Dear NYSID Members and Supporters:

It is our immense pleasure to introduce to you the 54 individuals who have been named this year’s Joslin Outstanding Performers. In NYSID’s eighth year of recognizing excellence in employment through the William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Awards Program, this year’s capable community of recognized workers exemplifies the job creation mission behind every business opportunity in support of government agency procurement.

Good-paying jobs for people with disabilities have never been more important at a time when unemployment hits this sector of our state’s working population hardest. According to a recent study at Cornell University, New Yorkers with disabilities are employed at less than half the rate of the working-age civilian population ages 21-64. New Yorkers with disabilities working on NYSID jobs earn their way as contributing members of numerous local communities thanks to Preferred Source employment opportunities! By recognizing the specific achievements of Joslin Outstanding Performers, we pay tribute to the powerful workforce that people with disabilities brings to New York’s fiscal health.

The talented pool of 2011 Joslin Outstanding Performers reflects our state’s diverse population of workers: those finding a new pathway to employment; others who have been employed on NYSID contracts over many years. These 54 distinctive chronicles of challenge and accomplishment through a common employment connection, the New York State Preferred Source Program, are proof positive that New Yorkers with disabilities are one of our state's best manpower resources.

Please enjoy the stories presented here as submitted by NYSID member agencies and private sector business partners. Most eloquently, the words of many Joslin Outstanding Performers underscore that growing jobs and supporting people is what NYSID is all about. Congratulations one and all for validating NYSID’s mission of “Turning business opportunities into JOBS for New Yorkers with disabilities!”

Stephen J. Towler  
Chairman

Ronald P. Romano  
President & Chief Executive Officer
### 2011 Joslin Outstanding Performers

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### Nancy Abraham

Nancy Abraham **fell off the icy steps of a bus one winter injuring her back, creating a herniated disk and a pinched nerve. This injury caused her a great deal of pain, followed by Carpal Tunnel Syndrome in 2000. The pinched nerve triggered debilitating migraine headaches.**

Despite these health issues, Nancy kept on working as an Administrative Professional at a large multinational securities firm until 2002. During this time, she worried about her family, her employment status and her health. By 2002, Nancy felt as if a bomb had been dropped on her life when her employer replaced permanent staff like her with temporary workers.

Nancy experienced difficulty finding new employment throughout the next two years. Fortunately, she found her way to GoodTemps by 2005, and in a very short time was placed with the NYC Department of Education as a special assistant to the Regional Coordinator of the Gifted and Talented Enrichment Program (GTEP). She began the job in December, and in February her supervisor sent her a basket of 18 roses saying, “Nancy, you hit the ground running.” The GTEP was a pilot program with an on-line portal for people to register their children. Nancy suggested some enhancements that made the site easier to use and was commended for her contribution.

GoodTemps next assigned Nancy to the Para Transit division of NYC Transit, followed by the Mayor’s Office as an administrative assistant. In this role, Nancy was recognized as a great public speaker, and was asked to speak to the public regarding the issuing of permits for events held throughout the city of New York and the five boroughs. Today, Nancy works through GoodTemps on a long-term assignment with the NYC Department of Education as a data entry keyer.

Despite having severe problems with ongoing pain management, Nancy has continued her education learning new skills such as accounting/bookkeeping through P^E^G^S, ultimately earning an accounting certificate.

Nancy has always made time to help others less fortunate. She sat on a Working Parents/Elder Care committee that developed a Partnership Group whereby she was interviewed for Working Mother magazine; she also worked with Center Women of New York (CWNy) – Time Warner New York One and the Funds for Battered Women. Nancy also volunteers twice a year at a local rehabilitation facility which takes patients to mass and provides holiday dinners. She was awarded the Outstanding Teamwork and Achievement Award from Temple Shalom for Torah, Worship and Deeds of Loving Kindness, and wrote a community events column for her co-op newsletter.

Nancy said it best when she said, “Giving back to humanity is not gifted and talented like most people think it is – it is psychologically gifted and talented.” She also said, “GoodTemps bridged the gap between unemployment and employment, and Goodwill is committed, understanding and goes the extra mile because they are client-focused.”
Robert “Bob” Balduzzi began working full-time at Monarch’s Wilbur Avenue production center through the Arc of Onondaga in September 2001 as part of a workforce transition when another rehabilitation and vocational agency closed. Bob has subsequently become a valued member of the Monarch team, and has worked on a variety of jobs over the past 10 years. These jobs include: assembling ball bearings using a press for Kilian, inspecting, packaging and testing remotes for Time Warner, and his more recent job for OCCRA (Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency) sorting batteries.

On this NYSID Preferred Source contract, Bob is part of a team that works separating alkaline and rechargeable batteries and then packing the different sizes and styles. Each rechargeable battery has to be in an individual bag. Bob also moves the barrels that the batteries are in to keep this job and contract on schedule. He has almost single-handedly made this new NYSID contract work, organizing the area and keeping everything clean. When the OCCRA truck comes in, he helps them load his finished work.

Outgoing, friendly and kind to his peers, Bob lived with his family up until May of 2006, when he moved into a residential program operated by Liberty Resources. Bob’s goal is to eventually move into his own place and live independently. He has two brothers and a sister along with several nieces and nephews, and is very involved with his family.

On the weekend, Bob walks to the Kirby’s Restaurant in Westvale, a short distance from his house every Sunday where he has dinner with friends or family. Bob also has a girlfriend whom he takes there and occasionally to the movies. He is also very particular about his haircuts, which his favorite barber teases him about. Bob’s peers are proud that their friend is being recognized for his years of being an admired co-worker and an outstanding worker. And Bob plans to keep on working with the Monarch team until retirement.

Robert Balduzzi
Onondaga County Chapter
NYSARC, Inc./Monarch Enterprises

Michael Baker
Lifetime Assistance, Inc./LAICO Industries

When the Supported Employment team was asked for a recommendation for this year’s Outstanding Performer, it was unanimous to pick Michael Baker, an individual who makes you smile whenever you see him.

Mike first worked at LAICO Industries on a housekeeping enclave at the Super 8 hotel from July 2004 until August 2005. At that time, he was recommended for promotion to our Janitorial Crew, where he has worked ever since. This recommendation was based on Mike’s excellent work ethic and attendance, and his ability to learn and maintain job tasks consistently.

Since joining the Janitorial Crew, Mike has received many compliments from customers as well as from his supervisory team. He learned the new job tasks quickly and acclimated to the many job sites involved with the mobile Janitorial Crew. Remarks from his job coaches clearly depict his outstanding job performance. He is reported to be a team player, always willing to help others without being asked. He always lets his job coaches know when he is finished and checks in for his next assignment. Mike is often considered the “go-to guy” as he is so dependable on a daily basis. He has been a great help to new coaches as well as relief coaches that are running the crew, doing whatever it takes to make his team successful.

Mike demonstrates great attention to detail, and can be counted on to start and finish a task with minimal supervision. He is very flexible and adapts to changing priorities very well. He is described as very personable and a pleasure to work with. Mike’s current job coach shares that he works independently off a checklist, which he never forgets. If paper supplies are low at the work site, Mike will make a list with little prompting. He is an excellent role model to his co-workers and is often involved in the training and mentoring of new people.

On his free time, Mike enjoys doing jigsaw puzzles, bowling with Special Olympics and playing video games. Mike has a special interest in aviation (reading about planes and making model airplanes). He enjoys playing the guitar and keyboard as well. Mike also enjoys participating in Lifetime agency social activities.

Mike has shared that one of the benefits of working on the NYSID crews is that it has helped him open up more. He describes it as being like a flower that blooms and that he feels he has blossomed into the person he is today. Mike explained that when he first came to our agency, he was very quiet and shy and did not speak much at all. Now he has grown so much and is comfortable interacting with his supervisors, co-workers and customers. Mike has enjoyed the interaction with the customers that he works with at the Sheriff’s stations and NYS Tollbooth. All of these sites invite and include our crew in their holiday celebrations each year. Mike is well liked and well-known by many of the sheriffs that he sees on a day-to-day basis.

The Lifetime agency has found it very rewarding to watch Mike grow in so many areas since starting on his crew, becoming more independent and growing in self-confidence.
Carl Barnhardt is an approachable, locally well-known man who lives in his own apartment in Perry. Carl attended Holcomb School until he aged out at age 21. While there he enjoyed working with the janitorial team, an experience which helped Carl obtain his current job as a janitor at Silver Lake Day Treatment (SLDT) in Perry, a NYSID Preferred Source contract. Carl has cleaned there since February 2000, and states that he enjoys earning a good hourly wage.

Carl works well with others as well as independently, and can be counted on to step up and assist, especially when the team is short staffed. Carl works four days a week, with Tuesdays off to participate in a local bowling league.

This successful employment placement has provided Carl his own apartment in his hometown community, allowing him to live near his large family. He once worked with a Literacy Volunteer, and still accepts help from his sister to maintain his independence with receiving and paying bills. Carl also bought himself a bicycle that he loves and uses to get around. His steady means of income allows Carl to enjoy many favorite activities such as bowling, collecting items at yard sales, raising fish in several tanks, and going on fishing trips.

Carl has an intellectual disability, yet has succeeded in his community, in his job and in his life. He has his own apartment, his own job and his own income. He is able to enjoy riding his bike to work and/or walking to the nearby restaurants with his longtime girlfriend. He travels with friends to different communities to enjoy activities throughout Livingston-Wyoming counties. Carl is known by most everyone in his community, and can be counted on to help out friends and family when needed.

Joe Bastian should not be surprised that he is the New Visions nomination for the 2011 NYSID William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Award. Joe is an unassuming man, surprised, but feeling good about being nominated. He has a good sense of humor in spite of the challenge of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Joe started out life as one of three children from a family of 11 who were placed for adoption. He was adopted by a couple and experienced a very happy childhood. Joe attended Schuyler Preparatory School in Schuylerville, graduating in 1966 amidst the Vietnam War years. Like many other young men at that time, motivated by avoiding the draft, he pursued going to college. Attending Ricker College in Holton, Maine, he made it through six months of a liberal arts program before being drafted into the Army in June 1967.

After basic training, Joe was sent to cooking school at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, eventually being sent to Vietnam. There he went straight from being a cook to an artillery unit. For nine months, he was deep in the jungles, the only way in by helicopter. Joe remembers the date of his homecoming exactly, June 12, 1969. At first, he just celebrated being home, but job-hunting was anything but a celebration. Many places of employment refused him. Joe said that on one job interview he was asked where he spent his military service. When he responded by saying, “Vietnam,” the man tore up the application. Eventually Joe found employment with Agway at the port of Albany.

During this time, Joe found dealing with his PTSD disability more and more difficult. He would become tense and agitated, as a result, frequently losing jobs. Social drinking became an outlet for him, but soon escalated into excess and a way to forget. When that did not work for him any more, he realized he needed help and entered into a Veteran’s Administration program, working on piecework for a year and a half. In 2002, Joseph was referred to Albany ARC, now known as New Visions, as a member of the Janitorial Program.

Today, Joe works in Building # 8, the Tax and Finance building part of the NYSID Preferred Source contract on the Harriman State Campus as a part of the New Visions Janitorial Services team. He appreciates having this opportunity and as he says, “Having this job has made me feel good about myself and has helped me to get along better with people.” He is interested in increasing his knowledge and skills of floor care and carpet cleaning. When asked what he would be doing now if he did not have this job, he laughed again and said, “Under the influence and laying in a gutter somewhere.”

Having a paycheck means Joe can afford his rent, pay his bills, be more independent, go on vacations, and spend time with his daughter. Joe is well-liked by his supervisor, the building manager and tenants. He enjoys crossword puzzles and “Googling.” Joe is looking forward to moving to the country and spending time with his daughter fishing.
George Bates
Northeast Career Planning/
The Norton Center, Inc.

George Bates began working at the NYS Education Department Print shop in 2003, where his primary responsibility is running the digital copy machine. George prides himself on going to work every day and keeping a full-time job on a NYSID Preferred Source contract. His supervisor Tom Vojnur pointed out that it was George who took the initiative to learn how to run the machines independently. He always completes his job assignments and is willing to take on more responsibilities and work. George routinely tries to make life easier for his co-workers, and will frequently share his ideas on how to cut cost and improve performance. For instance, he came up with a “Large-Type Exam Puller,” designed to remove documents out of boxes without suffering paper cuts. Always looking for ways to improve his daily work routine, George also volunteered to redesign Northeast Career Planning’s timecard, designing a simpler and cleaner format.

If you met George today, you would assume he is a pretty easygoing guy with a colorful sense of humor. But he is a very different employee than he was eight years ago. Like many people, George has very strong opinions and can sometimes be very forthright in his communication. This once led to continuous challenges on the job for him. In typical George Bates style, he confronted these challenges head-on, and then took the necessary steps to better himself, including enrolling in an anger management class to effectively deal with workplace conflicts. With the supports from his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and an understanding employer, he has learned how to appropriately address issues at work with others without offending them. He is committed to his counseling and still continues to participate in treatment.

