Our Mission Statement

ABLE Industries, Inc. is committed to improving the lives of people with disabilities by creating opportunities to maximize their independence.

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Looking for your next great hire?

By Jerry Ormonde

Nearly 1 in 5 Americans have a disability according to the 2012 US Census. So it’s no small secret that people who have disabilities make up a sizeable part of our population. Yet how many people think of someone with a disability as an asset to society, or a valuable contributor to our community?

Fifty plus years ago, a small group of parents in Tulare thought just that. Even though their kids had to live with a disability, these parents felt they had value and could be productive members of the community. They came together with their children and gave them work. They called this enterprise Able Industries.

Today, Able Industries, Inc. is a multi-million dollar non-profit organization that provides training services to Tulare County residents with disabilities. By providing a multitude of services to businesses in the area, trainees are able to gain valuable job and life skills under the guidance of Able’s staff. Once job skills are established, Able trainees are eager and proud to make the transition to competitive employment.

What once started with basic work like building kits or assembling mailers has now grown exponentially into an impressive array of services. For example, within the walls of the Able facility, the agency now offers a full-service distribution services, certified document destruction and Secure Document Scanning; which turns your paper documents into digital, searchable computer files. Able’s R and D department recently obtained the equipment and initiative to manufacture toothpowder which is sold from coast to coast.

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Competitive Integrated Employment

By Melanie Ponce

Here at ABLE Industries, we strive to meet the best needs of the employer and the consumer. In the competitive integrated employment process, our goal is to place consumers out in the community; in a real world setting with integrated workers producing minimum wage. There are usually many steps that take place in this process. The first step after enrolling in the CIE program or being referred to us, is to get to know the wants and needs of the consumer. Since ABLE Industries is a person-centered organization, the CIE Departments want to get to know the consumer first, building a trust and rapport. The second step is for the Job Developer and Employment Specialist to work with the consumer, analyzing their strengths, weaknesses, goals, expectations, limits, wants, and employment desires through a personality test, self-assessment test, fundamental work skills test, and more.

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Great Hire (cont’d)

Able also provides off-site services to businesses within the community. Able offers commercial warehousing services, commercial grounds maintenance, parks clean-up, janitorial services, mobile catering and in-store retail services. All of these services are provided for our community by a skilled workforce that is happy to meet your every need. The ultimate goal of these training programs is to prepare workers with disabilities for competitive employment.

ABLE INDUSTRIES CAN SAVE YOU TIME AND MONEY, by providing Employment Services that benefit your company! Supported Employment is one program that Able Industries offers to assist employers in finding hardworking, conscientious, reliable and dedicated employees. Our Job Developer, Melanie Ponce and the C.I.E. team will work with you to ensure that your needs are identified and met. Able Industries can provide additional support during the initial training period at no cost to you. We provide a support system to you and the hired individual by providing a job coach who will help with training the individual until job duties and tasks are learned and mastered. Your company may also qualify for Work Opportunity tax credits or ON THE JOB Training dollars.

For information contact:
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Competitive (Cont’d)

ensures that the employment we are looking for will meet the needs of the client; we do not want to set them up for failure. The third step, is to research available job openings that meet a majority of the consumer’s wants and needs, whether it be for location, availability, or work environment.

After finding a potential employer, the Job Developer then reaches out to them, gaining the employer’s wants and needs as well. If their wants and needs match the consumer’s wants and needs for the most part, then it becomes a great match. After notifying the consumer of the potential job, we ask if they would like to accept the possible offer. If they agree and say yes, then we proceed with the process and move forward. Continuing, we then meet with the employer to go over positions available, their hiring process, set up interviews, introduce candidates, give them a CIE information packet, give them candidate applications and resumes, and then an interview and follow up usually takes place. After a consumer has been placed, we continue to work with the consumer with any additional services needed through job coaching. Job coaching is a one-on-one coaching service that takes place at the work site, or off-site, and includes help with work habits, work performance, interpersonal skills, and more.
Work Training Transition Year —3

By Wende Ayers, Executive Director

As we have completed the third year in transition to comply with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines, we have made some progress in areas, but there is still more we need to do. We have gotten our Competitive Integrated Employment staff trained and they are placing individuals in jobs in the community. We have given tours of Life Skills Learning Center to individuals who currently receive training at the Work Center but have no intention of working in the community. Every indication from CMS and Central Valley Regional Center continues to tell us that the Work Center will probably not be funded in the future. Federal Medicaid Waiver dollars cannot be used to support the work center and state general funds may not be spent on work centers either. Able Industries will have to decide how we can maintain the center operation as a self-supporting venture. This next year we will be looking at options with CPA and attorney consultants.

Life Skills Learning Center has applied for additional vehicles so that their services will be conducted in the community for most of each day. If vehicles are funded, then all groups will be out experiencing training in the public and not in a classroom. This would then be an integrated learning program and should be funded with CMS dollars.

