

WorkQuest

FOCUS

on Jobs for People with Disabilities

WorkQuest Newsletter LIV

November 2021

Ronald Jordan of East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind honored with the 2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award



Ronald Jordan of East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind was recently recognized by WorkQuest with the 2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award. The award honors an outstanding Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) employee for leadership, dedicated service and commitment to excellence.

Having worked on multiple *Works Wonders* Program contracts, Jordan's experience makes him an integral member of the Lighthouse's team. He currently works on a manufacturing production contract, where he has a variety of duties and responsibilities, including palletizing, preparing packages and operating a packing machine that forms cartons.

Being a team player, Jordan is always ready to lend a helping hand when needed.

"Whenever a line is behind, Ron can just be walking by and he will stop to help out," Louretta Harris, Jordan's supervisor, said. "You look up and he is working through his break on another line to help them get caught up. He's just a great employee."

Growing up, Jordan was bullied because of his vision impairment, which put him in a very negative state of mind. However, his mentality began to change after he arrived at the Lighthouse and he opened up to Harris about the bullying he had experienced. She let him know that she was here to support him and help him get past it.

"From then on, he's just been a very hard worker. He's always trying to help, and he's always trying to figure out new ways to do things," Harris said.

Jordan is happy to work in such a supportive environment.

"That's how I wish everyone would have treated me when I was growing up," he said.

Jordan's determination, dependability and positive attitude are noticed by many across the company.

"Ron's work ethic is really inspirational," Heath Honzell, director of business operations at the Lighthouse, said. "He leads by example, he's very hard working, he's very dedicated to the mission and he's come a long way since he first started with the Lighthouse. I think that his progression, as he has learned new job roles and new functions across the production floor, is what allows other people to see Ron as an example and as a leader, and I think that that kind of work ethic is contagious."

Jordan's inspiring story was celebrated by the attendees at the 2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner, which also included his wife, Enedina.

Congratulations to Ronald Jordan and to all of the 2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees for their hard work, perseverance and enthusiasm.



Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner celebrates *WorksWonders* Program employees and customers

On Sept. 13, 2021, WorkQuest hosted its 14th annual Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner in Austin. Nearly 250 attendees gathered for the event at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel with various COVID-19 protocols in place. The event recognized supporters of the *WorksWonders* Program, which provides employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities.

During the award dinner, Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) representatives, award nominees and their families, representatives from the Texas Workforce Commission, WorkQuest board members and employees, and various other guests and attendees convened to celebrate the accomplishments of Texas employees with disabilities, as well as the dedication of WorkQuest and its CRP partners.

WorkQuest recognized several exceptional employees for their commitment and hard work. Among those honored were Brandon Freeman of On Our Own Services, who received the Most Motivational Employee Award; Connie Wooten of Rising Star Resource Development Corporation, who earned the Most Inspirational Employee Award; and Addy Leslie-Heaps of Goodwill Industries of North Central Texas, who was presented with the President's Award.

WorkQuest also presented this year's Spirit of State Use Award to Billy Killion, former chairman of WorkQuest's Board of Directors, for his impact and dedication to the *WorksWonders* Program throughout his career.

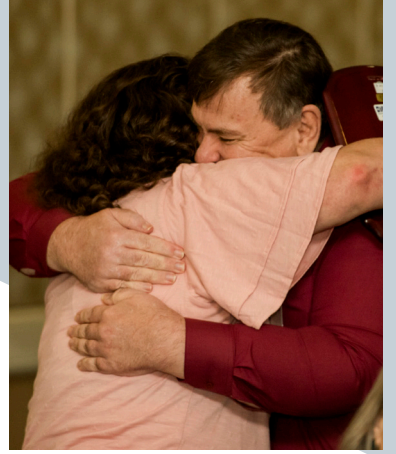
The evening's keynote speaker was Daryl Johnston, a former NFL player, who gave an inspiring speech on how the coaches and players of football teams, just like the leadership and employees of CRPs, have the power to positively impact their team by fostering a cooperative environment that encourages success. Johnston was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys in 1989 and was a key member of three Dallas Cowboys Super Bowl winning teams.

Following the keynote address, WorkQuest recognized the lists of state, city and county agencies and organizations that comprise the Top 3 customers who purchase products, services and temporary employment services through the *WorksWonders* Program. These agencies include the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, City of Houston, Office of the Attorney General, Texas Department of State Health Services and Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Throughout the event, attendees viewed videos showcasing the standout employees recognized during the program, including Freeman, Wooten and Leslie-Heaps, as well as the recipient of the pinnacle honor of the evening, the 2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award, which was presented to Ronald Jordan of the East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind. He was recognized for his willingness to learn, his hard-working mentality and his leadership at the Lighthouse, where he is admired for being an outstanding employee and co-worker.

