

Ernest Ramos: Positive attitudes create positive outcomes

In an instant, Ernest Ramos decided to change his life.

“I woke up one morning and said, ‘No more! I’m not going to live like this anymore.’”

After abruptly losing his sight in 2012, Ramos knew he had two options: He could either continue to lead an unfulfilled life, feeling sorry for his situation, or he could make the most of it.

Rather than viewing himself as a victim, Ramos found a way to overcome his disability—and in doing so, he found new meaning in life.

“I changed my goal of not only working, but also wanting to show people that we are ordinary people as well,” Ramos said. “We have overcome any fears that we may have initially had. It’s what you want to do after you see that challenge in front of you. You lose hope, but then you find it, and it’s so much more.”

A year and a half after losing his sight, Ramos was ready to get back into the workforce. In June of 2015, after a volunteer position led him to the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, Ramos was hired in the pencil department,

where he worked to assemble mechanical pencils and clam clips.

“A disability is a secondary trait, not a defining characteristic, and Ernest exemplifies that and the Lighthouse’s mission of empowerment,” Mike Gilliam, president of the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, said. “Everyone has a right to dignity, to support their families and to feel productive, and people who are blind or have other challenges to overcome are no exception.”

Since 1993, the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind has empowered those who are blind and visually impaired by providing rehabilitation services and opportunities for employment. Ramos is among 450 individuals currently employed there.

“A lot of people see this as just a job,” Gilliam said. “But it’s so much more than that. We make it a priority to take an interest in our team members’ personal and social lives as well by offering everything from sports teams to on-site Lion’s Club and choir.”

The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind has also been able to support other organizations with missions similar to its own because of the work of its employees. The Lighthouse operates multiple service centers under the AbilityOne Program, which partners with nonprofits to provide the federal government with products made by blind or visually impaired employees.



Ernest Ramos has developed new skills and regained his independence since he started working at the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind in 2015.

“We have helped many nonprofits because our employees see the importance of helping our community,” Gilliam said. “Their inspiration is what drives me to do more.”

With his employment, Ramos has been able to provide for himself and develop new workplace skills, which have helped him regain his independence.

“I try to be an example as a blind person, to show that we function and we can work,” Ramos said. “I want other people to know that there is hope, they just have to want to work, because it is out there for them.”

“You lose hope, but then you find it, and it’s so much more.”

—Ernest Ramos, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind

Tammy Glasscock: Finding additional purpose in purchasing



Tammy Glasscock, executive assistant to the Dallas-Fort Worth regional director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), values the opportunity to purchase products, services and temporary employment services through the WorksWonders program.

Tammy Glasscock, executive assistant to the Dallas-Fort Worth regional director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), often jokes that “all roads lead to Tammy.” In addition to her administrative duties, she serves as the backup purchaser of products and services for the organization and has trained many new budget analysts in her nearly two decades at TCEQ.

“I’ve been with the company for so long that I do a little bit of everything,” Glasscock said. “I like to say that I stay involved so I’m always ready to be more involved.”

TCEQ purchases products, services and temporary employment services from the *WorksWonders* Program through TIBH Industries, Inc. Glasscock estimates that 75 percent of the purchasing that TCEQ does is through the *WorksWonders* Program, including its office supplies, cleaning services and summer interns.

“If we ever think of something else we need, we can ask Ali (Eaton, TIBH Regional Marketing Manager), and she can usually get it for us,” Glasscock said. “It’s so nice to have one place to order everything instead of trying to manage multiple different orders.”

The ability to interact with the people who are providing the products that TCEQ uses is something Glasscock sees as a big perk of ordering through the *WorksWonders* Program.

“I’m so encouraged by meeting representatives from the businesses we order from, like the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind,” Glasscock said. “I love the personal approach that ordering through TIBH has. I like being able to interact with and put a face to the people who make the products we use every day.”

Although purchasing through the *WorksWonders* Program is mandatory, Glasscock is happy to be supporting TIBH’s mission to enhance the lives of Texans living with disabilities and says she would choose to order from them anyway.