This year as our group contracts with businesses expired, we have been renegotiating terms that will require hiring of our trained consumers. We are setting new contracts with new businesses that also have hiring the individuals when they complete training as a condition of the contract. Our efforts this next year are going to focus on educating business owners and managers about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. You may not be aware, but companies that have contracts with the federal government are mandated to have 7% of their workforce be individuals with disabilities. With this new federal requirement, opportunities to place our trainees in employment should be a bit easier.

Parents and group home providers are also going to be getting more training this next year. We have been trying for several years now to get parents and caregivers to get training on the many service changes we are adapting to. We have not been able to get them to come for any of these sessions. We have gone to CVRC and asked that they take the lead and put more effort into educating parents and group home operators of the CMS guideline changes. They and their businesses will be effected by the regulations.

We continue to move forward in an effort to come into compliance with CMS requirements. Able Industries hopes to be around for a long time, so how we provide training and where we provide training may have to go through some adjustments, but we have every intention of still providing training to people with disabilities. One of the better pieces of information we received this past year, was that CMS has extended the deadline for all states in the country to get their compliance plan approved and implemented. The original deadline was April 2019, but the deadline has been extended to April 2022.

Trainee Spotlight

By Janice McCarthy

Michael Webb has been training at Able Industries Inc. since September 2016. He is currently training at Best Buy Distribution Center. Michael has a wonderful work ethic and is an asset to our Community Work Crews. Michael moved from Santa Maria 2016 where he worked at a Pizza Parlor for several years. He has a very pleasant demeanor, a wonderful smile and is a great team player. He is also enrolled in our Competitive Integrated Employment Program and is working with our Job Developer to find employment in the community at minimum wage or better.
About Us

ABLE Industries, Inc., a non-profit organization, was established in 1962 in the City of Tulare by parents of individuals with disabilities who joined together to provide paid work and training opportunities for their adult children. The center opened with seven trainees. ABLE Industries, Inc. now has two facilities in Visalia serving approximately 300 individuals with disabilities annually.

ABLE Industries, Inc. offers a wide range of training programs that include life skills and vocational training. Business services include product assembly, personal hygiene kit packaging, shrink wrapping, Secure Document Scanning, Commercial Grounds Maintenance, Commercial Janitorial Services, Document Destruction, Mobile Catering and Retail Services.

Famous People with Disabilities

Hugo Weaving — Hugo Wallace Weaving (born 4 April 1960) is a film and stage actor, as well as a voice actor. Weaving was born in Nigeria. He spent his childhood in South Africa and then moved to the United Kingdom in his teens. He moved to Australia in 1976, where he attended Sydney's Knox Grammar School. Weaving later graduated from Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art in 1981. When he was 13 years old, Weaving was diagnosed with epilepsy. Due to the prospect of seizures, Weaving does not drive cars. He has never married and lives with his partner Katrina Greenwood.

Stephen Hopkins—(March 7, 1707 - July 13, 1785) - Stephen Hopkins was born in Scituate (then a part of Providence), Rhode Island. He attended the first Continental Congress in 1774, and was a party to the Declaration of Independence in 1776. He recorded his name with a trembling right hand, which he had to guide with his left. Hopkins had cerebral palsy, and was noted to have said, as he signed the Declaration, "My hand trembles, my heart does not."

Alan Alda—Alphonso Joseph D’Abruzzo (born January 28, 1936) is a five-time Emmy Award-winning, six-time Golden Globe-winning, Academy Award-nominated American actor. He is perhaps most famous for his role as Hawkeye Pierce in the television series M.A.S.H. Alda contracted polio, aged 7, during an epidemic. His parents administered a painful treatment, developed by Sister Elizabeth Kenny, where hot woolen blankets were applied to the limbs and the muscles were stretched by massage. This treatment, though brutal, allowed Alda to recover much movement.

Theodore Roosevelt—26th President of the U.S. (October 27, 1858 - January 6, 1919) Roosevelt was a soldier, historian, explorer, naturalist, author, and Governor of New York later becoming the President of the United States at the age of 42 years old. He was well known for having a vast range of objectives and achievements, all with an energetic determination and a hard "cowboy" persona. He was subject to epileptic seizures, his eyesight was bad, and he also suffered from asthma, but was still a man of courage and strength appreciated by many.

Sam Neill—Born 14 September 1947) Sam Neill is a New Zealand television and film actor most renowned for his role as Alan Grant in the hit movie Jurassic Park. Neil was eventually suppose to play a role in the movie Lord of the Rings by Peter Jackson but had to turn the offer down due to his immediate business with the Jurassic Park III movie. As a child, Sam had a stutter which he worked very hard to control. In a rare instance, you may still make this stutter out in some of his movies.