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend this year's event. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

Scenes from the Awards Dinner



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



Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner and Products and Services Expo in person this year. These events highlight the benefits that the *WorksWonders* Program provides to the state of Texas and the individuals who are employed through the Program, as well as the customers who purchase their products, services and temporary employment services.

I would again like to thank all the community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that ensured their nominees were able to attend this year's event. We were so pleased to be able to celebrate these wonderful employees who continually thrive in their roles and inspire us with their diligence and perseverance every day—and to recognize the invaluable service they provide to the state of Texas.

Over the past year, WorkQuest has been closely monitoring the implementation of amendments to the rules outlined in Chapter 806 of the Texas Administrative Code, which governs the *WorksWonders* Program, in order to more effectively assist CRPs as they move to facilitate these new requirements and incorporate them into their reporting practices.

One important rule amendment implemented in January requires CRPs to ensure that employee determination of disability forms, which are mandatory for CRP inclusion within the Program, are completed by independent, non-CRP individuals, such as a medical professional, vocational rehabilitation professional, local education agency, social security administrator or another individual who has demonstrated the qualifications necessary to make such determinations.

Also, the initial phase of *WorksWonders* Program product quality testing, which consisted of testing all existing products to ensure they meet the formal state specifications developed by—or commercial specifications approved by—the Comptroller of Public Accounts, has been completed and has now entered its second phase. Currently, that testing is being utilized to ensure that all products being submitted for review and inclusion for sale under the Program meet those requirements as well.

The past year and a half has presented many challenges to individuals and organizations across our state and country. We feel very privileged to work with partners who are just as passionate about WorkQuest's mission as we are.

On behalf of everyone at WorkQuest, thank you for your continued support of the *WorksWonders* Program.

2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award Nominees

1. Arthur Arellano, Border TM Industries, Inc., dba Xceed Resources
2. Celina Carrillo, Professional Contract Services, Inc.
3. Ferdinand Collins, David & Ivory Ministries
4. Preston Daniel, Daniel Pest Control & Professional Services
5. Charles (Chuck) Dennison, Center for Recovery and Wellness Resources
6. Cordelia Diggins, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
7. Ashley Franks, Austin Lighthouse for the Blind
8. Brandon Freeman, On Our Own Services
9. Alexandria Romero Gonzalez, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind
10. Vontrez Grayson, Goodwill Commercial Services
11. Inga Hall, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
12. Bobby Hickman, Easter Seals Central Texas
13. Luis Hinijosa, G&H Equitas Foundation
14. Lacy Holleman, Center for Life Resources/Janie Clements Industries
15. Kevin Horrigan, New Hope Academy of Fort Worth
16. Shaun Houk, Amplify
17. David Howell, Goodwill of Central Texas
18. Jennifer Huerta, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
19. Brandon Jackson, Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center
20. Howard Jeffrey, Lending Helping Hands to Others, Inc.
21. Ronald Jordan, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
22. Mark Kestler, Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind
23. Gregory Land, Endeavors Unlimited
24. Aldalynn (Addy) Leslie-Heaps, Goodwill Industries of North Central Texas
25. James Lilly, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
26. Elize Lopez, Marian Moss Enterprises
27. Jennifer Meyers, Second Chances Starting Over Again
28. Jose Ordaz, Border TM Industries, Inc., dba Xceed Resources
29. Gerardo Orozco, Goodwill Services, Inc.
30. Regina Patina, Enterprise Professional Services, Inc.
31. Mauro Ramirez, Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
32. Joe Samaro, Peak Performers
33. Patricia Stroope, Goodwill Industries of Northeast Texas
34. Bobby Thompkins, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
35. Jonathan Teague, WorkQuest – Central Store
36. Jessie Tran, Envision - Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind
37. Alberto Valdez, World Technical Services
38. Edmundo Vargas, Relief Enterprise of Texas, Inc.
39. Veronica Vazquez, E.Q.U.I.P. Enterprises, Inc.
40. Ricardo Wade, The Lighthouse of Houston
41. Doug Wheatley, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
42. Jay Wilkerson, Aldersgate Enrichment Center
43. Duree Etta Wilkinson, Goodwill of Central Texas
44. Terence Woollis, Work Services Corporation
45. Connie Wooten, Rising Star Resource Development Corporation
46. Daniel Yebra, Camino Real Community Services

WorkQuest hosts 33rd annual Products and Services Expo



Nearly 300 people attended WorkQuest's 33rd annual Products and Services Expo on Sept. 14. The Expo brought together Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) representatives and the customers who purchase products, services and temporary employment services through the *WorkWonders* Program, which helps Texans with disabilities find meaningful employment.

