

My Work, My Choice My Co-Workers, My Friends

Indianhead Enterprises, Inc.

"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

-- Theodore Roosevelt

"We, as human beings, must be willing to accept people who are different from ourselves."

-- Barbara Jordan

"To be one, to be united is a great thing. But to respect the right to be different is maybe even greater."

-- Bono

"When I was four years old they tried to test my IQ, they showed me this picture of three oranges and a pear. They asked me which one is different and does not belong; they taught me different was wrong."

-- Ani DiFranco

"The individual is the central, rarest, most precious capital resource of our society."

-- Peter F. Drucker

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment."

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

These are all great quotes that need to make us start questioning what is going on in our Country and our State, especially if you know a loved one with a disability who works in a community rehabilitation program (CRP) or a sheltered workshop. You need to get involved and educate yourself as to what is happening. Let us try and put it in simple terms.

Services such as those offered by a CRP have been around for over 50 years. CRP's serve a great variety of individuals and the special needs they present. Some have been very easy to assist and some have been a huge challenge. Point being, CRP's do not serve ONE population or ONE individual. They provide services to many people with many different needs. You cannot lump them all into one category or one need. Currently there are many groups trying to do just that.

The government and several advocacy groups that at one time cared about the wellbeing of individuals with disabilities, are now trying to say individuals with disabilities are all the same and they should all be receiving the same services. This works great in a dream or in a theory, but it does not work in reality.

These groups have a plan. Their plan states that all individuals should be given an interest test, update their resume, and finally obtain a job in the community. They do not seem to care what job it is or how many hours per week it is. They do not seem to care if the individual is happy with the job they have now. They do not seem to care if the person has high self-esteem and is accepted by his or her co-workers. All they seem to care about is that everyone has the right to work in the community and is making the same wage as the person next to them. Again, sounds great in theory, but not in reality.

Theory states that there are employers out there willing to pay able-bodied individuals \$10.00 per

hour and individuals with disabilities, producing at one tenth of the standard norm, the same \$10.00 per hour. Reality says, Good Luck. There is nothing wrong with CRP's being able to pay individuals a piece rate for work completed. The reality of it is some individuals can produce 100 widgets per hour while some can only produce 5 widgets per hour. The major difference between CRP's and these misguided advocacy groups is that CRP's accept these individuals as valuable employees who contribute to meeting the customers' demands/needs. Individuals working at CRP's have a great deal of pride, acceptance and self-worth with their jobs. They are safe and have developed many friendships and relationships amongst their co-workers and supervisors.

So why then does our Government and certain advocacy groups want to take them out of such a successful environment and put them in something totally unfamiliar and unaccepting to them. Why would you want to leave your job in which you are comfortable, have friends, have acceptance, and go someplace where you do not speak the same language, eat lunch all by yourself and have no clue as to the job task at hand. If you would not be willing to do this, why are we forcing our loved ones into this?

Our service delivery system has lost total retrospect of what and why we are here. We are here to do what is best for those we serve. The last quote below is the one that truly states it clearly. We are no longer treating individuals with respect and love. Our system is letting them down, they are turning our loved ones into nothing more than just a number and not an individual with individual needs and wants. If you know a loved one with a disability, it is time to get informed and involved.

“The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children...those who are in the twilight of life, the aged...and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.”

-- Hubert H. Humphrey

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