George grew up in Hoosick Falls raised by his grandmother, and he still spends most of his weekends helping her out with some of the heavy housework and chores. In his personal time, George also enjoys horseback riding, hiking, camping, computers, and movies. He has a long-term goal of going back to school for computer design. George is an active member of the Polish Community Center where he plays on two dart leagues.

George is an advocate for himself, whether at work or in his personal life. A few years ago, he was living by himself in an apartment, which is funded through a Supported Living program. At one point, the apartment complex wanted to remove all Supported Living residents from the complex. Justifiably upset and steadfast in his desire to stay, George fought the eviction and won, continuing to live in his apartment.

George truly honed his personal and professional skills while employed at this NYSID contract, a testament to the benefits of employment for everyone. This opportunity allowed him to stumble and make mistakes, but then learn and grow from them. It also provides him with the pride and confidence to stand up for what he believes in. George Bates is an incredible example of why employing individuals with disabilities is a benefit to New York State!

Mark Bentz
Liberty, the Montgomery County Chapter NYSARC, Inc.

Mark Bentz is a quiet and friendly young man who entered the Liberty vocational training program exactly ten years ago. At that time, Mark lived with his family in the community but wanted to be more independent and was placed in a Liberty IRA. After a few years, Mark advocated for himself to move to Amsterdam and live with men who shared his common interests, a situation which would provide him with more independence. Since coming to Liberty, Mark has learned to control himself and deal with things that do not necessarily go his way. He’s come a long way both at work and at home.

Early on, Mark had limitations in independence with respect to job performance, ability to follow instructions, and ability to cope with work problems. He first worked in a sub-assembly setting, soon setting his sights on either a maintenance position or a production job in the Liberty soap area processing and packaging the deodorizers, cleaners, and liquid and dry soap products. Mark does better in work areas where he can move around and complete different tasks during the day. The Liberty soap production area is an integrated work site that consists of production of manufacturing, packaging and shipping of detergents, liquid soap and chemicals to distributors all over the United States. These products are also available to state and local government agencies through the NYSID Preferred Source Program.

In each of the areas, Mark assists with production of two varieties of detergents, 14 varieties of liquid soap and 97 varieties of chemical cleaners. That’s a lot of soap! Mark works the majority of the time as a machine operator in the dry fill area. He works along with his supervisor running the machine that produces the small packets of powder that are sent along on a conveyor belt to be packaged and shipped to customers. Mark’s responsibilities include filling the machine with dry fill, running the machine for his six-hour shift, cleaning the machine at the end of his day, and performing quality control on all dry fill packets before they go to packaging. If work is slow in his primary area, he is very willing to work in any of the many work areas that he is assigned. Mark’s supervisor reports he is very flexible, easily trained and independent in supervision. The supervisor also reports that Mark is very dependable regarding attendance, and is a loyal friend to every one of his co-workers and the Liberty staff.

Recently, Mark has set a personal goal of becoming his own guardian and is working with his support team to make this goal a reality. Mark continues to look for ways to increase his independence, so he can become a valuable member of the community in which he lives. He is a wonderful example of the individuals that Liberty strives to support in overcoming barriers and reaching their full potential.
“I feel good, happy and proud,” said Carrie Bishop about her job at ACHIEVE. “I would like to continue this job. I’m helping people in hospitals and nursing homes.”

Carrie has been actively involved with ACHIEVE’s Country Valley Industries work training program since November 1999. She experiences her day-to-day life while meeting the challenges of a Seizure Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Diplopia, and Mild Mental Retardation. She is 32 years old and lives in Windsor with her family.

A quiet young woman with perfect attendance and a great work ethic, Carrie is very proficient on all jobs she knows and takes great pride in her accomplishments. In the past, when different or more challenging jobs were introduced, Carrie had difficulty making changes and being flexible. She generally chose to work without much interaction with others and had difficulty communicating. Conversations on random topics were difficult for Carrie, so her peers felt she was not friendly. In reality, she is a very caring and compassionate young woman.

Carrie received encouragement to expand on her excellent work skills and develop her ability to communicate. When the NYSID Preferred Source contract with Bates-Troy was introduced at CVI and was being completed in an area adjacent to her work area, Carrie became very interested in trying the new laundry sorting and folding operation. She frequently glanced over at the laundry area and asked questions about the jobs, so she was overjoyed when her department was asked to assist in completing some overflow laundry. Ultimately, with support and encouragement, Carrie agreed to fill in when laundry workers were absent, with some trepidation about leaving the security of her own work area. Gradually Carrie became more at ease, and was able to team up with others for large folding projects. In this new vocational setting, Carrie began conversing with others and in turn they became more accepting of her. Ultimately, Carrie requested to work on the NYSID contract full-time, and has since become a very valuable and committed member of the laundry team.

Outside of work, Carrie is an active member of her church, participating in a small prayer group on Monday evenings. Her mother reports Carrie prays for those who have been hurt, sick and/or have suffered any type of misfortune.

The various activities and long-term nature of the laundry services department has allowed Carrie opportunities to not only further develop her skills as a worker, but also increase her self-esteem through improved social relationships. The Preferred Source Program has made it possible for Carrie to make considerable employment strides, and also makes her a perfect candidate to be nominated as a Joslin Outstanding Performer.

Justin Brower
The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter
NYSARC, Inc./Progress Industries

Justin Brower is a 23-year-old young man who has been confronted with many obstacles and challenges to overcome from a very early age. Justin has chosen not to let his diagnoses define him, and when meeting him for the first time you can’t help but be struck by his unassuming, quiet and polite demeanor. Throughout his short time with The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter, NYSARC Justin has demonstrated the distinct ability to set ambitious goals and work tirelessly to obtain them despite obstacles and setbacks that have come his way.

Justin was referred to Progress Industries three years ago from the Oneida County Department of Social Services. The majority of his childhood was spent between a residential treatment facility and foster care providers. Upon arrival to the vocational program, Justin had a difficult time completing a full day; his stress tolerance was extremely low. Justin would often require a great deal of supervision and supportive counseling just to accomplish the minimum requirements of his assigned tasks. At many times throughout his early days, it did not seem like Justin was going to stay connected to his vocational program.

Then in November of 2009, recognizing Justin’s potential, he was placed on the bottling of NYSID Preferred Source dishwashing and laundry detergents. Initially Justin enjoyed the work, but the transformation started to occur when he received his first paycheck after performing well on this job. Justin realized that the increased wages would set him on his way to accomplishing his goal of independent living. From that point on, he took a very active role in his vocational program. Justin’s work endurance, stress tolerance and overall self-esteem increased significantly. It truly was the NYSID Preferred Source contract that opened Justin’s eyes to both his potential and what developing his vocational skills could give him in life.

Since then, Justin has made several positive choices in life by focusing on behaviors that are counter-productive and working with his treatment team to learn how to move towards his goals. Justin has moved into a supportive apartment within the community, and is putting forth a solid effort to continue his movement towards positive outcomes. Justin continues to face setbacks and obstacles in his life, but he seems to address them with more confidence and maturity, which he feels have come from successful experiences on NYSID Preferred Source opportunities. According to Justin, “Hard works pays off. It got me to feel good about myself!”
Sandra Brown’s hard work, dedication and positive attitude have been a formula for providing outstanding service at the J.M. Murray Center. Custodial Services and the Preble Rest Stop staff believe that she demonstrates the qualities deserving of the Joslin Outstanding Performer distinction.

Sandra began her career with the agency’s Custodial Services division nearly 12 years ago, performing janitorial services for one of the Cortland area’s local factories and has been a dedicated employee of JM Murray ever since. Throughout her career, Sandra has exemplified the agency’s commitment to excellence, and has provided quality and friendly service to a number of customers.

Seven years ago, Sandra became part of a selected crew on the NYSID Preferred Source contract at the I-81 Preble Rest Stop. She has an excellent work ethic, working hard to provide a clean and pleasant rest stop for the traveling public. Sandra has trained and mentored new employees at the job site, and is a positive influence on her co-workers making them feel welcome and comfortable at all times. She takes pride in her work and encourages others to do the same. Her favorite part of the job is the interaction with different people throughout the work day.

Sandra is an excellent worker who has proven to be reliable, dependable and a committed employee. She is always looking for ways to improve her job performance and advance her career thus, providing a better opportunity for her and her family. Sandra proudly stated, “I make an amount that provides a good quality of life and can enjoy things I like to do.”

Sandra believes that if everyone pulls together and works as a team, they can make a difference. She demonstrates the Murray Center’s values and beliefs by putting people first and treating everyone with dignity and respect. “I never thought I would be nominated for an award,” she stated. “I just do my job and enjoy it!”

Dwayne Brown
Angelica Textiles Services, Inc.

This July will mark six years of Dwayne Brown’s employment as a truck loader for Angelica Textiles Services, Inc., an industrial laundry plant near his Hempstead home. His motivation is evident in his work as he is consistently on time, always has a positive attitude and works hard to complete all of his tasks in a timely manner.

When Dwayne was first hired by Angelica in July of 2006, he was just coming out of a difficult period in his life. His struggle is one which can inspire everyone, demonstrating self-control and an amazing amount of inner strength as he raised himself from a life of crime and substance abuse to maintaining sobriety and truly enjoying his work. In fact, one would never guess anything about 24-year-old Dwayne’s past from speaking to him. He is pleasant, neatly put together and maintains good eye contact. It is clear that he values the work he does and enjoys being around other like-minded people. The epitome of his growth, though, is best illustrated using his own words. When he described the reasons he likes working at Angelica, he said it was because it is “a stable job” and that it is something he “can count on.” He even went so far as to confidently state that if he didn’t have this job, he would still make sure that he was working so that he could support himself and his family. That simple statement is a complete turnaround from the life he led before. Dwayne picked up the pieces in all areas of his life and continues to make efforts to better his environment for himself and his family.

During his time at Angelica, Dwayne has become loved by colleagues and employers alike. His attitude and work ethic motivate the other members of his team, and he is persistent in his efforts to get the job done. When he began employment in 2006, he was paid $7.50 per hour, but because of his excellent work his wage has risen to over $12.00 per hour. In the past year, Dwayne has worked an average of 40 hours per week earning more than $28,000. This is enough to afford an apartment and provide for his new family, including his first child who is six months old, as well as support his mother. His commitment to the job and example of responsibility and consistency is something his co-workers look up to. The fact that he is able to work 40 hours a week while helping to raise his child is truly amazing.

Dwayne recognizes the value of his work and the potential he has to continue to improve. In the future at Angelica, he wants to turn potential into reality by earning his Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) in order to become a driver for the company. This will allow Dwayne to become an expert in every aspect of his field, taking on further responsibility doing pick-ups and deliveries of soiled and laundered items. Through earning a CDL, Dwayne will show everyone more than his driving skills. It will be yet another proof of how far he has come and how much he has overcome to transform into the responsible adult he is today.
Timothy Brown  
Rochester Rehabilitation Center

Tim Brown came to Rochester Rehabilitation Center in 1995 through a local outpatient services division to help deal with his mental health issues. He experienced problems with paranoia, and was easily agitated to anger. Through the support of therapy and medicine, Tim was admitted to the WISE Program which helps people with disabilities gain and maintain employment. Tim was hired as a cleaner in the Rochester agency’s KleenSource division in 2004, and since then has succeeded in both his personal and professional life due to the wonderful support of counselors and his own hard work.

KleenSource maintains a number of NYSID Preferred Source contracts for Monroe County government agencies, the Finger Lakes DDSO, and other state and local government entities. On the job, Tim has gone to individual sites to clean by himself, or sometimes with a team of custodians. For the past two years, he has taken on additional responsibilities of signing out and returning security keys at the Monroe Developmental Center. This is an important task and can be troublesome if the keys aren’t returned in a timely manner.

His supervisor attests to Tim’s near-perfect attendance and punctuality, and has stated, “We know we can always depend on Tim to be at work, rain or shine.”

At home, Tim has achieved independence by purchasing and maintaining a car after earning his driver’s license. This enables him to get to work, run errands for himself and family and get out to play his favorite sports, baseball and basketball.

Tim has truly overcome disability through employment under the Preferred Source Program.

Todd Byron  
Saratoga Bridges, NYSARC, Inc./Alpha Industries

Todd Byron has worked at Alpha Industries consistently since November 2003 where he started in the pallet shop and currently packs firewood, a NYSID Preferred Source product. Todd is a very conscientious man with a very strong work ethic. He has been known to work through his breaks to make sure that contracts are done on time. He can do any job given him and even though he has his preferences, never says no to a job assignment.