At the Expo, CRPs exhibited their products and services while making connections with current and potential purchasers.

"This is the one time of the year when I get to showcase my products for all of the state agencies," Vickie Sanders, sales and marketing manager at the West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind, said. "I love that they get to see the products in person, in addition to viewing them through a website or a catalog, because you get to touch and feel the products, as well as take some samples with you."

While some CRPs have been attending the Expo for several decades, others were participating for the very first time, and they welcomed the chance to meet with purchasers from across the state.

"This is my first year participating in the Expo, and I am excited to have the opportunity to get our name out there," Marcus Fagan, plant manager at Marian Moss Enterprises, said.

The Expo also gave purchasers the opportunity to learn more about the products that are being offered through the *WorksWonders* Program and how they can benefit their companies.

"We got to see a new disinfectant spray that kills the COVID-19 virus and protects cleaned surfaces for 24 hours," Eli Puentes, logistics coordinator at the Texas Department of State Health Services, said. "This is such an essential product for us since we deal with a lot of walk-in customers, so this product could be very helpful for our clerks and anyone who walks through our doors."

After having virtual meetings for more than a year due to COVID-19, many attendees were eager to see each other face to face, as well as have the opportunity to interact with one another. This allowed CRPs to network with purchasers, which can lead to new business, and it gave purchasers the opportunity to meet the people with whom they have been virtually interacting.

"It is so fun to get to meet all of our WorkQuest contacts at this event, and it is great to see and meet our customers in person," Ruth Davis, director of commercial services for Goodwill Industries of East Texas, said. "It feels so nice to put faces and names together and to not just be email addresses on a screen."

"People get the opportunity to see and touch our products, and they also get to see the great things that people with disabilities can do," Patti Archer, head of the State Use Department at the Beacon Lighthouse, said. "They can get our information, which they can take back to their agency and hopefully decide to do business with us."

Exhibitors who attended:

- Austin Lighthouse for the Blind
- Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind
- Envision - Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind
- East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Enterprise Professional Services, Inc.
- Goodwill Industries Central Texas
- Goodwill Industries of East Texas
- Marian Moss Enterprises
- New Hope Academy of Fort Worth
- Peak Performers
- Professional Contract Services, Inc.
- Relief Enterprise of Texas
- South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Texas Correctional Industries
- West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- WorkQuest - Central Store

Products included:

- Office and school supplies
- Furniture items
- Food supplies
- Janitorial supplies
- Outdoor clothing supplies
- Safety supplies

Services included:

- Landscape maintenance
- Janitorial maintenance
- Grounds maintenance
- Document destruction
- Litter pick-up
- Day Porter services

Temporary services included:

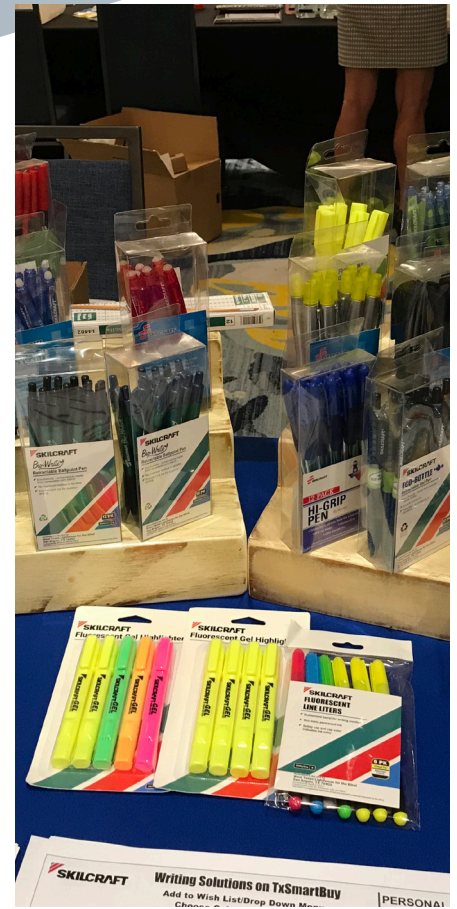
- Accounting and clerical support
- IT Staffing
- Data entry services



Scenes from the Expo

“This program helps offer jobs to people with disabilities, which in turn really helps out the entire community.”