“It’s a good program that helps people,” Glasscock said. “Plus, they keep finding things that we need!”

Part of TCEQ’s future purchasing plans include prescription safety glasses that the company’s employees had a hand in customizing.

Glasscock heard about the glasses on the radio and immediately emailed Eaton, her TIBH representative, about them. Eaton reached out to the business producing the glasses—as well as the TCEQ field workers who were in need of a better option for safety glasses—and gave their personal input about features that would be important to them.

“They really listened to us and essentially tailor-made the glasses for our employees,” Glasscock said. “None of that would have been possible if not for the quick work of TIBH on our behalf!”

Glasscock is grateful to be a part of the important work that TIBH and the *WorksWonders* Program does for disabled Texans every day.

“It’s absolutely mutually beneficial,” Glasscock said. “It brings a sense of purpose to those who might not otherwise get to feel that, and in exchange, we get great products and services for a fair price.”

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—Tammy Glasscock,
Texas Commission on
Environmental Quality

TIBH IN THE COMMUNITY

For the 25th consecutive year, TIBH contributed to the Austin Blackhawks' beep baseball team by sponsoring a lane during its annual Bowl-A-Thon in February.

Beep baseball allows people with visual impairments to compete against one another at a high level through the use of adaptive equipment and the implementation of modified rules. For over 30 years, the Blackhawks have been using the sport as a way to promote their mission of encouraging those who are visually impaired to pursue athletic adventures that might not otherwise be available to them.

The Bowl-A-Thon began as a way for the Blackhawks to fund travel to various beep baseball tournaments, but it has evolved into an event that aids the team in many of its community outreach initiatives, such as facilitating opportunities for visually impaired individuals in countries that do not prioritize the needs of blind and visually impaired citizens.

During the event, organizations such as TIBH contribute by sponsoring lanes that participants use to compete to win door prizes throughout the night.

TIBH is proud to support the Austin Blackhawks' mission of providing opportunities for blind and visually impaired individuals to access athletic endeavors.



Pictured left to right: Molly Fleming, Brenda Horwitz and Jamie Sibson, members of the Austin Blackhawks beep baseball team, attend the annual Bowl-A-Thon in February.

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



TIBH will begin hosting its annual Compliance and Training Seminars this spring. These seminars function as a way to inform Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) how to operate within the *WorksWonders* Program, as well as how to utilize the resources the Program has to offer them. The seminars will focus on a variety of topics, including:

- 1.) The requirements needed to participate in the *WorksWonders* Program
- 2.) Staff development and career counseling training
- 3.) How to contract with government agencies
- 4.) Procurement procedures and law

Please monitor the TIBH website, TIBH.org, to see when and where we will be offering a seminar near you.

This September, TIBH will hold its 11th annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner and 30th Annual Products and Services Expo. This year's events will celebrate TIBH's 40th anniversary of providing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across Texas. The dinner, which will take place on Wednesday, Sept. 19, will honor all of the hardworking *WorksWonders* Program employees and customers whose support has contributed to the program's success over the past 40 years. The following Thursday morning, Sept. 20, the 30th annual Products and Services Expo will feature the products, services and temporary employment services provided for purchase through the program. If you haven't had the opportunity to attend either of these events in the past, we invite you to participate this year to learn about the quality products and services provided through the *WorksWonders* Program, as well as meet the outstanding individuals who work with such dedication to provide them. You can visit our website or call our office for more information about either of these events. We look forward to seeing you.

Thank you, again, for your continued support of TIBH's mission to expand employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities!

Best Regards,

Fred M. Weber, Jr.



Jobs for People with Disabilities

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Upcoming Events

11th Annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

At 6:00 p.m.

Doubletree Hotel Austin

6505 IH-35

Austin, TX 78752

30th Annual Products and Services Expo

Thursday, September 20, 2018

At 10:00 a.m.

Doubletree Hotel Austin

6505 IH-35

Austin, TX 78752

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CATALOG AT WWW.TIBH.ORG**