Todd often volunteers to help others with their jobs when he sees they need assistance. He is quite outgoing and makes a point to greet his co-workers in the morning and say goodbye at the end of the day. Todd is very knowledgeable of how things should be done and is very observant of others. In the past, he would criticize his co-workers if he felt they hadn’t performed a task correctly. He has now learned to alert his supervisor and let her take care of any corrections that need to be made.

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When not working, Todd likes to garden at his home and help his mom with hers. He is also involved in several Special Olympic sports. Going forward, Todd wants to remain employed at Alpha Industries, aspiring to be a forklift operator.
Nominating Donna Campbell as a Joslin Outstanding Performer was an easy decision. After almost 18 years of being affiliated with Seneca Cayuga Industries, a new level of success was achieved in 2009 when Donna accepted a custodial position at the Dick Van Dyke Addiction Treatment Facility in Willard, a NYSID Preferred Source contract. After many years of trial and error with her employment, Donna has achieved long-term vocational success.

Donna worked in numerous positions both in enclaves and in the community, but the support of an enclave setting was an important factor in her success. With the love of her family, her ever-growing determination and the years of support from Seneca Cayuga staff, Donna found her way to a job that she loves. It was simply the right mixture of ingredients that steered her towards the success she experiences today.

Donna gained the necessary work skills to take on the treatment facility assignment with the assistance of the agency’s Supported Employment program. She would have the support of an on-site supervisor and yet still be able to work at a high level of independence. Donna is well-respected by the staff at the Dick Van Dyke Center and has gained many friendships there. The following is a quote from one of the staff at the Center: “Donna is always pleasant. She is a hard worker and is at work all the darned time.”

Donna is a proud mother of her 24-year-old-son Gilbert. Her husband Dale was Seneca Cayuga’s 2006 Joslin Outstanding Performer. It’s obvious that this family is a testament to hard work and dependability. Donna also has a lot of interests outside of work such as reading novels, playing bingo, walking, and spending time with her family and friends. She aspires to get her GED in the future.

This agency is very proud of Donna and the growth that she has shown in her over 18 years. She is a very good role model and possesses a work ethic to be admired. Donna’s characteristics of being extremely dependable, hardworking and competent really shine through.

Everyone who has the good fortune to know Michael Carchedi will remember the first time they met. An exceptional employee at Human Technologies Corporation for 28 years, Mike is our unofficial company historian, ambassador and public relations spokesman, so much so that during an interview with a local news station, he humbly described himself as “Mr. HTC.”

Mike has always personified ability. Although diagnosed with a personality disorder which typically manifests itself in patterns of discomfort with social and interpersonal interactions, he has used his employment at HTC to overcome these barriers and is regarded by all as the “go-to” guy. Mike started working for HTC in 1983, sewing Military Head Harnesses and hospital gowns. He trained on virtually all operations in all departments, working on a number of NYSID Preferred Source contracts along the way. Always a quick learner with excellent quality, Mike was eventually assigned to work on the company’s most important and demanding production.

Seven years ago, Mike was chosen to lead the production on HTC’s largest NYSID contract, where he is responsible for receiving, inspecting and performing the final manufacturing processes on inmate boots for the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Services. Mike oversees the three-punch presses, and is able to troubleshoot and perform preventive maintenance on the machines. His work ethic, keen eye for detail and meticulous recordkeeping helps his work team to produce and distribute 50,000+ pairs of boots annually.

When not working on this contract, Mike has further expanded his skills by becoming the top order picker and product kitter in HTC’s distribution center for uniforms for the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, personally processing up to 80 orders and 500 line items per day with 99.8% accuracy. His ability, as well as his willingness to train others, was a big reason HTC was awarded a new NYSID contract in 2010 to supply uniforms for the Nassau County Police Department, the 13th largest Police Department in the country.

Mike’s skills and willingness to do any job needed has provided him with the income necessary to live independently in Utica in his own apartment. He often takes the microphone at monthly employee meetings and recounts his experiences with the various community assistance programs that are available to help others move towards greater independence. But all work and no play is not Mike’s style. You can always find him enjoying the arts and culture of his beloved city, which he refers to as “beautiful downtown Utica.”

Every day, at work and in the community, Mike lives up to the high standards of NYSID’s Joslin Awards Program. “Mr. HTC” is proud to be nominated, and in typical fashion wishes to thank NYSID for the opportunities afforded him under the Preferred Source Program.
Maicol Cordoba

Maicol (Michael) Cordoba did not know his life would change forever on the morning of April 3, 2005. While attending a barbecue, he fell victim to three stray gunshot wounds, two in his chest and one in his arm. The shot to the arm shattered bone, muscle and tendons. As he collapsed to the ground, his arm twitched violently from the injury.

When Maicol awoke in the hospital with breathing tubes in his throat, he was told that some organs were removed due to the wounds. After 10 days in the hospital, blood clots and infection set in. During a five-hour surgery, Maicol’s arm was removed in order for him to live, requiring him to be hospitalized another 25 days.

After this horrific ordeal, Maicol fell into deep depression and stayed inside the home for almost a full year, refusing to speak to family or receive physical therapy. After patient coaxing from his family, he began the process of rebuilding. This would be even harder for Maicol as his first language is Spanish, compounded by a newfound meekness due to the accident. Finding employment would not be easy.

An acquaintance encouraged Maicol to apply to ACCES/VR, formerly VESID, which put him in touch with NYSID member F•E•G•S who finally referred Maicol to American Maintenance, a NYSID private sector business partner. American Maintenance performs Preferred Source janitorial services for Brookhaven Town Hall, a 250,000 square foot complex in the largest town by area in all of NYS. All cleaning at the Town Hall is done throughout the daytime until 3 p.m. Cleaners interact with staff and must be aware not to disturb town employees, which can be an intimidating work environment.

Initially, Maicol was very timid in his new role as a porter. After training, his direct supervisor took him under her wing, and within a few weeks he flourished. The changes in his personality were visible as his confidence and enthusiasm returned. For the first time since the devastating injury, he felt like himself.

Today, Maicol is financially independent from his family, and helps his mother and younger brother make ends meet. He plans on saving his money to buy a prosthetic arm, and is currently attending school to master English. Maicol is a model employee and exemplifies the opportunities provided through the Preferred Source Program.

Kim Dougherty

Kim Dougherty is a very quiet individual, but has grown in many ways over 17 years at Southeast Works. When Kim first came to the agency at the age of 29, she was very shy and lacked confidence with her work abilities due to mild Mental Retardation challenges. She was placed in the Pre-vocational Work Center at Southeast Works’ main facility performing a variety of job tasks: packaging, labeling, sorting, and inspecting. Kim was quick to learn these tasks, but was unsure of herself and would continually seek reassurance from her supervisor.

In 1997, Kim had gained a great deal of work skills through the pre-vocational program, and decided to be a part of the Southeast Works Mobile Janitorial Crew. She was very excited for this new opportunity which would lead to greater work independence. Kim quickly learned the necessary custodial job skills, but still lacked some confidence with her abilities. Over the years, Kim was able to gain a sense of confidence and to complete work routines independently at various worksites, primarily cleaning at New York State toll stations where work pace, confidence and attention to detail are vital.

Kim has numerous friends at work. She also has great work attendance, and is quick to learn new tasks with newfound confidence. Kim not only continued to build her confidence while working on these NYSID Preferred Source contracts, she also learned how to better advocate for herself and increase pride in her personal appearance. She is now ready to take the next step towards obtaining competitive community placement, and has begun the process of further job development to achieve this goal. And while Kim is still looking for the right fit for her, she has already received job offers!

Kim currently lives with her family and assists with the many daily family chores. She also takes care of the family cat. Kim’s parents and siblings are very supportive of her choices, and she is looking forward to transitioning to a supportive apartment in the future. Kim likes going out to dinner and watching movies with friends and family. Kim also enjoys playing mini golf, picnics and the summer family camping trips.
Stewart Elder
PSCH, Inc.

Stewart Elder is a personable 33-year-old Queens resident who exemplifies determination and a can-do attitude towards achieving his personal and employment goals. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia, undifferentiated type while incarcerated at Manhattan Psychiatric Center, and has since overcome many challenges in the process of successfully managing his mental illness.

For Stewart, obtaining his first employment with Clean Corp. has been the best thing that has ever happened to him. He is committed to sustaining his employment and progressing until he accomplishes his goals of independence and self-sufficiency.

With confidence and enthusiasm, Stewart continues to progress steadily and surpass the expectations of his supervisor and job coach. He demonstrates a great work ethic and the ability to work independently while performing his cleaning duties at Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center, a NYSID Preferred Source contract. He is a team player and makes himself available to help co-workers when done with his responsibilities. Due to his outstanding performance, he has received recognition and a recent promotion to Master Groundskeeper on the contract.

Stewart proudly states that being employed and gaining hands-on experience has given him the confidence and foundation to continue pursuing his goals. He is currently working on getting his driver’s license to qualify for a full-time maintenance worker position with PSCH, Inc. He is also taking the steps needed towards independent housing and has requested assistance with the PASS program in order to save the necessary funds. Stewart is an example of perseverance, who feels this way about the importance of his paycheck: “It puts a smile on my face to see what I earn. I am proud of myself and know that I can be independent, and be of help to others.”

Lewis Gallup
CWI…Community Work & Independence, Inc.

Most people have aspirations in life to grow up, get a job, and have a home and family. Most people have all their senses, and their challenges are not physical or debilitating. Most of us are given a full shot at all of this right from the start and do well. Lewis Gallup is not most of us.

Lewis was born prematurely, weighing less than two pounds. At age six months, it was determined that he was blind, as a result of complications at birth. He was also diagnosed with a developmental disability. Lewis eventually attended the New York State School for the Blind and Warrensburg Central School through its BOCES Best Program. Following graduation, he came to CWI’s North Country Ventures in 2000.

Initially, Lewis struggled with learning tasks and jigs to help him accomplish simple piece work, as he had not really done structured work prior to coming to a manufacturing setting. He also struggled with becoming mobile and navigating to the restroom, the lunchroom, and back and forth to transportation.

After a few months, it was obvious that Lewis was a special person. He learned new tasks quickly, and was able to know where he was in the work area by extra-sensory perception. Now that Lewis has been at North Country Ventures for over ten years, he is able to get around on his own, and knows exactly where he is at any moment. He is friendly and cooperative, willing to try any new job presented to him and able to do very complicated tasks which many other workers find tedious and unexciting.

The NYSID Preferred Source contracts are a huge part of the work center, and Lewis has worked on several, including staple removers. His precision and consistency make him a desired worker in all areas, and his ability to work diligently with a positive attitude inspires his co-workers. Lewis’ participation on NYSID contracts has given him new skills, and enabled him to broaden his social skills. He has become one of the most valued workers at North Country Ventures, and has seen his earnings gradually increase over the years.

A few years ago, Lewis purchased his own home, and with assistance from his family who live nearby, he maintains the house and pays all homeownership bills. He was recently honored for 10 years of service at CWI, a devoted employee who relishes work and new contracts.

Lewis’ accomplishments are many. Like most people, he grew up and graduated from school. He got a job and bought a home. His family surrounds him with love and understanding which he passes on to those who get to know him. But Lewis is not like most people; he is exceptional.
Each day Nicholas Gouvakis comes to work, his smile and positive energy grace our office. Nick has been part of the growth of our company for over two years. Even battling Muscular Dystrophy, all Nick needs is an adjustable seat and his readiness does the rest. He is one of the most responsible employees we have and believes in Focused Technologies' customer-driven mission. He enjoys working here because it is fun, and everyone helps him when help is needed. His supervisors and co-workers concur that Nick is very attentive on task, that he has no problem multitasking, and that he communicates his needs well – a true team player. Nick’s overall confidence and skills have improved greatly since he began working at Focused. Being that he is one of four scanners essential to an important new records management contract with the NYS Office of the State Comptroller, his accuracy and speed is key to achieving customer satisfaction. Nick regularly meets this goal, as he is one of our best Document Imaging Specialists.

In 2010, Nick was awarded “Works for Me” recognition as an outstanding employee in an NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities program. As part of our team, we are proud to know that he is appreciated for his contributions.

Nick is proud, happy and grateful to be working at Focused Technologies. He feels that this is the best job ever, and enjoys that people are impressed with the work that he does. His supervisor feels that Nick is consistent, dependable, and the “cornerstone of our scanning process.” He rarely misses a day of work and understands the commitment involved in being a part of a team. Nick has good scruples and values, and a strong moral foundation. His supervisor added, “I have never seen Nick without a smile.” His parents are also very proud of him and happy for him. As long as he is happy, his parents are happy with his accomplishments.