Ester Mata – Staff Services Officer, Texas Department of State Health Services

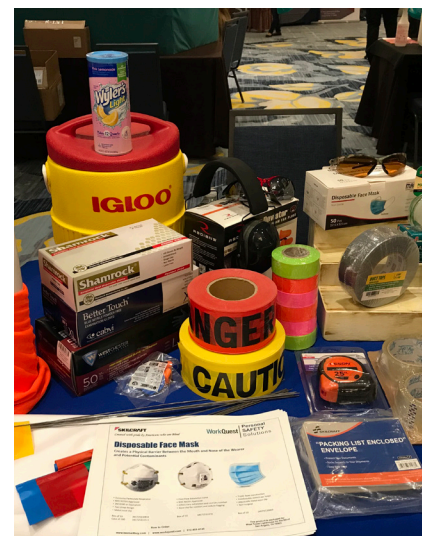
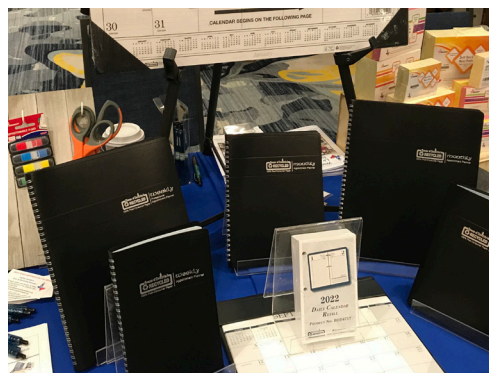


“WorkQuest is a great partner. We look forward to this event every single year, and I am so glad we had the opportunity to be in person this year.”

Vickie Sanders – Sales and Marketing Manager, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind

“This event really gives us the opportunity to meet customers from smaller offices around the state of Texas who might have been out of reach if it weren’t for this expo.”

John Moore – Director of Business Development for State Use Program, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



“This event keeps us up to date on the new things that are coming out. Because we are CRPs and we are working with people with disabilities, a lot of them are coming up with new and innovative ways of doing things, and it is really impressive.”

Ronda Houston - Business Development and Contract Administrator, Relief Enterprise of Texas



“WorkQuest serves an awesome purpose, and this event brings together a diverse group of vendors to give purchasers the opportunity to purchase from organizations that are inclusive, exhibit integrity and truly make a difference in their communities.”

Kimberly Bradford-Brown – Deputy Chief of Staff, Texas Workforce Commission

2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award Nominees



Arthur Arellano, Border TM Industries, Inc., dba Xceed Resources



Celina Carrillo, Professional Contract Services, Inc.



Ashley Franks, Austin Lighthouse for the Blind



Brandon Freeman, On Our Own Services



Vontrez Grayson, Goodwill Commercial Services



Kevin Horrigan, New Hope Academy of Fort Worth

2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors vice-chairman; Daryl Johnston, keynote speaker and former National Football League player; and Edward Serna, executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission.



Shaun Houk, Amplify



David Howell, Goodwill of Central Texas



Jennifer Huerta, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



Ronald Jordan, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



Mark Kestler, Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind



Aldalynn (Addy) Leslie-Heaps, Goodwill Industries of North Central Texas

2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors vice-chairman; Daryl Johnston, keynote speaker and former National Football League player; and Edward Serna, executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission.



Elize Lopez, Marian Moss Enterprises



Jose Ordaz, Border TM Industries, Inc., dba Xceed Resources



Gerardo Orozco, Goodwill Services, Inc



Regina Patina, Enterprise Professional Services, Inc.



Joe Samaro, Peak Performers



Jessie Tran, Envision - Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind

2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors vice-chairman; Daryl Johnston, keynote speaker and former National Football League player; and Edward Serna, executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission.



Edmundo Vargas, Relief Enterprise of Texas, Inc.



Doug Wheatley, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



Jay Wilkerson, Aldersgate Enrichment Center



Duree Etta Wilkinson, Goodwill of Central Texas



Terence Woollis, Work Services Corporation



Connie Wooten, Rising Star Resource Development Corporation

2021 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors vice-chairman; Daryl Johnston, keynote speaker and former National Football League player; and Edward Serna, executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission.

WorkQuest

The right solution.

1011 East 53 ½ Street
Austin, Texas 78751

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Austin, TX
Permit No. 703

1011 East 53 ½ Street | Austin, Texas 78751 | P: 512-451-8145 | F: 512-451-0824 | WorkQuest.com

WorkQuest wishes you a joyful holiday season and a happy New Year.



[View the WorkQuest catalog at WorkQuest.com](http://WorkQuest.com)