other dignitaries for the grand opening of the \$32 million, 86,000 square-foot Billeting Facility, which includes an administration and classroom building, a library, an auditorium and the student housing (billeting) building.

The National Guard unit has a high regard for CRV and reaffirmed its commitment to expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities when other new buildings on the site are completed.



ACCSES NJ President & CEO Mohsen Badran (center) is pictured at the ribbon cutting ceremonies at the New Jersey Army National Guard's Regional Training Institute in Sea Girt with the CVR executive staff (from left): Regional Manager William Bartok, President/CEO Russel Anderson, Maria DeSeno and William Ireland.

State Use Program Activity

As the year winds down, the New Jersey State Set-Aside program that ACCSES New Jersey manages (CNA Services) has been focusing on basics to attract new customers and create more jobs for people with disabilities.

A good part of the program's recent activity has been at government-related conferences. We exhibited at the NJ School Boards Association's annual Conference, NJ Counties Wardens Association, NJ Housing Authority, The Garden State Employment and Training Conference and, the biggest of them all, the State League of Municipalities. The conferences are crucial for educating the attendees about our mission.

The program has developed many customers directly related to these events. We recently received our first order for GoldShield 75 Sanitizer from the Ocean County Jail as a direct result of the Wardens Conference.

Municipal, school and county business is important for the program's continued growth. New janitorial projects were recently started for West Long Branch, the Jackson Municipal Authority and the North Hunterdon-Voorhees Regional School District. Camden Schools became a customer for HVAC filters.

While the job totals from these projects is moderate, Sales Manager Kevin Regan expects them to grow in the future.

Blood-Borne Pathogens Training

ACCSES NJ conducted a training session of clean procedures for blood-borne pathogens. The training is necessary to protect employees who can reasonably be anticipated to come into contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials as result of doing their job. The training outlines what workers must do to protect themselves from exposure to blood and or body fluids that have contaminated the work area. ACCSES NJ conducted the training at Career Opportunity Development Inc (CODI) in Atlantic County for supervisors and lead workers.



(From left) CODI staff members Rasheed Johnson (Work Leader), Cornel Jones (Ops Manager), Tracy Burnett (Job Coach) at blood-borne pathogens training.

Healthcare Center Honored



The Arc of Mercer Healthcare Center staff.

The Arc Mercer Healthcare Center's staff has been collectively selected the Arc of New Jersey's Healthcare Professional of the year for 2017. The Center opened in 2011 and is Greater Mercer's only

healthcare facility dedicated to treating people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The Arc Mercer's physicians provide primary health care to individuals with I/DD who have complex medical problems, and they coordinate care among multiple specialists. Their behavioral health team includes an in-house psychiatrist, behavioral health clinician and social worker. Because of the excellence of their health care services, The Arc Mercer has documented a more than 500% decline in hospital ER visits and unplanned hospitalizations.

Arc of New Jersey Executive Director Thomas Baffuto said: "Quality healthcare is essential to every person's life but it is even more important for people with developmental disabilities. It is critical that they receive comprehensive and compassionate care from health care professionals who are knowledgeable about the complex needs of people with developmental disabilities."

The Healthcare Center's services include primary health care, referral to specialists, care coordination, psychiatry and behavioral supports.

Abilities Forms Alliance

Abilities of Northwest Jersey, Inc., a not-for-profit organization that provides innovative supports and services, has affiliated with Allies, Inc. The arrangement allows both organizations to retain their corporate identities and maintain the current levels of service for the individuals they serve: people with disabilities.

"Abilities is now part of a family of affiliates that will further our mission, allow for the expansion of our services and, most importantly, provide a stronger voice as we continue to advocate for those we serve," said Abilities CEO Cynthia Wildermuth. "This is a historic moment in the evolution of Abilities, and we look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead."

The partnership is beneficial for both Allies and Abilities, providing opportunities for growth, advancement potential for employees, and additional resources useful for expanding both agencies' services in the future.

Abilities provides services and supports to more than 350 people daily who live in the northwest region of New Jersey. Allies is located in Hamilton, and provides services for individuals with disabilities statewide.



Pictured from left are Allies CEO Elise Tretola, Abilities of Northwest Jersey CEO Cynthia B. Wildermuth, and Abilities Board President Paul Sterbenz of Maser Consulting.

Goodwill Opens New Store



Goodwill of New York and North Jersey recently opened a flagship Goodwill store and donation center in North Plainfield. Pictured is Goodwill President and CEO Katy Gaul-Stigge (center) with dignitaries of Somerset County and North Plainfield.

Goodwill Medical Equipment

Goodwill Home Medical Equipment, operated by Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey & Philadelphia, is now open in its new location at 2901 Brunswick Pike in Lawrenceville, NJ. Located inside Route 1 Plaza, the store collects and sells refurbished home medical equipment and unopened medical supplies at affordable prices. The new site features a retail showroom and donation drop off area. It was previously located in Ewing, NJ.

According to Goodwill President & CEO Mark Boyd, Goodwill Home Medical Equipment is a natural extension of Goodwill's business line. "With healthcare reform taking hold and the need for durable medical supplies and equipment rising, Goodwill is pleased to provide a cost-effective alternative. We encourage area residents to give gently-used medical equipment a second life by donating them to Goodwill so that we

can get items into the hands of those who truly need them the most."

Typical items generously donated to Goodwill and available for sale at Goodwill Home Medical Equipment include wheelchairs, walkers, portable ramps, lift chairs, hospital beds, canes, crutches, and bath and shower items, just to name a few. Once fully sanitized, these goods are sold at drastically reduced costs—translating into huge savings on items that are often not fully covered by health insurance, Medicare or Medicaid.



17-month-old Abby had never been able to stand on her own without supports until her caseworker found her a stroller at Goodwill Home Medical Equipment.

Agency Launches Auto Training

The Arc Mercer Automotive Program has introduced automotive vocational training at Marrazo's Auto Service in Hamilton Township. The program has two job coaches and seven dedicated people with special needs working weekdays from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm.

The job coaches and consumer-participants are involved in every aspect of the Automotive Program, including light auto repair, auto detailing, final work inspection and safety check. The consumers share joint responsibility with the job coaches for all work performed and must sign-off on every vehicle they work on. They also assist with the administrative

work related to the program, copying work orders and making sure all billing is done properly. All work is supervised by a trained job coach.

Participants receive training in shop safety, personal safety, and vehicle safety. They have also learned how to check interior/exterior areas for damage, document mileage, check and refill fluid levels, check and refill tires to proper inflation levels, handle various work equipment, and fix common automotive problems.

The Arc Mercer Auto Program is currently open to 501(c) non-profit organizations in Mercer County with agency vehicles.



Hatem ElAttar (foreground) and Ahmad Austin get under the hood of a vehicle in the Arc Mercer automotive training program.

Heroes Volunteer at Abilities



A group of volunteers from Hackettstown Lowe's, known as Lowe's Heroes, lent their expertise and energy to Abilities of Northwest Jersey, painting and installing carpet and flooring at the agency's newly renovated Hackettstown Center, which is being expanded to accommodate additional service recipients. The renovation includes the construction of a sensory room, funded in part by the John & Margaret Post Foundation, designed to provide a stimulating setting for therapeutic and behavioral interventions.



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Newark

Center for Educational Advancement
Flemington

Center for
Vocational Rehabilitation
Eatontown

Community Quest
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East Brunswick

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Edison

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Vineland

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