Nick enjoys his paycheck, as it offers him a chance to feel responsible and enjoy himself. He uses his money to go to the mall, specifically the Cheesecake Factory restaurant, and he likes to buy pizza for his family as well. Having this position gives him an opportunity to set goals for himself, both professionally and personally. When asked where he sees himself in a few years, Nick said that he would still be working at Focused Technologies and that he would like to be married. He would also like to be living on his own. If he wasn’t working at Focused Technologies, he would be working somewhere else at a “regular job.” For Nick, a regular job would be somewhere he was not looking forward to coming in to work each day. To him, Focused Technologies isn’t a regular job; it’s a place where he feels needed, respected and appreciated for the work he does.

Nick is a continuing reminder that it is not our disabilities that define us, but it is our spirit.

Anthony Gutierrez has been a dedicated worker of Hudson River Services, the custodial division of NYSARC, Inc. (AHRC) for more than 12 years. At an early age, Anthony, now 43, was diagnosed with mild mental retardation and seizure disorder, and placed in his grandmother’s care after he and his sister were removed from their mother’s home. Anthony was later adopted by a caring family, Mr. and Mrs. Keane.

Anthony graduated from Queens Occupational Training Center in 1989, and enrolled with AHRC, Employment and Business Services, Supported Employment Program seven years later. In 1999, Anthony married his wife Lucy and moved to a one-bedroom apartment with his adoptive father, Mr. Keane. As a prospective participant, Anthony attended job club and was employed at Burger King as a porter gaining experience. Despite his eagerness to learn new tasks, Anthony had difficulty in coping with work-related stress and soon was let go.

Things began looking up, as Anthony was later hired by Hudson River Services as a porter working for a NYC Transit Authority site in Maspeth, a NYSID Preferred Source contract. He worked closely there with a job coach who helped him develop a strong work ethic and necessary skills to become an independent worker. Anthony occasionally experienced trouble in communicating his feelings and had violent outbursts at work. At this time, the job coach gave him the support needed to help deal with work-related stress, which in turn helped prove Anthony as a reliable, hard working and dedicated employee. In March 2005, he was promoted to a higher-paying position within Hudson River Services, and now currently works for DOT Metropolitan.

With the help of his supportive job coaches, family and staff, Anthony has become an exemplary employee with excellent communication skills. He attended work each day, never missing a day without informing his supervisor. Anthony also became more sociable which allowed him to engage in conversations and express himself to others more effectively. This helped him deal with daily work demands without having outbursts, and he now understands that his supportive staff is always there for him when he needs them.

Ultimately, Anthony has grown to be an independent individual who is now able to live on his own with his wife and take responsibility for himself and his family. All of his supervisors and co-workers love Anthony and recognize the hard work, great work ethic and respect he shows to each and every worker. In his own words, the power of work is evident in him: “I am able to pay my bills and support my family. I like the people I work with and I enjoy being a porter.”
Natalie Hemingway
Unitex Rental Textile Services

Natalie Hemingway is employed by Unitex as an ironer near her Newburgh home where she lives with her two children. Natalie is a warm, intelligent woman, who has managed to overcome desperate circumstances in a way which can inspire anyone.

Unitex, the company for which she works, is an industrial laundry corporation, a job that is extremely physically demanding. Many would be so fatigued that they would be unable to stay awake when they finally returned home after a day of work. Natalie has never been late to work; in fact, she is consistently an hour early, arriving by 6 a.m. ready to get to work. The laundry customers include many NYS government agencies and higher education facilities as part of the NYSDID Preferred Source Program.

Natalie's work consistency and sense of responsibility are emphasized by the fact that she realizes the things one has to do are not always the same as the things one wants to do. She dreams of working as a medical assistant, a degree which she earned in 2009. However, she remains employed by Unitex with a positive attitude and a never-fading smile because she needs to earn the money to care for her children and to keep her house.

To speak with Natalie, one is impressed by how comfortable she is with herself. She is open and honest, quick to laugh and quick to make others laugh. Natalie doesn't try to hide her past, but instead embraces the struggles she overcame as a part of who she is and as motivation to move forward into a better future. Her optimism shines through in everything she does, turning any unpleasant situation into something enjoyable. She is a hard worker and encourages the rest of her team to finish their daily tasks. The fact that she has remained sober for five years and continues to be so strong is something that acts as a self-motivator and an inspiration for anyone with whom she comes in contact.

Natalie has a sense of commitment that is emulated by her children and her colleagues. She says she “loves being clean” and delights in being able to work. To her, a paycheck doesn't mean a sum of money that she can go and spend. It is an opportunity for her to feel good about herself and to earn so that one day she can be financially secure and be able to send her children to college.

These hopes for a better future are the lights guiding the way down Natalie’s once-dark path. She knows that through Unitex she can earn the opportunity to have money in the bank and the life she desires. This job will help boost her employment experiences enough to possibly fulfill her goal of becoming a medical assistant. Natalie's dreams are simple: She wants to get married and “live in a house with a white picket fence” while working as a medical assistant and supporting her children. Yet these simple dreams provide the motivation and inspiration to lift anyone from a life of darkness into a life of the brightest light.

Dawn Henry
E-BizDocs

Dawn Henry is an exceptional individual whose positive attitude and outlook on life is admirable, considering the challenges she faced in her vocational career. Dawn worked very hard on conquering her disabilities and challenges when she began as a member of the Document Preparation Team at E-BizDocs in November of 2006. She excelled in her role as Doc Prep Specialist, preparing paper documents for digital scanning.

Dawn's performance has continually flourished. She consistently produces well-prepped boxes, and as a result, she has been assigned to many important projects. In October of 2008, she was selected to work on a special contract with the Dormitory Authority of New York State at their site. Dawn welcomed the extra responsibility with open arms. From the very beginning, she proved to be a valuable asset to this project. "I have a very comfortable feeling about Dawn being a member of the Dormitory team," Director of Operations, Ed Canary stated. "She possesses the knowledge, speed, accuracy, and training capabilities needed to get the project off the ground. She will be missed here at the home office."

Supervisor Tia Mingo has also recognized Dawn's hard work and spirited dedication to the team, and she recently nominated Dawn for Employee of the Month. “Thank God for Dawn. She has assisted me in so many ways from helping retrieve boxes, looking for specific documents, and training of employees.” Dawn was recognized with this distinction at a luncheon held at the home office in May of 2011.

Dawn has faced many challenges along the way, but she has achieved stabilization as well as self-confidence and financial success, and in doing so she currently lives in her own apartment and is very happy with her recent purchase of a 32” flat screen television.

Dawn is a valuable contribution to the E-BizDocs team. She is a hard-working employee who has proven on many occasions to her Job Coach Kate Sibson, her immediate supervisor Tia Mingo, as well as Director of Operations Ed Canary, her ability to meet both personal goals as well as production goals. Perhaps most importantly, she motivates her fellow employees to do the same.
At 58 years of age, Nelson Hooper is a prime example of resilience. He is motivated, patient and pleasant, and these attributes become apparent as soon as you meet him. After 20 years of alcohol abuse, Nelson checked into Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center Martin Luther King Jr. Alcohol Outpatient Department for help with his addiction in an attempt to put his life back together. He was referred to the F•E•G•S Porter Training Program in 2004 by ACCES/VR, formerly VESID. Through this program, he learned valuable skills of floor care, rug care, OSHA safety procedures, and more that he continues to use at his current job.

When a NYSID Preferred Source contract started at the Hauppauge State Office Building on Long Island, Nelson was referred for one of the porter positions. Although he lives 2½ hours away in the Bronx, it has not stopped Nelson from being on time or missing a single day of work in seven years! It didn’t take long for his work ethic and dedication to become apparent to his co-workers, supervisors and even the State Office Building’s superintendent. In 2007, Nelson, was promoted to team leader and is currently responsible for overseeing various projects at the Hauppauge State Office Building. He works with a crew of two to four people to ensure efficient and effective completion of projects throughout the building.

Nelson’s motivation to work and his willingness to help his fellow workers is evident every day. “Although he travels 2½ hours, he gets here early and is anxious to start working even before his shifts starts,” says Supervisor Mike Fahey at Hauppauge. Nelson loves his job because it allows him to make others happy which in turn makes him feel happy in all that he has achieved. He takes pride in his work and keeps himself extremely busy until the tasks at hand are completed. Through the NYSID Preferred Source Program, Nelson feels he learned professionalism and respect for others as well as himself.

On his days off, Nelson enjoys spending time with his family. He likes to play sports with his siblings and cards with his father.

Employment for Nelson through the NYSID Preferred Source Program has allowed him to work towards his goal of self-respect, and one day be able to retire and enjoy those years like the man he admires the most, his 83-year-old father.

Six years ago, Mike Jones had trouble finding a job anywhere, but it wasn’t for lack of professional skills. Known for showing up at interviews in a suit and tie, Mike gives 100% no matter what the situation calls for, an individual who balances the realities of working as a custodian with the pull of ambition and dreams. Mike enjoys the hard work and routine that his job as a custodian brings while paying attention to other opportunities that could enrich his life. He recently completed his two-year degree in math and science, and holds a Regents diploma from high school. Mike is a go-getter, and doesn’t let anything – even Cerebral Palsy – stop him from achieving what he sets out to do.

Mike began as a custodial cleaner for Oswego Industries, Inc. in 2005 at the Syracuse Developmental Center, and he has shown aptitude and grace as an employee ever since. He repeatedly shows a willingness to move beyond the scope of his duties, to adapt to a changing environment and to be professional every day. One year ago, Mike applied for and was awarded a different position on the custodial crew at Syracuse City Hall. His presence and continued welcome at the Syracuse City Hall speak volumes about Mike’s professionalism, as does his recommendation letter from the head custodian on the City Hall crew, who has declared Mike to be “about as close as it gets” to perfect, and who vouches for the fact that the employees at City Hall love Mike and look forward to seeing him every day.

“He has impressed me since the very moment I met him,” stated Jody Lamitie, interim Custodial Division Manager for Oswego Industries, Inc. In addition to being known for his pleasant mood, Mike is lauded by supervisors for always being prepared, a trait well accompanied by his quiet confidence.

A young man still in his twenties, Mike Jones has a lot of future stretching before him. He aims to obtain his driver’s license, and loves to play paintball and with his modified RC car. Mike acknowledges that he is not exactly sure what’s in store for him next, but he’s clearly excited to meet the challenge. In his well-prepared way, Mike confidently stated, “It’s good to have a well-rounded background and knowledge either way.”
**Sheila Kazlauckas**  
Wayne Arc

Life started out positively for Sheila Kazlauckas, as one of six girls born into an Air Force family. Sheila was born in Japan, then lived in England, Texas and Utah where her family finally settled. The family lived off the land and became very self-sufficient, growing their own food, clearing land and building with their own hands. Sheila learned how to work hard and loved working with her hands; getting dirty was just part of her day. After graduating from high school, Sheila married and had four children, eventually moving to western New York.

Unfortunately, Sheila’s world turned upside-down when she had a breakdown and was hospitalized. After she was released, Sheila decided she must get her life put back together again. In 1999, she was recommended for services through ACCES/VR, formerly VESID, and began working at Wayne Arc in the janitorial department. Sheila has worked at several sites and eventually ended up at the Finger Lakes DDSO, a NYSID Preferred Source contract.

Sheila is always willing to help out wherever she is needed. Her many years working in janitorial make her an asset to her cleaning crew. The income that Sheila makes through the NYSID contract keeps her comfortable in her own house and helps pay her living expenses. It also helps with her favorite hobby, gardening, which brings her back to her childhood memories.

Sheila has always put her children first. No matter how hard her life might once have been, Sheila refused to let it deter her from raising her children properly. Due to this commitment to her children, they have all grown up to be successful in their lives and chosen careers. She has also been blessed with several grandchildren that bring a smile to her face when she talks about them. They are truly Sheila’s pride and joy.

When Sheila talks of retirement, it is not to stop working, but to volunteer wherever she is needed. It is her wish to give back to those who helped her. Sheila appreciates Wayne Arc for giving her a chance all those years ago and contributing to one of the best experiences of her life. Sheila’s infectious smile and her determination to succeed are an inspiration to all who know her.

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**Daniel Kopp**  
Madison-Cortland County Chapter  
NYSARC, Inc./Alternatives Industry

For many people with disabilities the road to employment can sometimes have obstacles. At Madison Cortland NYSARC, we believe that with the right training and support, all individuals can reach their full potential.

Daniel Kopp realized his life needed to change when his mother needed to seek treatment at a long-term care facility. Dan, who has a developmental disability and is blind in one eye, had lived with his mother and sister for 15 years without receiving vocational services. With his mother gone and his sister at work, Dan decided to enter the workforce and set goals for his future.

Dan had some early experience at a workshop facility in Oswego in the past, and wanted to return to a similar setting at Alternatives Industry in Oneida, a business enterprise of Madison Cortland NYSARC that employs people with developmental. Individuals who work at Alternatives Industry receive support and training to assist them in improving confidence and job skills.

