

A Special Visit from Governor Markell

The Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Instructional Materials and Resource Center (IMRC) in Wilmington were honored to have special visitors on June 1, 2015. Governor Jack Markell, Department of Health & Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf and founder of Specialisterne Thorkil Sonne stopped by to see Brett Reilly at work and take a tour of the facility.

- Specialisterne (which translates from Danish as “The Specialists”) is a social business concept originally founded in Denmark in 2004. The objective is to create one million jobs worldwide for people on the autism spectrum, using an assessment and training model unique to their program. After reading about the Specialisterne initiative in the New York Times, Governor Jack Markell invited the Specialist People Foundation to meet local stakeholders in Delaware to discuss the opportunities for Specialisterne in Delaware. Governor Markell chaired the meetings and the result was a strong commitment among stakeholders to support the establishment of Specialisterne in Delaware as a hub for the Mid-Atlantic region and the US.



Brett Reilly is alumnus of the very first Specialisterne class in Delaware which launched in June 2013. Brett’s unique attention to detail and ability to learn quickly made him an excellent candidate for the program. Not long after completing his training, Brett became an employee of DVI and has been at the IMRC ever since. According to DVI Director Daniel Madrid, “Brett is an essential part of the services we provide to people who have visual impairments and to the community.” Brett is part of the IMRC production team that converts books and publications into Braille and other accessible formats. He also assists with maintaining the inventory of books and equipment which are housed within the IMRC library. This multi-step process requires a great deal of focus and attention to detail. Properly converting materials is essential to the education of students who are blind or severely visually impaired. Once converted, the accessible instructional materials are provided to ed-

ucators who work with students in kindergarten through twelfth grade students throughout the State of Delaware. “It’s an important role that requires a lot of computer work, attention to detail and highly-developed organizational skills.” states Madrid, “We are lucky to have someone as dedicated and talented as Brett.”

Director Madrid arranged for the Material Center visit so Governor Markell and Thorkil Sonne had the opportunity to witness first-hand how the partnership they created has benefited Brett who is just one of many Delawareans who have unique talents and a lot to offer employers.

Another Successful Employment Story



Lakeita Hannah moved back to Delaware from Georgia after obtaining her Bachelor’s Degree in Marketing. Upon her return, she ventured into a successful EBay sales business with a family member; however, after a couple of years she determined she had a need for more financial stability. In the fall of 2013, she sought the support of DVI for vocational rehabilitation services to help her secure a new position.

Lakeita was searching for a flexible position that provided the opportunity to work from home and had potential for growth.

The DVI vocational rehabilitation staff assisted Lakeita through career counseling, job preparation and development techniques such as resume revisions, interview coaching and technology assessment. After a comprehensive job search, she obtained a position at Capital One in the fall of 2014. The Customer Service position matched

Lakeita’s job skills perfectly and provided her the flexibility of performing most of her job at home. Since beginning her position, she has received a favorable ninety day review and two pay increases.

Lakeita continues to meet with DVI staff for ongoing counseling to assist with her career advancement goals. In addition, Capital One has a lot of excellent possibilities for career advancement that Lakeita has already begun to pursue. She quickly registered with their Career Consulting Program which provides career counseling and development services. She is excited to pursue a career in marketing and will possibly relocate to another state in the future. Someone who is as intelligent, resourceful and organized, like Lakeita is sure to have continued success.

DVI Pilots Youth Sports Days

The Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) ventured into a new summer activity this year and hosted “Sport Days” for youth who are blind or have visual impairments. Sponsored by DVI and Delaware Association of Blind Athletes, the three separate days were staffed by volunteers from DVI, Camp Abilities PA at WCU, Camp Abilities Brockport, NY and Camp Abilities Long Island.



During the events, participants had the opportunity to explore multiple types of sports using adapted equipment and were afforded the assistance of sighted staff providing hands-on instruction. Athletes experienced soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, disc golf, hiking, track/field, bocce, lacrosse and more. According to DVI Orientation/Mobility Specialist and event coordinator Maria Lepore-Stevens, “One athlete enjoyed golf so much, he wants to find a way to play regularly.”



In addition to sporting activities, volunteers helped the athletes make healthy, delicious lunches and hosted lunch and learn sessions about careers and job preparation. The events were so successful and well-received that DVI will be searching for funding to replicate next summer. DVI would also like to thank the partners and volunteers who made these events possible.

DVI in Need of Two Teachers of the Visually Impaired

The Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired is currently seeking two Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVI) in New Castle County. A TVI is responsible for providing vision related education services to students in a variety of settings, throughout New Castle County. Applicants must meet State of Delaware Department of Education licensure and certification requirements as Teacher, Special Education-Teacher of the Visually Impaired, at the time of application OR be able to achieve within the probationary period. Applicants must demonstrate Braille literacy or hold Certification in Braille. Find more information and application process by visiting the following website:

<http://jobexchange.aerbvi.org/150806.Teacher.DeDVI.DE.090715.htm>.

DELAWARE

DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Improving Perception

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Blind**

DVI Views

Division for the Visually Impaired

Delaware Health and Social Services

Daniel Madrid, Director

Elisha Jenkins, Deputy Director

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Youth Open Houses

DVI and the Parent Information Center (PIC) are hosting four Open Houses, throughout the state for children and young adults (birth thru 24) who are blind or have visual impairments. The events are designed to provide information regarding PIC resources, transition services, school services, orientation and mobility, navigating state systems, and more. All sessions are conveniently scheduled from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in local libraries so parents can easily attend a session and have some very important questions answered. For more information, please call DVI at (302) 255-9800.

Date	Location	Address
September 16, 2015	Wilmington Library	10 E. 10th St, Wilmington
September 23, 2015	Dover Library	35 E. Lockerman St, Dover
September 30, 2015	Georgetown Library	123 W. Pine St, Georgetown
October 7, 2015	Bear Library	101 Governor's Pl, Bear