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Real Work Has Value to All

By Cathy Feemster

Originally printed in the *East Wichita News*.
Featuring our very own, Jason Jewett

Happiness does not come from doing easy work but from the afterglow of satisfaction that comes after the achievement of a difficult task that demanded our best. Theodore Isaac Rubin.

Some of you readers and advertisers may have noticed that there is a new delivery person for *East Wichita News* news racks. His name is Jason and he's a student at Heartspring, a Wichita school for speech and hearing impaired students.

Jason is part of a program that is giving him and other teens a chance at learning work skills in a volunteer position. This is not easy work for Jason as he has Autism (and Down syndrome) and he has a fear of the van he has to ride in. But this is job he's proud of because it is real work, according to John Santonil, employment training coordinator at Heartspring.

Santonil contacted *East Wichita News* a few months ago, offering to have his students deliver papers. We were thrilled with the offer, because the job was important, but it was also time-consuming. Now, Jason is delivering about half of our 1,200 rack papers each month. The bulk of the paper's 27,000 circulation are delivered by mail.

The Heartspring employment training program has seven students currently, according to Santonil. "It seems little to some, but the growth our students attain is huge," he said. "It reinforces the skills we teach."



Sensory Friendly Movie

Join us for “*The Lego Movie*” on Saturday, March 8, 2014 at 10:00 AM. This “sound down/lights up” movie is hosted by the Starplex Theater in Normal. The Starplex offers free child admission with one \$6 adult ticket purchase.

Surfing the Web

This website features tax strategies for parents of children with special needs. This site was updated for Obamacare. You will see the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), has some significant implications for special needs families. www.tacanow.org/family-resources/tax-strategies-for-parents-of-kids-with-special-needs

Mom's Night Out

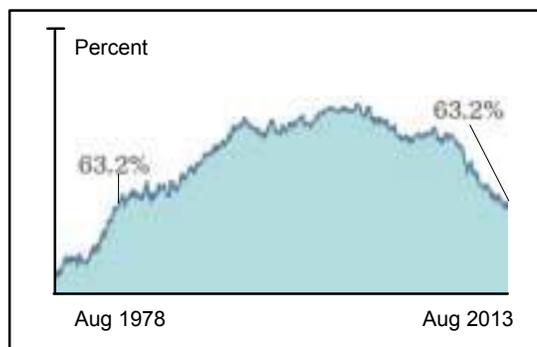
Looking for a reason to get out of the house? Meet us at Medici's at 6:00pm on March 11th.

Students start with on-campus jobs, like delivering, doing laundry, and pulling weeds. When they master those skills, they move to other on-campus jobs from local businesses and organizations (from Pioneer Balloon, Cypress Medical, and RiverFest). Then, they move into the community. Nine entities are currently in the off-campus program – the Wichita Bar Association, Ball-N-Strikes, Botanica, Birds of Paradise, Towne Place Suites, the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities Daily Bread Food Pantry, Friends of the Library, and *East Wichita News*.

The students' jobs include folding sheets, stocking shelves, weighing, and packing bird seed, sweeping, sanitizing CPR mannequins, vacuuming turf, washing windows, and setting up tables. “These jobs motivate them when they know they are doing well,” said Santonil.

People with disabilities have a nationwide unemployment rate of about 70 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. These are people who want jobs and have no problems showing up, unlike many non-disabled people.

As the chart on this page shows, the Labor Force Participation Rate has dropped sharply in the past five years. People with disabilities want to participate and need jobs.



US Labor Participation Rate

Seasonally adjusted. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Ruth Abbott, whose son Daniel is a former Heartspring student in the program, says her son was “enriched by the real, meaningful work” he did, and is was “something he looked forward to doing.”

Eighty-eight percent of American prefer to give their business to employers who hire people with disabilities, according to the Business Leadership Network, a local group recently formed to encourage and educate businesses about hiring special needs employees.

Now is the time for business owners to look at their operation and see the possibilities for paying jobs for those who have skills. Local agencies provide job coaches, expertise, and are ready to help.

Coming Soon!

Sensory Friendly Movie
March 8th

CEC Adult Bowling
March 9th

Mom's Dinner Out
March 11th

Board Meeting
April 7th

Board Meeting
July 7th

Board Meeting
October 6th

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.cidso.org

Facebook Fan? Like Us!
Central Illinois Down
Syndrome Organization

About Our Organization

The Central Illinois Down Syndrome Organization (CIDSO) is a not-for-profit organization of families and interested persons working to increase public awareness, support families, and improve opportunities for those touched by Down syndrome. Established in 1974 to act as a support service, we serve Bloomington, Normal, and the McLean County area. Our organization is the oldest Down syndrome parent group in Illinois and the second oldest in the nation.

New Parent Outreach

The process of acceptance begins as soon as Down syndrome is suspected. To support parents and extended family during this time, a parent outreach member will gladly make hospital or home visits. Informational packets are also available to new parents. Parent Outreach Members, *Brenda & Kevin Harms*, (309) 378-2388 and *Rick & Jennifer Bauersfeld*, (309) 874-2038, can be contacted any time.

Enrichment/Participation Fund

This fund is designed to enrich the lives of those born with Down syndrome and promote community involvement/participation. It is available to any person with Down syndrome regardless of involvement/participation in CIDSO. Applications are reviewed at the quarterly board meetings and must be received by CIDSO at least 10 days prior to the board meeting. Additional details and applications can be found in the "Resource" section of the CIDOS website. <http://cidso.org/resources.asp>

Disclaimer Policy

The editor of this newsletter writes as a non-professional. CIDSO does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, institution, political affiliation or professional system and any information contained herein shall not imply such. Please discuss specific concerns with a professional.