When Dan began production work at Alternatives Industry a year ago, he had trouble keeping up with the product assembly pace of his co-workers, yet he did not let this challenge bring him down. With hard work and determination, Dan demonstrated patience and stuck with it, working as hard as he could to focus on required tasks and learn new skills.

Dan now works in a clean room at Alternatives where work projects include bearing assembly, which involves taking a small steel ball the size of a BB, resting it on a magnetic platform and snapping it into each end of a plastic wand. “I am going to do this pile today,” he said, gesturing to a six-inch high pile of pencil-sized plastic wands.

Dan has also been assigned in Alternatives’ Food Processing division, which handles food-based contract work such as vegetable processing and portion-controlled margarine chips, a NYSID Preferred Source contract. His favorite job is packing the margarine in boxes and preparing them for shipment, where he feels like part of an important team.

“If I didn’t work here, I’d be bored,” stated Dan with a smile, while snapping another bearing into place. “I like making a paycheck.” He would like to stay at Alternatives and keep improving his job skills. He is happy with his work and family life, and spends a lot of time with family and friends when not working. Dan was recently profiled in the local paper under the headline of “Hard Work Yields Positive Results.”

Dan appreciates the team atmosphere at Alternatives and has made numerous friends. In his own words, he “wouldn’t trade it for the world.” Dan is a success story, a prime example of setting goals and reaching one’s potential: “I am very proud of myself for working so hard.”
Frank LaMarche
Jefferson Rehabilitation Center

Frank LaMarche is a 38-year-old Watertown resident who has faced many challenges, including an intellectual disability, medical condition and sensory impairments, and yet has made much progress. Frank has gone from living at home with his parents, to living in a supervised group home, to now living in an apartment with one other person and part-time staff support and supervision. He has also become more independent on the job, where he is very dedicated to his work.

Frank graduated from the BOCES Special Education Program and started with Jefferson Rehabilitation Center’s Production Unlimited 18 years ago. Through the years, he has worked on a variety of jobs through the NYSID Preferred Source Program, gaining many employment skills and becoming more independent. Frank's current assignment is on the three-ring binder contract where he completes a variety of tasks including loading and unloading materials and shipments, preparing materials for production and working on the machinery to produce the binders. Frank is currently the only person certified to utilize an electric pallet jack for the movement of materials and products. He has excellent attendance and works hard to complete orders as required. Frank has been commended recently for improvements that he has made with his interpersonal skills at work. He has many friends at work and is helpful to others.

The wages that Frank receives have enabled him to have a comfortable lifestyle in the community. He has acquired many personal possessions, including his computer which he likes to use during leisure time. This year, Frank was also able to take vacations in Las Vegas and in Florida for baseball’s spring training.

While Frank enjoys his current work, he is also looking to the future and further employment opportunities. At this time, he is being referred for an Internship Program so that he can make further advancements and ultimately work in the community through the supportive employment program. Frank’s goal is to someday work on machines at New York Air Brake like his father once did. His employment through the NYSID Preferred Source Program will assist him in working towards this goal.

Carol was born in the Bronx where she lived with her mother and father until her mother passed away when Carol was only two years old. After being cared for by older siblings, she lived with various foster families until she was 18 years old. Carol graduated from Maxwell High School in Brooklyn, and immediately went to work at the United Cerebral Palsy Center’s sheltered work shop. She also worked with small children and volunteered in the linen room of a hospital. When she moved up to Orange County with her brother and sister-in-law, Carol went to work at Occupations, Inc.

Carol moved away from her family to a community residence in Sullivan County, coming to Sullivan Arc in 1996. Carol started working in the Sullivan Industries production center on various jobs and machines, including the rotary machine where she made good money. True to Carol’s nature, she progressed from there and went to work in the Employment Service Program at various places in the community such as the Concord Resort Hotel and N & P Jewelry. Carol started working on NYSID Preferred Source contracts in 2002 performing custodial services at the NYS Department of Labor. She took on an additional NYSID contract at the NYS Department of Health in May of 2010. Carol likes to work cleaning the bathrooms, dusting and emptying the trash. Her vocational progression assisted in her moving into a supervised apartment, and then to a supported apartment where she continues to live today with one roommate.

Carol is a very hardworking individual who likes to make money. She loves working at the Department of Health and Department of Labor because the people there are nice and the jobs pay well which enables her to go shopping for food, clothes and accessories for her house. She also enjoys having her hair done. Carol has a good work ethic, putting aside her personal dislikes (such as getting her hands dirty) in order to do the jobs that pay the best. She also loves to just help out answering the office phone if the staff person steps out, delivering things or conveying a message when needed. She is very responsible in the sense that if she sees something that is out of place, unusual or of any concern, she will report it immediately. Carol is very trustworthy and has a high level of integrity on the job.

Carol has a wonderful personality and is always a pleasure to have around. She loves to eat out, go to movies, go dancing, and attend parties. Having the opportunity to work and make money on NYSID contracts has enabled Carol to feel good about herself, gain more independence and be in control of her own home and finances.
“Jawonio is a wonderful special place with very dedicated people who make you feel like family. I highly recommend Jawonio to anyone with a disability.”

These are the words of 40-year-old Thomas Lombardi, who has battled bipolar disorder since 1989. It was around the summer that Tommy, as he prefers to be called, was working as a caretaker at an upstate campground. His family noticed him showing signs of anxiety and depressive behavior which led to bouts of violent outbreaks, so they enrolled him for treatment at a Westchester facility. During the eight months that Tommy was there, he completed courses necessary to gain his high school diploma. A few years later, Tom relapsed and immediately started showing symptoms of anxiousness and anxiety as well as violent behavior. He voluntarily checked in to another treatment facility for several months. Tom is delighted to report that since then he has taken medication regularly and has experienced no other relapses.

Tommy came to Jawonio on the recommendation of a friend in 2000, and he started working on NYSID Preferred Source contract at the Blaisdell Psychiatric Center as a cleaner. He left briefly in 2004 to pursue his CDL license, which he obtained after passing the test. But Tommy soon discovered it was not for him, and returned to his position at Blaisdell a short time later where he has been since.

Tommy has lived in an apartment on his own for two years now. He has been dating a woman for seven years, and hopes to one day marry. Much of Tommy’s time now is spent helping care for his elderly father who as of this writing is fighting bone and lung cancer. Tommy lost his brother earlier this year to a brain seizure.

When he’s not working at Jawonio or tending to family needs, Tommy has been a volunteer fireman with the Stony Point Volunteer Fire Department for nearly a year. He’s presently on an official leave of absence to care for his father. Years ago, he was a volunteer fireman in Pennsylvania where he proudly says his most gratifying experience was in extricating an elderly woman from a car accident utilizing the Jaws of Life. Tommy hopes to remain a volunteer fireman as long as he can because “it gives something back to my community and helps me feel better about myself.” This sounds good to us.

Tommy is a motivated and highly independent employee who is reliable, responsible and well thought of by his peers and supervisors. He has demonstrated a steady work history for the better part of 10 years despite his disabilities and is willing to help out in other areas if needed. Tommy has come a long way since he has been here and deserves the Outstanding Performer recognition.

An employee of The ReHabilitation Center for the past 22 years, Lynn McAllister is a vital member of the Subcon Industries work team on NYSID Preferred Source stamp pad products. Lynn is a versatile employee who can perform all 13 jobs in the manufacturing process, including assembling and labeling cases, running a die-cutter, and shrink-wrapping the final product. He is a well-regarded employee who demonstrates many of the characteristics valued in a workplace: cooperation, respect, a positive attitude, and consistent quality work performance.

Lynn is diagnosed with a developmental disability, and has a mild gait impairment due to a hip fracture around 1980. His first job was at Allegany County Chapter NYSARC, Inc./PWI in nearby Wellsville, where he worked in the assembly operation. He eventually relocated to Olean in 1989, and was subsequently hired at Subcon. Since that time, he has excelled at all jobs in the workshop and demonstrates a strong work ethic combined with an affable manner. His supervisor states that, “He can perform every job, including running the machines in our woodshop.”

Lynn especially enjoys running the shrink-wrap operation, and his productivity more than meets the standards of the contract. He recognizes that the time he spends at work is money in his pockets, which is most important to him. After Lynn had saved enough money, he purchased a riding lawn mower which he keeps at his brother’s home. When he visits for extended weekends, he mows the lawn there and also earns money by mowing for neighbors. Lynn and his brother enjoy spending time together hunting and fishing. He has developed a good balance of work and personal pursuits, and is very content with life.

This year, Lynn’s goal has been to improve his productivity and earnings. He likes being paid for the work he produces, and appreciates the opportunity to benefit from NYSID’s goal of creating employment options for people with disabilities. Lynn has developed the skills to make positive choices, both at work and at home – to live a rich and rewarding life.
Mittie McFadgen
Lifespire, Inc.

Mittie McFadgen is a 55-year-old Bronx resident who has attended Lifespire’s Bronx Comprehensive Services Center (CSC) for nearly 16 years. When Mittie first came to Lifespire, she was enrolled in the Day Habilitation program, eventually “graduating” to the Prevocational program. Mittie continues to participate in the Prevocational program where she assembles and packages items such as cutlery, crew socks, special occasion gift bags and paper products, all of which can be found at local community resources.

Mittie describes herself as a “hard worker” who takes pride in her output, showing growth in many areas over the years. She has shown growth in socialization, more specifically, getting along with others, working alongside others, and communicating her wants and needs. What’s more, Mittie learned how to meet the productive demands of the workplace. She proudly says that working and earning a paycheck not only allows her to save money, it gives her a sense of accomplishment. Mittie says that she doesn’t know where she would be and she wouldn’t know what she would be doing if it was not for working at CSC. Over the years, she has worked on NYSID contracts such as packaging crew socks and plastic utensils, taking her job responsibilities very seriously. In fact, she has only been absent twice in the past two years! Mittie works an average of 25 hours per week and averages between $40-$60 per week.

Mittie expressed that she enjoys helping others, and she spent many years caring for her elderly parents, taking on such responsibilities as cooking, cleaning and grocery shopping. Since her parents’ passing, Mittie has maintained these responsibilities in the home she shares with her brother, who is extremely proud of his sister’s accomplishments. An active church member, Mittie says that her faith has gotten her through struggles and hard times.

CSC staff and co-workers find Mittie a pleasure to work with. She is described as a kind, caring individual with a positive work attitude. She is also recognized as very conscientious about her work and assuring that deadlines for contracts are met.

Mittie is optimistic about the future, and says that she wants to learn how to travel independently so that she can work in her community some day in the human services field.

Robert McKnight
Occupations, Inc.

Robert McKnight is a 40-year-old Orange County resident who has confronted a variety of challenges, including a developmental disability, depression, low self esteem, and poor interpersonal skills. Hardworking and easygoing with a wonderful smile that he’s not afraid to use, Robert is confident in his skills but continues to strive toward bettering himself vocationally and personally. He faced challenges in school but still received his high school diploma in 1992, and according to Robert, “never looked back.”

After graduating school, Robert worked in a fast food setting and was very happy but wanted to make more money. He learned about the Occupations Janitorial Training program through his job coach. Encouraged by his father, he entered the Janitorial Training Program in May 1996. During the training, he had difficulty with the floor buffer and other equipment, but was excited for the opportunity and the possibility of getting a job at West Point when the training ended. After completing the Janitorial Training Program, Robert was offered a custodial position at Pershing Center, West Point in a highly-supervised setting. At first, he struggled with low self-esteem and lack of accomplishment. He had difficulty grasping the janitorial floor equipment, but with his supervisor’s constant reassurance and on-the-job training, he learned to use the buffer like a pro and Robert became “the floor man of Pershing Center.” With time, training and hands-on experience, he became independent and confident in his work relationships.

In 2006, Robert was offered a full-time position at a NYSID Preferred Source contract at Mid-Hudson Forensic Psychiatric Center (Richard C. Ward Addiction Treatment Center). Robert accepted the position making equitable wages and working in an independent setting. Recognized as a valuable member of this cleaning team, Robert continues to receive job coaching services to support him in the community.

Robert recently became “the man of the house.” He has taken on the responsibilities of paying the bills, doing the grocery shopping, making household repairs, cooking, cleaning, and watching his 11-month-old niece whom he spoils. Robert has become more independent and advocates for himself, and has set a goal to assist at other NYSID contracts working on the weekends for extra income. In his own words, he stated that being named as a Joslin Outstanding Performer is important to him: “I am so proud that I am doing things right. It shows that I have accomplished a job well done.”
David Mesnick is a 65-year-old gentleman who copes with a number of challenges including Bipolar Disorder, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder and Asthma. He is a quiet, focused man with many interests, residing with his wife in Poughkeepsie. David is an avid reader, and has an extensive music and movie collection. He enjoys a wide variety of musical styles and is often seen during his breaks listening to music while reading a novel.

