

TIBH FOCUS

ON JOBS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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Dueshawnba “Adam” Ward Makes a New Life at LifeNet



Adam Ward enjoys his responsibilities and takes great pride in his work at LifeNet.

Nearly three years ago, Dueshawnba ‘Adam’ Ward was living at The Bridge, a Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA) assistance center for in-need citizens facing mental and physical challenges. Today, he is a team leader pursuing project management through LifeNet’s Fairweather vocational services department. Ward now works primarily on a janitorial maintenance contract at facilities such as McKinney’s City Hall.

“We work 10 or 11 locations each day,” Ward said. “We clean all of them, picking up trash, cleaning windows and vacuuming.”

Ward does not take his job lightly. In fact, he says it’s helped him tremendously—both personally and professionally.

“I’ve learned a lot about human nature,” Ward said. “This job has enriched me culturally. It’s not just janitorial work, it’s public accountability. I’m responsible for my people’s welfare and health.”

“Adam has flourished,” Joseph Garcia, vice president of LifeNet said.

LifeNet employs a range of people—from those with disabilities and others returning to work, to people making initial entries into the workforce or trying to successfully advance in a workplace. Overall,

LifeNet aims to help people become self-sufficient by providing services such as mental health care, substance abuse treatment, gainful employment and supportive housing.

“I like helping people, and I will help as long as they give me ammunition to help them,” said Cliff Gray Spicer, Ward’s supervisor. “Adam is reliable. If you tell him to do something, he does it. You can’t put a price on that.”

Under Gray Spicer’s watch, Ward and his team clean more than 300,000 square feet of office and mechanic shop space, a sign and signal shop, 43 restrooms, 26 smoking stations and surrounding grounds.

“This is the best crew I’ve got,” Gray Spicer said.

With his three children for motivation and a renewed sense of self-respect, Ward now lives in his own home.

“I get a sense of self-worth in being able to say, at the end of the day, I’ve helped someone else,” Ward said.

As a member of the Dallas chapter of the Project Management Institute, Ward next hopes to gain additional contracts for his team, ultimately employing and helping even more people like himself.

“It’s about teaching them to respect themselves.”

— Cliff Gray Spicer, Project Manager, LifeNet (Texas Department of Transportation - Mesquite)



Jobs for People with Disabilities



Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission Purchasing Manager, Ron Hunter, Encourages State Use Program Support



Pictured left to right, Domingo Lugo, Ron Hunter and Robert Scruggs are proud of TABC's purchasing partnership with TIBH.

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission's (TABC) purchasing manager, Ron Hunter, oversees the procurement of law enforcement products and services designed to meet officer and staff needs. Purchasing for not only Texas' alcoholic beverage industry's regulatory body, but also its 20th largest state agency, Hunter, Domingo Lugo and Robert Scruggs form a highly efficient and State Use program-supportive, three-man team.

While Hunter has coordinated TABC's purchasing for more than seven years, he previously purchased at various agencies for two decades. His current team buys items such as narcotic testing kits, spill kits, safety vests, nitrate gloves, targets and office supplies—including note pads, pens and paper.

"TIBH shows us all kinds of new products," said Hunter. "They try to keep us happy, and they don't make us feel like [our business is] taken for granted."

Besides the wide variety of products available, Hunter's team also appreciates the State Use Program's ease of use and quality products, services and temporary employment.

"There was a certain perception about using products and services from people with disabilities initially, but that's no longer a problem," said Lugo, TABC State Use coordinator and purchaser.

In fact, Hunter and his team have come to rely upon not only the timely delivery of goods, but also TIBH's customer service.

"If we have any issues, we know who to contact [at TIBH]," Hunter said. "They fix everything for us."

Hunter and his team estimate as much as 40 to 60 percent of the consumables their organization uses are purchased through TIBH. TABC also utilizes Goodwill's temporary employment services, including document destruction.

Although purchasing through the State Use Program is required, Hunter says his team is glad to participate, particularly after touring the Travis Association for the Blind—also known as the Austin Lighthouse—a community rehabilitation program in Austin.

"It was eye opening," Hunter said. "I'm just amazed that these people can prepare a product despite their limitations and make something fantastic."

"I thought, 'Wow, I have all of my faculties, and look what this guy can do,'" echoed Scruggs, TABC purchaser.

Supporting people with disabilities certainly factors into the team's purchasing efforts, and they aim to continue their partnership with TIBH.

"If we weren't required to use TIBH, we still would," Hunter said. "Where would these people with disabilities be without their jobs?"

TIBH IN THE COMMUNITY Donates Goods for Holidays

Over the holidays, TIBH employees donated canned goods and other non-perishable items to local families in need. The food drive was well received and, ultimately, several hundred pounds of food were delivered to Austin's Capital Area Food Bank in mid-December. Thank you to all who participated, and our thoughts remain with those in need.



