

# TIBH FOCUS

ON JOBS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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## Kirk Sneed Gains Independence



*Kirk Sneed enjoys his position on the copy paper line.*

For more than a year, Kirk Sneed has been employed full time at the Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth—a non-profit organization that provides training, employment and rehabilitation to the visually impaired. Sneed, who himself has impaired vision, works on the copy paper line where he unloads pallets, places paper on a conveyer belt and labels it for boxing.

“It has given me the opportunity to work,” Sneed said. “People always use paper.”

In addition to his current position, Sneed is also cross-trained in the organization’s pen and energy pad departments. While his job at the Lighthouse is not his

first, it is the only one that has allowed Sneed the independence to acquire his own apartment, which is located about 10 minutes from work. He rides in with a friend each morning and uses the Mobility Impaired Transportation Service to return home.

“I like working here,” Sneed said. “I’m doing it mainly to be around people, mainly to have something to do.”

At this time, the Lighthouse’s direct labor force is comprised of 100 percent legally blind employees. Platt Allen, III, the organization’s president and chief executive officer, says the program benefits everyone involved. Current estimates reveal there are 37,000 people in Tarrant County who are blind or significantly visually impaired.

“Our mission is to serve people who are blind in Tarrant and surrounding counties,”

Allen said. “If our customers are happy with quality, price and delivery of our products, then we’re doing the right thing on the industrial side, and if people who are blind in Tarrant County are gaining independence, we’re doing the right thing on that side.”

Richard McManaway, Sneed’s supervisor, believes Sneed has not only gained independence, but also valuable skills. Among his peers, supervisor and Lighthouse staff, Sneed is known for his positive attitude, impeccable attendance record and willingness to do whatever is asked of him. McManaway calls him a standout employee.

“It’s hard to come by people who aren’t mad at the world and who don’t think the world owes them anything,” McManaway said. “It’s not a given to work here, it’s a privilege. I wish I had about 10 more of him.”

Through his work at the Lighthouse of the Blind of Fort Worth, Sneed has achieved significant personal and professional successes.

“[McManaway] called me in the office one day and told me I was one of the best workers he’s ever had,” Sneed recalled proudly.

With bolstered self confidence and a dedicated team, McManaway and the Fort Worth Lighthouse staff look forward to helping Sneed continue to reach new heights.

*“You can’t go wrong with Kirk.”*

Richard McManaway,  
Sneed’s Supervisor  
Lighthouse for the Blind  
of Fort Worth

# Texas Health and Human Services Commission Purchaser, Becky Martinka, Supports State Use Program



*Martinka is proud to help HHSC and people with disabilities through her purchasing position.*

With a career spanning 15 years, Becky Martinka currently holds the Purchaser V position on the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) services team. Martinka has worked for the organization, which maintains and improves the state's health and human services system, for three years.

Prior to working for HHSC, Martinka was not required to utilize the State Use Program. However, she now procures a variety of commodities through TIBH, including approximately 80 percent of the agency's janitorial needs, as well as shredding and temporary employment services, for locations across the state.

"For instance, in HHSC region eight, we have 49 offices contracted for janitorial services, and TIBH maintains 42 of those locations," she said.

This contract volume has led to an invaluable "give-give" relationship between Martinka and TIBH staff. If issues arise, she and regional managers ably negotiate fair market pricing, contract specifications and scope-of-work standards.

"When I began using the State Use Program, there were some concerns regarding the community rehabilitation programs' (CRPs) management of janitorial services," she said. "Relaying HHSC's concerns to TIBH, we worked together to provide a clear expectation of the services, as well as the recommended management of those contracts."

While contract management was an initial concern, Martinka has never questioned the desire of the CRPs, as well as their workers with disabilities, to ensure HHSC's happiness.

"Budgets are tight, but the CRPs try to keep the cost fair and provide excellent service," she said. "The consistent feedback on-site is that the employees with disabilities work above and beyond our agency's expectations."

Though HHSC requires procurement through the State Use Program if TIBH can provide the needed products or services, Martinka is glad to oblige.

"I'm a mom, and I think about how I would feel if my child had a disability," she said. "Anytime you can build confidence and independence for a person with a disability [through these contracts], you are not only helping fulfill the agency's need, but also an individual's need."

HHSC will continue to look to TIBH staff and CRPs to fulfill its service needs, an added benefit which, Martinka believes, is encouraging even more workers with disabilities in their pursuit of a higher standard of living.

"Helping someone become independent leaves me with a happy heart," she said.