In the 10 years prior to joining Gateway Community Industries, Inc. (GCI), David stated that he was “sick” and was not able to do much besides sit on the couch and feel sorry for himself. He tended to isolate himself from others and had difficulty communicating. At the encouragement of his wife, David joined Gateway in 1996. He began in GCI’s work center doing assembly work, but felt he had a hard time coming to work.

David’s supervisor recognized his abilities and began teaching him office products assignments, many of them NYSID Preferred Source contracts. Because of his capabilities, David learned to run most every office products machine with a high rate of efficiency, making him a very valuable team member. After his first year at Gateway, David’s production rate was at 59% of competitive norms. Because of his excellent work ethic and tremendous drive to set and attain personal work goals, David steadily increased his production rate every year until he achieved his goal of 100% productivity in 2002. To this day, David maintains a better than 100% rate of productivity, and continues to challenge himself with a high standard of performance.

Because of his determination for excellence, David was transferred to the office products department in 2007, where he worked almost exclusively on NYSID contracts. In 2009, Gateway consolidated all of its office products division in one location and David was one of those workers chosen for this assignment because of his diverse skills, commitment to quality and level of production. David commented that he feels like he is a valuable part of Gateway, and it has had a tremendous impact on his outlook. In 2010, David was asked to work five days a week for a two-week period in order to assist the Office Products Division meet a deadline on a NYSID contract job. David obliged and the deadline was met. With the wages he earns working on NYSID contracts, David contributes to household bills and groceries, and has stated, “Getting that paycheck makes me feel like I am worth something.”

David’s experience working on NYSID contracts at Gateway has made a profound impact on his life. He has been able to overcome a major part of his illness and has made strides in improving his communication skills with his wife and family. He says that he now likes to engage himself in things going on around him and in activities.

Marie Moncure has faced an array of challenges, consisting of a developmental disability, anxiety, and mood disorders over her 39 years. Marie is a fun-loving person with a contagious hearty laugh, which she brought to the Pilot Industries production center Ellenville in March of 2010. Since then, she has grown and prospered professionally and personally, frequently attending self-advocacy conferences in order to better herself and gain independence.

Marie takes pride in working on the NYSID Preferred Source Drug Testing Kit contract and has learned to do all required tasks in the process, including sealing on the Vertrod as well as quality control. When she is not working diligently on this important operation, she works on the blister machine. Marie is our top-quality person here: she seals about 5,000 pieces a day and is very flexible with excellent attendance. Kathy McCombs, Marie’s work coach, stated that, “Marie is a reliable worker who does not refuse jobs given to her and I enjoy working with her.”

Another professional stride Marie has made is that she is very close to independently running our Pilot Industries Café. She was the first person to work in the café, which has been running for about a year. Marie receives a little assistance from her work coach to help with the demands of the customers. She maintains the cash box, fills the cart and makes sales and change using the calculator. She also maintains the inventory and lets someone know when certain items are running low. Marie has also helped with shopping for the café and making lists of what items to purchase.

This past year, with the help of her work coach, Marie was able to obtain her library card and now takes books out independently from the local library. Reading is one of her pastimes, and she is exceptionally proud to have accomplished this for herself.

Marie continues to prosper at Pilot Industries Ellenville, and her wages are boosted by working on the NYSID contract. This allows her to go on vacations throughout the year, including a recent trip up to Lake George in the Adirondacks. Marie also diligently saves towards her dreams of working in the community and getting her own apartment. Upon being named a Joslin Outstanding Performer, Marie commented, “I am happy, excited and proud of my hard work.”
Tessa Montero
Chemung County Chapter NYSARC, Inc./Southern Tier Industries

Tessa Montero is a pleasant, kind woman of 35 years of age, proud to be living on her own in addition to accomplishing long-sought personal goals despite challenges along the way. Tessa has not had an easy road to walk as she has a developmental disability, but she also has overcome a history of substance abuse.

Tessa came to Chemung NYSARC Southern Tier Industries as a shy, kind employee, who barely spoke at all. Today is another story: she has grown to the point of enjoying her work while being in the midst of hundreds of people at the Elmira/Corning Regional Airport. Tessa has gone from having little knowledge of custodial work and equipment to operating all of the large custodial equipment on this busy NYSID Preferred Source contract.

At the outset of coming on the contract last November, Tessa only worked two days per week. But her drive and determination to get off public assistance, and her eagerness to perform her duties skillfully, have resulted in a current five-day work week. Tessa has truly earned a roster spot on one of the highest-paid NYSID contracts in the Southern Tier of New York.

Tessa has progressed into such a quality worker, she will subsequently be working independently at our largest NYSID contract; she’ll also be filling in when staff is unavailable. Tessa is a tremendous asset to the team at Southern Tier Industries, and we are proud to honor her journey to success with the distinction of Outstanding Performer. “I am proud of myself for working so hard,” Tessa enthused. “I want to be the very best at my job!”

Sarah Palmer
Columbia County Chapter NYSARC, Inc./COARC

Sarah Palmer came to Columbia County NYSARC’s vocational industry, COARC, directly from high school in October of 2000 with no work experience. Quiet and shy but with an interest in cooking, she was placed in the agency kitchen where she remained until it closed in 2003.

At that time, Sarah came out to the workshop floor and did piecework, eventually showing interest in a material handler position. Her supervisor worked with Sarah to show her how to check different jobs, do weigh-up and give credit for the amount of work performed. She did extremely well as a material handler and gained a lot of confidence in herself. After doing that for awhile, Sarah was asked to work in the molding department on the machines as a nest packer for certain jobs. As someone who likes to learn new things, she readily agreed to try working on the NYSID Preferred Source contracts for cafeteria cups and trays, and has been working on this contract for the past four years. Sarah’s ability to count and her attention to detail makes her a great asset to work in molding, enabling her to make a good paycheck. When not working in the molding department, Sarah works around the building as a messenger, is learning to answer phones for the receptionist and performs filing duties.

Sarah is also part of our Blended Opt's program that combines both Pre-Voc and Day Hab programs. She volunteers at Livingston Hills nursing home doing manicures, taking people to the different activities or just talking with the residents. If that weren’t enough, she volunteers at A Light Center for Women where she helps fold baby clothes and does filing when needed. Sarah is learning to use a computer, and once a month she will do a cooking class with her social worker as a part of her counseling. She looks forward to this time when she and a peer will make a meal and eat it for lunch.

Sarah is also receiving ACCES/VR (formerly VESID) intensive services through COARC’s supported employment department so she can eventually find a job in the community.

In her leisure time, Sarah loves to read and do crafts. She is always making something for someone, and also likes to do cooking and baking. She is constantly busy and has blossomed into a very accomplished woman. Sarah really likes to come to work each day because she likes to earn a paycheck and build on her skills. She says that making a good paycheck allows her to help her family and that it makes her feel like she contributes to the household. Sarah was both happy and surprised to be nominated for this award because she never expected it.

Sarah wants to continue to gain skills to hopefully get a community job and make money to save for her own apartment. She has many staff and programs that support her, and she has gained many skills, numerous friends and much confidence. Sarah Palmer is definitely on her way to accomplishing all her goals in life.
Wayne Parks

Wayne Parks is a 45-year-old man whose dedication, hard work, quiet confidence, humility, and sense of service are an inspiration to those who know him. Although shy and soft-spoken, Wayne possesses a great sense of humor and has worked in a variety of settings, including community enclaves during his 16 years with Continuing Developmental Services.

Wayne certainly has come a long way during this time. When he first started with the agency, it was common for him to withdraw or skip programs altogether, stating that he “didn't feel like coming.” Sometimes, Wayne would get upset, scream at the top of his lungs and run out the door. Now you can’t keep him away from work! For the past four and half years, Wayne has worked packing boxes of spices in the Unistel spice room for the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision under the NYSID Preferred Source contract. Wayne has also worked on filling 16 and 32-ounce bottles, labeling, material handling, and janitorial responsibilities in the spice operation. When questioned why he enjoys working here, Wayne responded, “I like making a paycheck and it has improved my self-esteem.”

Wayne has resided in a supported apartment for the past nine years. While he has enjoyed this experience and has gained many life skills, his personal dream is to live independently in the community. Wayne is excited to share that by the end of this year, with the assistance of his support team, that dream is going to come true! Wayne understands the value of a dollar, and is confident that he will be successful on his own.

It's important to note that Wayne not only works hard every day, he also plays just as hard. He has been an active participant with Special Olympics for 20 years, participating in golf, track & field and bowling. Wayne enjoys taking walks, watching comedic movies, reading, cooking (his specialty is pasta), spending holidays and occasionally weekends with his family. He also shared with a large smile that he is currently single but looking.

Wayne is recognized every day by his peers and staff for his commitment, professionalism and for being a terrific person.

Kirk Playford

Kirk Playford was born on August 9, 1973 in Kingston. Difficulties in speech and socialization were noted early on, and Kirk was eventually diagnosed as learning disabled. He finished high school despite the many obstacles faced both at school and personally and then lived at home for several years with no job or day program before moving to Schoharie County with his family. He then began working at Toe Path Industries in July 1999.

When Kirk first started at Toe Path, he was only able to speak a few words and knew some sign language. Today, he is able to carry on conversations, and has developed many friendships both at work as well as in the community. He obtained community employment through supported work in 2004 at a local recycling company and continues in this employment today. Kirk has also earned a NYS driver’s license and commutes to and from work on his own. He purchased his own vehicle and very much appreciates having that independence. He is proud of his independence and empowers his peers to be more independent as well. For a short time Kirk was living in a camper, but has now successfully obtained an apartment. To achieve his goal of purchasing a home, he has volunteered to participate in budgeting classes as well as a home buyer training program to increase his quality of life.

Kirk now maintains a split schedule between Toe Path and the Montgomery-Otsego-Schoharie Solid Waste Management Authority (MOSA). He is very happy working at both companies and notes that if he didn’t have those opportunities then he would probably just sit at home. A warm, soft-spoken gentleman who gets along with everyone, Kirk is a crucial worker when it comes to NYSID Preferred Source contracts. Over the past year, he has worked on several of these, and is a key contributor on each. Specifically, Kirk die-cuts all of the components required for the reflective vehicle graphics and unit identifiers produced by Toe Path Industries for the NYS Police. Additionally, he is a highly skilled and productive operator of our various automated and manual die-cutting systems that produce the floor maintenance pads and utility pads sold to NYS agencies through NYSID.

Kirk communicates that he feels good about his work and doesn’t get tired of it. Aside from the NYSID contracts, Kirk has taken on additional hours in our new redemption center, which offers community members an opportunity to return their cans and bottles at Toe Path. He has been a key member to that effort. Kirk has a dynamic personality and has developed great customer service skills. He works closely with his supervisors and his quality of work is noted to be exceptional. He also increased his productivity this year by 11%, which made him ineligible for Medicaid waiver pre-vocational services, a huge accomplishment.
Anthony Real
The Altamont Program, Inc.

Anthony’s story is an all too-familiar tale of pain and loss, but also of recovery and pride. At the very young age of 13, he was first exposed to illegal drugs. While he became a successful independent businessman in his own right before the age of 20 that provided employment to four other individuals, his growing chemical dependency soon overshadowed all else. In a brief span of time, his drug experimentation quickly and tragically developed into a serious addiction to both crack and heroin. It was not long before all of his money and attention was devoted to satisfying his growing drug problem. Before he knew it, he had lost his business and alienated his family. All the things that he had worked for and accomplished and all that mattered to him were gone.

Somehow Anthony found the inner strength to approach overcoming his demons. Without incurring any legal issues or problems, Anthony came to The Altamont Program after his sister called Father Young in distress. Displaying wisdom beyond his years, Anthony decided to stop living life on his own terms, wisdom beyond his years, Anthony decided to stop living life on his own terms, and he made up his mind to listen to the treatment professionals.

Since becoming a part of NYSID Preferred Source Solutions and The Altamont Program, Anthony’s prior experience in snow removal and the agency beginning a snow removal contract last year worked perfectly in achieving his treatment and employment goals. He worked in both a laborer and supervisory roles with equal passion and humility through the duration of the service. Today, Anthony is part of a new partnership with G-9 Turf, Inc., representing the Altamont Program and NYSID with dignity and professionalism in bringing cutting-edge synthetic turf to Preferred Source customers.

Anthony is a self-starter, a great worker with a true passion for doing quality work; customer service and satisfaction are paramount. He has latched onto the wounded-healer concept, and represents a new generation of this. He lives in the community, practicing a program of recovery, striving to help the next person. He has also demonstrated an authentic interest in volunteerism. He has re-established a relationship with his family, and is taking on personal responsibilities within the family setting. Gaining their trust has been one of Anthony’s proudest achievements, and he visited with them over the holidays for the first time in almost 10 years.