TIBH employees were proud to donate goods to families in need during the holidays.

Travis Association for the Blind Welcomes Customers

On Nov. 9, 2011, the Comptroller of Public Accounts office held a training session and facility tour at the Travis Association for the Blind (TAB) for State Use coordinators and regional agency customers. Opening the doors to its 62,500-square-foot work space, TAB provided purchasers a first-hand look at its many products and, most significantly, allowed them the chance to see individuals with blindness at work.

In 1934, TAB, also known as the Austin Lighthouse, was established to employ people with visual impairments and assist them in attaining the skills needed for community employment. Product demand has grown since its onset, and the Lighthouse currently boasts not only its central facility, but also satellite distribution



Kimball Kuhn, TAB senior manager of manufacturing, explains to purchasers the work behind the products.

warehouses across Austin. This growth continues to help hundreds of visually impaired individuals gain independence.

Prior to the Lighthouse facility tour, Judy Ousley, CTP, Comptroller of Public Accounts, led training presentations by Texas Correctional Industries (TCI) and TIBH. TCI's Joseph Salazar expounded on products made in various Texas Department of Criminal Justice prisons. Ron Bartels, TIBH director of marketing, then reacquainted customers

with the State Use Program, detailing its history, products and services provided, the impact of program purchasing throughout the community, and TAB's role in Austin.

"Texans may be proud that purchasers have access to the TIBH contracts, and [this initiative] should be seen as a model for states that have not made it to this level in supporting such programs," Ousley said.

The tour solidified what the purchasers learned in the training session, and, for some, this was their first time to see the program in action. Groups paused throughout the massive facility, viewing in-process production of items including skin care products, binders and sewed goods.

"Tours add to the purchasers' knowledge and understanding of the abilities of State Use employees with blindness or other disabilities," said Bartels.

Of note were the ways in which TAB not only accommodates its workers' needs, but also how these accommodations make TAB's workers most effective. For example, scales used in skin care beeped when the correct amount of product in containers was reached, sewing machines featured Braille buttons and staff remained on hand to assist.

"I was impressed with the quality of the work and the enthusiasm and professionalism of the employees who train and work there," said Ousley.

Time and again, training and tour opportunities prove to be truly valuable experiences. Please look for upcoming events in your area.

A Message from President and CEO Fred M. Weber, Jr.

As we move into summer, TIBH is continuing to develop its 2012 initiatives.

TIBH is working toward an upgrade to the Integrated Financial Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System and is hoping to go live in

July. These improvements, including a computer-to-computer data exchange system, called electronic data interchange (EDI), will allow TIBH to digitally interact with EDI-compliant community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). Orders will soon be sent electronically from TIBH to the participating CRPs, enabling them to bypass keying in individual line items. This will help streamline and enhance efficient order processing and turn-around to customers. In the future, TIBH also hopes to expand EDI interaction for interested service CRPs, as well as on its website.

Following last year's successful schedule, we'll also be holding additional regional CRP compliance training and safety seminars. The month of March marked TIBH's first LIDS classes, and we're also scheduling meet-and-greets between CRPs, TIBH staff and the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities. Please check the calendar on our website for upcoming events.

We hope to see you all at these events. Thanks, again, for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Fred M. Weber, Jr.





Jobs for People with Disabilities

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Easter Seals Central Texas Celebrates with Thanksgiving Feast

On Nov. 22, 2011, TIBH representatives were pleased to attend the Easter Seals Central Texas annual Thanksgiving Feast. At the event, the nonprofit not only celebrated its hard-working Paid Job Training employees, but also left attendees looking forward to the upcoming holiday season.

“This was my fourth year to attend,” Abby Monk, TIBH regional marketing manager, said. “It was nice to again see everyone having a great time.”

At the feast, volunteers and Easter Seals staff gave thanks to employees and guests by personally serving an array of traditional holiday food. Employees were also recognized for various awards, including those for tenure at the organization. Danny Ross, the organization’s 2011 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominee, read a few of his “Eastersilian” themed poems, which largely describe his job’s meaning in his life.

“In contract services, I usually only get to see the crews’ on-site results, so I love meeting the people behind the work,” said Monk. “These hard-workers deserve the recognition.”

TIBH thanks Easter Seals Central Texas for the invitation to this meaningful event.



Danny Ross reads one of his “Eastersilian” inspired poems at the Thanksgiving Feast.

Important Dates

Friday, June 1
Pricing Subcommittee Meeting

Friday, June 29
Council and Certification Subcommittee Meetings

VIEW THE TIBH ONLINE CATALOG AT WWW.TIBH.ORG