## TIBH IN THE COMMUNITY Gold Stirrup Horse Show

During Rodeo Austin's 2012 season, TIBH helped the organization celebrate its 75th anniversary by donating award belt buckles to the Gold Stirrup Horse Show. This event not only showcases the talents of riders with disabilities, but also promotes therapeutic riding as a tool through which rehabilitation and recreation positively impact people with special needs. Competitors were able to compete in three levels of showmanship, which included English and Western equitation, as well as barrels and trail. TIBH is proud to support the Gold Stirrup Horse Show, and we look forward to future events.



*Participants celebrate their successful rides.*

# TIBH Continues Seminars in Summer Programs

For the second time in two years, TIBH sponsored a summer safety seminar series aimed at educating community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) on the newest industry trends. Facilitated by Troy Bonar, these training opportunities emphasized a central message—safety is not a privilege, it is a requirement.

Bonar, an award-winning author and leader in the safety, security and management industry, led the well-attended sessions. With 20 years of field experience, including leadership initiatives and business consulting, Bonar presented innovative ways of promoting personal responsibility and professionalism to build a sustainable business culture.

“You are a significant part of the most important group of professionals in the workplace,” Bonar said. “You are the key to helping save lives and prevent injuries.”

Bonar touched on a number of topics ranging from products to personal safety. The January 2014 rollout of global harmonizing, which will take precedence over the now-standard materials safety data sheet (MSDS), was a significant change to those CRPs which must use chemicals in the performance of their contracts.

“I heard people say that [Bonar’s] comments on global harmonizing alone made the seminar worth attending,” Ron Bartels, TIBH director of marketing, said.

Bonar also reiterated the importance of meeting with employees regularly, as well as keeping everyone up-to-date on the latest trends.

“Safety for any business is a necessity,” Bartels said. “We have to ensure that our companies provide safe working environments for their employees.”

Bonar motivated audience members, many of whom said that they were excited to update and revise their CRPs’ safety programs. Having spoken to organizations like the American Red Cross, as well as contracting with companies in order to observe and make procedural recommendations, there was no CRP big or small that could not benefit from his message.

TIBH thanks its attendees and looks forward to presenting future safety seminars.



*Troy Bonar makes his safety presentation at the Tyler seminar.*

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

When TIBH held its first Artie Lee Hinds Award banquet in 2003, we couldn’t have anticipated how well received the evening would be by our community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), customers



and others associated with the State Use program. As the event continues to grow, we look forward to this year’s fifth celebration of outstanding employees with disabilities. We also anticipate a great turnout for the 34th Annual Products and Services Expo, which takes place the morning after the dinner and is characterized by the same enthusiasm and support. We hope to see you all at these events.

TIBH is pleased to announce that its contract as central nonprofit agency with the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities (TCPPD) was renewed for another five-year term. We are happy to not only continue working with the TCPPD, but also to further promote our joint goal of providing employment options to people with disabilities.

As you read in this issue, TIBH has also moved forward in its efforts to provide CRPs additional educational opportunities. With award-winning trainer Troy Bonar on hand to answer industry-related safety questions, CRPs were given first-hand knowledge of the newest innovations and trends. Between noteworthy safety transitions and best-practice goals, we hope that all attending CRPs took something away from these seminars.

Thanks, again, for your support.

Sincerely,

Fred M. Weber, Jr.



Jobs for People with Disabilities

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## Important Dates

**5th Annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner**  
Wednesday, September 26, 6:00 p.m.  
Doubletree Hotel Austin  
6505 IH 35 North  
Austin, Texas 78752  
*Please contact TIBH to attend.*

**24th Annual TIBH Products & Services Expo**  
Thursday, September 27, 10:00 a.m.  
Doubletree Hotel Austin  
6505 IH 35 North  
Austin, Texas 78752  
*Please contact TIBH to attend.*

**Pricing Subcommittee Meeting**  
Friday, September 7, 10 a.m.  
Austin, Texas

**CRP Certification Subcommittee Meeting**  
Friday, September 21, 9 a.m.  
San Antonio, Texas

**TCPPD Open Meeting**  
Friday, September 21, 10 a.m.  
San Antonio, Texas

**Pricing Subcommittee Meeting**  
Friday, November 9, 10 a.m.  
Austin, Texas

**CRP Certification Subcommittee Meeting**  
Friday, December 7, 9 a.m.  
Austin, Texas

**TCPPD Open Meeting**  
Friday, December 7, 10 a.m.  
Austin, Texas

**VIEW THE TIBH ONLINE  
CATALOG AT [WWW.TIBH.ORG](http://WWW.TIBH.ORG)**