Anthony is very grateful for his job, his sobriety and the positive changes that have taken place in his life. And he is pleased about being part of something that helps so many others like him. In stark contrast to his prior life, today he has a job he loves, contact with his family, an apartment, independence, money in his pocket, and sobriety. He was named Client of the Month during treatment and also received a certificate of completion from his CALS class. He recently celebrated a year of being clean and sober. The Altamont Program is proud of the inner courage that Anthony has demonstrated, a second chance in life full of hope and fulfillment.

Timothy Reese
NYSARC Inc./Seaway Industries

Timothy Reese, Sr., is a 64-year-old gentleman who began his employment with St. Lawrence NYSARC in March of 2008 as a part-time Janitorial Crew Member. Due to a severe hearing loss as a result of his service in the Army Reserves as a heavy equipment operator, Tim had a difficult time finding work and was referred to our Agency through ACCES/VR, formerly VESID.

It didn’t take Tim’s supervisors long to realize what a great work ethic he possessed. Shortly after he began employment, he was asked to fill out an application for clearance to work at Seaway Industries’ state and federal sites. Tim received “favorable employment status” through the Department of Homeland Security in October of 2008.

Since that time, Tim has received excellent evaluations from his supervisors. The following are just some of his attributes: “always prompt; volunteers for overtime when needed; tolerates pressure at crucial times more than the average person; conscientious about neatness and orderliness, very polite and willing to help, always willing to listen and comply/very good attitude” – and those are just to name a few!

Due to Tim’s excellent work with St. Lawrence NYSARC, he was promoted to “fill-in weekend/holiday Supervisor” in September of 2009. Tim now supervises any number of crew members on community, federal, and NYSID sites such as Ogdensburg Mental Health and Hamilton Hall. He also supervises other NYSID sites as needed, as Tim can ALWAYS be counted on to step up and help out whenever he is asked.

Tim was born and raised in northern New York, has been married for 28 years and has five children. Since his wife sustained an injury at her job, he has been the sole family supporter. His wife continues to receive medical care for her injury, and Tim takes her for appointments once a month in Syracuse.

Tim stated that he grew up without a lot of money and always worked wherever he could get a job. His very first position was through the public school system as a janitor which gave him the skills he possesses in his current position with St. Lawrence NYSARC. Tim states that he is “proud to teach his crew members the skills that they need to perform their job(s) in the best possible manner.”

Tim was employed for 32 years with Newell Manufacturing where he made wire and packaged nuts, bolts, etc., but lost this position when the company closed. He then worked for Dew Industries (a Canadian company) where he made airplane “bridges” until laid off when the company returned to Canada.

Throughout his life, Tim Reese has overcome many obstacles and continues to be a valuable member of his community and a positive role model. Not only has he overcome disability, but his crew members understand his communication issues and have learned how to communicate with him effectively.
Guadalupe Rodriguez
Scarab Consulting

Guadalupe Rodriguez is pleasant, polite and helpful, and continues to be one of the best workers on the NYSID Preferred Source contract where she is employed. Due to a high fever when she was nine years old, Guadalupe lost her hearing. She attended School for the Deaf in Mexico City, Mexico where she completed the 12th grade. When Guadalupe moved to the United States to look for a better opportunity for herself, she experienced the added challenge of learning to sign in English. Her desire to work led Guadalupe to look for opportunities in different fields of work, and she even completed a culinary program.

In 2008, after being referred by ACCES-VR, formerly VESID, to F•E•G•S Deafness Employment Program, she was interviewed for a position with Scarab Consulting, a document duplication company and was hired as a file clerk through the NYSID Preferred Source Program. This position provided Guadalupe with stability and income that she longed for to help maintain her family, providing a better education for her young daughter and support for the expected second child.

Guadalupe hopes to one day be able to take her family to Mexico to visit her parents there and is grateful for the job she has because she feels it will give her the opportunity to achieve that dream. Upon being recognized as a Joslin Outstanding Performer, she offered, “I like that I am being recognized for being a consistent, hard worker. This is a good job because I like being productive and having lots of work.”

We would like to take this time to express gratitude and appreciation of Andrew Rosenbluth for his dedication and service to Terranova Fine Landscapes and its Preferred Source customers. Andrew is the consummate gentlemen and greets every day with a smile and positive attitude.

In his role as a landscape maintenance crewmember at the SUNY College at Old Westbury, Andrew has demonstrated care, attention to detail and a cheerful disposition that he brings to all of his endeavors. Andrew's interest in always doing an excellent job to “make the campus as beautiful as possible” personifies our company's commitment to ongoing improvement. Peers and customers alike notice his efforts and attitude regularly. Leadership by example is one reason why Andrew is an ideal Joslin Outstanding Performer.

Andrew's interest in helping people has made transitioning other disabled individuals into service a pleasure. Perhaps he draws from his experience as a single father, but Andrew always manages to exhibit great care and patience as a member of our team and shows everyone respect and support. He aspires to grow in his job and climbs that ladder every day, in spite of his disability.

In his own words, Andrew feels very grateful for the employment opportunity at Terranova, which has enriched his life: “I feel really happy that someone has acknowledged that I’m doing a good job. It makes me want to do an even better job.”

He's proof positive that the Preferred Source Program succeeds in putting people to work and bringing meaning to people's lives. Andrew loves his job and takes great pride in his service. He's become a keystone in our organization and an inspiration to us all.
The whirlwind sailing past everyone in the hallway is Mariano! He is a difficult man to pin down, always on the run and full of joie de vivre. At 27 years old, there is no stopping him, and for Mariano the glass is always half full no matter what the challenges. He has thrived in spite of a rough start, born three months prematurely and eventually being diagnosed as legally blind. As a result of hydrocephalus, he has a shunt to drain excess fluid, and his gait is unsteady due to cerebral palsy. Yet none of this deters Mariano in seeing all of life’s possibilities.

Mariano has long shown his initiative and drive, working as a top-notch document preparer and microfilm expert in Maryhaven’s micrographics department. He has worked on many NYSID Preferred Source contracts, including Suffolk County District Court, Suffolk County Family Court, Suffolk County Surrogates Court, Half Hollow School District, Brooklyn Appellate Court, and Brooklyn Grievance Committee. He loves the variety of this work.

Success at Maryhaven has only served to strengthen Mariano’s work ethic, and he uses his drive and vibrant personality to perform weekend duties as a dining room attendant at Taco Bell because it is impossible to keep a good man down. He takes his community job as seriously as he does with the courts, and it is with diligence that he cleans tables, clears trays and restocks supplies in the restaurant. However, it is Mariano’s attention to customer service and genuine hospitality that elevates his job performance above the ordinary. He takes the Taco Bell mission of “thinking outside the bun” to heart, and greets all the patrons with a big smile and his infectious personality. He is a bundle of first-class customer service energy, rarely seen in today’s fast food marketplace.

Mariano’s ultimate dream is to be a Christian rock star, playing his guitar and singing songs he has written himself. He is a fountain of information on music and singers, and he uses the latest technology to his best advantage. Mariano wears his headsets when he is working on the NYSID contract, and the courts would be amazed to see someone so happy to be doing their work! Occasionally, he may break into song.

Being nominated for the NYSID award makes Mariano feel “absolutely great,” and he is proud of the fact that he has been able to work both his NYSID job and his part-time job at Taco Bell. The work with NYSID contracts and the support he has received from his supervisors have been a major factor in encouraging his success and confidence in the future. Mariano takes great pride in the work that he does for NYSID, finding the ever-changing flow of documents fascinating.

Since February of 2009, Paul Singer has been a dedicated worker on the HARC Mobile Cleaning Crew. Along with the several HARC sites that are part of the Cleaning Crew’s routine, he cleans daily at the local DDSO office complex. Paul always has a positive mindset when he begins his work shift. He communicates openly with his supervisor and job coach and takes constructive criticism well, always trying to do what’s right and what needs to be done. Paul is also a very dependable worker and fills in for his co-workers whenever needed. What’s more, he has brought several possible safety concerns involved with the Cleaning Crew to management’s attention.

As an example, Paul noticed the lack of lighting in one of our building’s parking lots, and also suggested CPR/First Aid training for consumers who are working with the Mobile Work Crews one-on-one with their supervisors. However, it was not without hardships or road blocks that Paul strived to maintain his employment. In the summer of 2010, he had Carpal Tunnel surgery on one of his arms, putting him out of work for several months. Paul also copes with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), a condition that makes it hard to breathe. After Paul’s surgery on his arm, he strived hard to get back to work, attending regular physical therapy. Paul easily returned to work and says that while his arm movement is not the same as it once was, it does not get in the way of him working.

Paul lives independently in our community and actively plans for a brighter future thanks to his job and working on the NYSID Preferred Source contract. A role model to others, Paul volunteers daily for the Herkimer County Office of the Aging’s Meals on Wheels program and assists them with setting tables, preparing meals and doing dishes.

During the course of a Framework for Planning interview, Paul revealed his artwork to Herkimer Arc staff for the first time, showing off an impressive collection of detailed drawing of cartoon characters that he produced some years ago. Working with his counselor, he is now taking art classes. He loves to share his new artwork with staff, and he hopes to exhibit his work in galleries.
Karen Toma
Center For Disability Services

Sometimes an award presents itself. This is true for Karen Toma, for whom life has truly come full circle where her work is concerned. Karen has been linked to the Center for Disability Services programs since she was a child. During this time, she has faced significant physical and mental challenges, while being confined to a wheelchair.

Thanks to her high skills level, Karen became part of the Supported Employment Program at the Center for Disability Services, known as Employment Options. In 1996, she was placed in a clerical position with Newkirk Enterprises involving inserting and alphabetizing documents. After three years, the business became more and more automated, and Karen found herself with fewer hours. Eventually she left and returned to sheltered employment at the Empire State Plaza, a satellite of the Center, remaining there until 2008, working steadily to regain her self-confidence and overcome various health problems. In November that year, Karen requested and was granted a place in an enclave at Commercial Services, a for-profit mailing business of the Center for Disability Services. Karen was appointed a Mail Processing Clerk I, starting at minimum wage. She worked on a wide range of jobs including NYSID Preferred Source contracts for the NYS Insurance Fund, the NYS Department of Social Services and the NYS Housing Authority, as well as other smaller ones. She demonstrated flexibility and adaptability working on the various tasks and quickly learned new skills.

Starting off 2011, Karen was offered a 20-hour-a-week position at $7.40 per hour as an independent worker at Commercial Services, no longer under the constant supervision of the enclave. She demonstrated the capability to accept responsibility, and she has proven a totally reliable worker. Throughout this time, Karen’s self-advocacy has been an important part of her success.

Karen has a wonderful sense of humor and a kind, considerate attitude towards others. She is a joy to be around and brightens up the day of her fellow workers. Karen is very conscientious and always asks her supervisor to help her understand what is expected of her. She maintains focus, makes sure the job is done properly and welcomes quality control. Karen lives in her own apartment, and enjoys knitting, volunteering at the Humane Society and surfing the internet for new ideas and hobbies. She keeps the staff on their toes at the apartments where she lives with her practical jokes.

Karen has indeed come full circle and is once again an independent worker in the community.

Nancy Valder
Ontario County Chapter
NYSARC, Inc.

Nancy Valder is a 34-year veteran of Ontario NYSARC, having come to the agency after graduating high school in 1977. One of the original members of the “Workshop Crew,” Nancy was eventually placed on the Mobile Custodial Crew, which is comprised of three crews that clean three or four buildings every night. For years, Nancy was responsible for collecting trash on her crew. She did a fine job and always worked at a steady pace, her strength being consistency.

Nancy’s warm smile and gentle laugh is a guaranteed tonic for any daily stress. She would rather work than do anything else, and you can tell by the huge smile that she wears as she works every evening.

Nearly four years ago, the crew switched to a team cleaning concept where workers each have specialties and follow specific guidelines and routines. Nancy became a “Light Duty Specialist,” responsible for dusting, wiping down furniture and equipment, spot cleaning glass, and removing trash. Despite many attempts to help her meet all of the duties required of her specialty, she steadfastly remained solely focused on removing the trash. At the time, such allowances were made because it was possible to do so. However, as customer needs and requirements changed, this accommodation became increasingly difficult, so much so that about a year ago, there was real consideration as to whether this was any longer an appropriate placement for Nancy.

Nancy’s crew chief felt that moving her off of the crew devastate her, so he arranged a separate training for Nancy, utilizing DVDs, demonstration and hands-on learning. According to the crew chief, “Suddenly, things began to click for Nancy. I no longer needed to show her what to do. She beamed knowing that she had it, and I admit I got all teary.” In retrospect, it seems quite appropriate that this occurred at a NYSID Preferred Source contract building, one of the very same buildings where she had cleaned for many years.

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Nancy once was consistently the lowest-scoring Light Duty Specialist out of eight others for the entire crew. Each crew chief completes a weekly “report card” on each participant, scoring them on quality and efficiency. These evaluations had been at the center of the “appropriate placement” discussion. Nancy now leads the pack each and every week, outscoring other stellar performers. Long gone now are those questions regarding the appropriateness of the placement for Nancy.

Suddenly, Nancy wanted to know more, and approached the crew chief about learning to become a restroom specialist. She worked with the crew’s regular restroom specialist for a couple of evenings, and shortly later had that specialty mastered, too. Nancy then requested to be trained on a buffer to learn to buff floors! She is now in great demand by the other crews as a substitute for vacations and illnesses because she can fill in for TWO specialties. She is likely to be advanced to one of those teams as soon as an opening occurs.

Mr. William B. Joslin saw “employment as a key to individual success.” That statement has never sounded truer than it does with Nancy.
Robert Wienikes

Robert Wienikes is a 55-year-old veteran working for the landscaping company, Carlstrom & Ritter, a NYSID private sector business partner. Robert's situation is especially impressive because he was first hired for the company for seasonal snow removal work, but after seeing his hard work he was offered full-time employment.

Before his current work, Robert served in the United States Army from 1977-1979. He was first on U.S. soil in two different states for basic and infantry training, and then traveled overseas to Germany where he was in a mechanized infantry unit. Robert drove an APC113, a track vehicle, which held up to ten soldiers in the back. This sense of honor and responsibility has clearly followed through to his work after being released and returning home. In fact, his love of hard work is part of why he likes his current job. He says that it has enabled him to grow as a person and that it feels good to be able to go to work every day, especially since there are so many who are less fortunate. His army experience also shines through in the fact that he likes the physicality of his job and that it keeps him in shape, both physically and mentally.

After the army, however, Robert's life went on a downward spiral. He turned to substance abuse to deal with some of the pain, and at certain points it seemed as though there was nowhere to turn. He was somehow able to pull himself up though, in a way which can inspire anyone. He became clean and currently completely abstains from alcohol or any other drugs. He not only successfully maintains sobriety, but is so intent on his newfound responsibility that he says he continues to look for opportunities to “move up in society.” He is able to keep an open mind and deal with things as they come, a talent which many people lack.

Additionally, Robert has found an entirely new attitude. To speak to him, one finds a smiling, good-natured man. He always seems to be in a good mood and has an incredibly funny sense of humor and easygoing manner. He appreciates all that he has been able to achieve, and has learned not to take anything for granted. He has even been able to maintain a positive relationship with his son, who now lives in Colorado, as well as his brother. Robert is looked up to by his co-workers because of his diligence. His mantra is “idle time is the devil’s time,” and he holds true. He consistently goes to work and completes all tasks efficiently. He loves his $14.00 per hour paycheck for a 40-hour workweek, and says that it allows him to pay his bills and have some change in his pocket.

Robert truly cherishes his job and recognizes how lucky he is through the hard work that went into creating his luck. He has been completely successful in turning his life around and is finally on his way to finding the peace he desires.

Larry Williams

Larry Williams was born in Warrenton, North Carolina in 1956, the second youngest of seven siblings. After the death of his mother when he was only four, Larry was raised by an aunt while the remaining children were raised by another aunt. At the age of 16, Larry dropped out of school and moved first to New Jersey to live with his oldest brother and his wife, and then to Albany to be near one of his sisters. He enlisted in the Army in 1973 and was stationed in Germany before returning home.

In 1976, Larry went to work in a General Electric factoring setting and worked there until about 1980. It was at about this time that Larry began to experience some psychiatric issues along with drug and alcohol abuse that eventually led to legal involvement. For the next 25 years, Larry suffered from relapses and frequent hospitalizations as he struggled with his illness and its related medication issues. During this period of his life, Larry’s work experience was fragmented, including a brief attempt as a courier with Rehabilitation Support Services (RSS) which didn’t work out.

By 2004, Larry began to have success coping with his symptoms and medication. He obtained his GED and began to explore work options, including handyman and janitor employment. In 2008, he decided that he would give the RSS courier job another try, and the second time was a charm. Larry is now in his third year of employment as a courier and has proven to be one of the most dependable employees. He has trained across all of the NYSID Preferred Source courier contracts and is able to complete any route required. Larry has become so proficient that he now trains the new couriers, and has also volunteered for specialty runs that require difficult navigational issues.

Larry is an imposing figure at 6’2” although a man of few words. When you get to know him, you find him to be caring and thoughtful. He takes his job seriously and understands the importance of being dependable and prompt. Larry is always there to lend a helping hand, and goes out of his way to cover a co-worker’s shift when needed. He is well liked by his co-workers and has received many compliments from satisfied customers. His supervisor has nothing but positive things to say about him.

Larry strongly values family and remains in contact with his two children, a son in New York and a daughter in Mississippi. His long-term goal is to move on to a full-time job where he can utilize his newfound skills and dedication. RSS is proud of Larry and his accomplishments, and supports him as he pursues this goal.
In the 26 years that Trish Wilson has been working at Lexington Industries, she has proven to be a very dedicated worker and has grown in so many ways. She has worked full-time on a variety of jobs that include, but are not limited to: Leukemia Coin Boards, Labeling Bottles, Collating, Valve Press, and, most importantly, making Care Kits that are provided for the NYC Department of Homeless Services. Trish also has experience working in the agency’s cafeteria, quickly learning the routine and carrying out duties effectively.

One of Trish’s greatest assets is that she has the ability to adapt her skills to the necessary duties that a particular job requires, performing the job requirements well with minimal supervision. Trish has always had excellent attendance and is very punctual. She likes to be busy working and is willing to try any new job that becomes available. She possesses good concentration and precision skills.

On a personal note, Trish has learned to pay her own bills in order to improve her quality of life. She now lives with her mother, and her life has taken a turn for the better. Trish has gained new life skills since she has moved back in with her family. As a result of making good changes, her self-confidence has soared. These changes are apparent in Trish's daily motivation at work and with her personal independence.

Trish participates in pre-employment classes at Lexington Industries to help her to learn more about the world of work and further prepare for new employment opportunities. She assists in distributing materials to peers for these classes. Through her participation, she is recognizing what skills she has and can develop in regards to her vocational goals.

Staff has noted that Trish has grown as an individual and as a worker, challenging herself to do better on each and every job that she performs. Her production versatility is an asset that could not easily be replaced.

In Trish’s free time she enjoys doing crossword puzzles and helping around the house. She also enjoys shopping and has been a successful Avon representative for several years.

Fred Wood

Steuben County Chapter
NYSARC, Inc.

Fred Wood joined the Steuben agency 27 years ago, and has worked on NYSID Preferred Source contracts in the Printers Plus Screen Print Department for the past 12 years.

Fred is diagnosed with Mild Mental Retardation and Seizure Disorder, but that does not slow him down. He likes to stay busy and learn new jobs! He has worked for the agency’s Mobile Janitorial Crew, in the Industrial Solutions and Shake Away Department, and on mobile enclave jobs in the community. Fred has excelled in the Screen Print Department, mastering the fine art of printing apparel. Whenever there is a difficult job to squeegee (push ink through the screen onto the apparel by hand), Fred is called upon to do it. It takes a trained professional to make a print look nice, and Fred has this ability.

Fred knows the necessary screen-print tasks such as squeegee, pull apparel off the press and place it on the dryer, work the end of the dryer, perform quality control, set up screens for a job, and take them down and clean them. He can process a First Article inspection, and print five gallon pails and install handles on them. Fred hopes to someday own his own screen-print business and hire a team of expert workers like him.

Fred lives in a residential home in Hornell where he is a big part of his community. In the last few years, he has become actively involved in the local Relay for Life event, heading up his own team. Fred participates in team meetings, campaigns for team members and helps with fundraising. He feels good knowing he is helping others through this worthy cause.

After struggling with some health issues in the last few years, Fred has fought hard to get healthy in order to meet the rigors of a physically-demanding job. Following in the footsteps of Outstanding Performers before him, Fred Wood epitomizes the Steuben agency’s commitment to honoring excellence in Preferred Source employment.
Mitchell Woodbeck is a 47-year-old Oneonta resident who has overcome a variety of personal and professional challenges, including a developmental disability and difficulty with interpersonal skills. When speaking with Mitchell, one notices his soft-spoken manner and quiet disposition; however, after much conversation, you quickly notice the many layers to his personality. Mitchell is a loyal friend, an avid gardener, a member of the self-advocacy group, a sportsman, and a hard worker with the desire to get out on his own, start a family and be independent.

Mitchell has worked most of his life on independent living skills and social skills, areas which have been the biggest barrier to success both at home and at The Arc Otsego. After living with family, Mitchell lived at Broome Developmental Center and then at an IRA in Oneonta. Moving to Oneonta was a return to his hometown, a chance to develop better life skills and a positive outlook on life. Mitchell often had the view of “I can do what I want,” creating difficulties with authority figures. This attitude, along with lack of respectful conduct, prevented him from having steady work at the agency’s Vocational Training Center. Mitchell has now been at the Vocational Training Center two years running, showing success personally and professionally.

Since 2009, Mitchell has worked on NYSID contracts in the briefs packaging room, a longstanding Preferred Source contract. He works primarily as a Material Handler, but can run machines, count items and package products. Staff reports that Mitchell will step in and help without being asked, with a positive attitude and a sociable disposition. His peers feel that Mitchell guides and supports them when they are feeling overwhelmed, and he has kind words of praise when they are doing well – an overall team player. Mitchell feels that his employment experiences have helped him develop a better attitude, made him feel better about himself, and have given him the skills he will need to work in his community. He was named Worker of the Month at The Arc Otsego twice in the past year, and has also won flash awards for excellent work performance and perfect attendance awards.

Mitchell’s ultimate goal is to work in his community, live independently and start a family. Working on NYSID products has helped him meet his valued outcome of improving his work skills and participating in gainful employment, but it has also done so much more. Mitchell has moved to a less restrictive setting recently and enjoys living with his four roommates. The move also allows him to access the community with more independence than ever before.

Mitchell diligently pays his living expenses and engages in hobbies that make him happy due to having steady, enhanced wages from NYSID contracts. He is an avid gardener with a membership to Oneonta Garden Club, and also affords a local ski club membership. Buying gifts for close friends is something he enjoys doing as well as saving money for trips. Mitchell has shown us that however your story begins, it is possible to rise above adversity, improve your life and keep on smiling.

Emily Van started her career in eDocNY, the electronic document management company at Westchester Arc one year ago. At first, Emily was very quiet and only asked questions relating to her work. Work was her focus.

Emily is a very capable hardworking young lady, always arriving on time and rarely missing a day. She has continually expanded her skill set over the past year. At first she just scanned documents, and then trained to learn data entry. Emily is eager to learn and performs very well. She is currently learning how to scan specialized documents such as large scale drawings, and is proud of her performance. “I like working on a computer. I am good at it,” she commented. E-DocNY provides document imaging and scanning services to a number of state and local government agencies through NYSID Preferred Source contracts, and Emily is a major asset to the team’s ongoing success.

Emily has grown personally as well as professionally. Her supervisor, Natalie Davis, commented that, “Emily has become more outspoken and socializes with her co-workers more than she used to.” Emily has worked on changing her appearance and attire to look more professional. She talks about the pleasure she gets in visiting her grandmother and going to church.

Emily likes to work with computers and her career goal is to do that in a hospital setting. The experience that she’s gaining at EDocNY is laying the groundwork for her continued career development.
It has been a long road to success for Roberta Youmans, a road with many bumps, a number of potholes and several detours. By her own admission, growing up in West Clarksville with her five sisters was a struggle. She was placed in special education classes in third grade and still recalls the name calling, bullying and labels she and her friends from the class endured. School was filled with frustration for Roberta as she faced monumental challenges with reading and writing skills. She remembers working on her studies as hard as could, but learning never came easy. When Roberta received her General Education Diploma in 1979, she dreamed of a job to show all who doubted her that she could contribute in a workplace. But frustrated by her limitations, she was unsuccessful in securing employment.

Roberta married at age 25 and raised two sons, Donald and Edward. Her lack of vocational opportunities and her husband’s poor health forced her to rely on public assistance to support the family. Roberta said that becoming a parent increased her motivation to be a better role model for her boys. She once again sought employment, but had trouble filling out job applications and even reading the employment ads. It was truly a very frustrating time in her life. She felt trapped by the perceptions and stereotypes of her intellectual disabilities, yet her primary focus was parenting and trying to hold the family together.

In 2000, Roberta was referred to the Allegany NYSARC’s PWI vocational program by the local Department of Social Services job track program. At the age of 41, after years of social isolation and unemployment, she finally began earning the paycheck she had dreamed of as a teenager. For the first time in her life, Roberta felt a sense of control over her life, gaining a significantly improved self-concept and positive social relationships with a wide circle of friends. Roberta started as an assembler on the DNA Data Bank Collection Kits, proving to be reliable and highly focused on quality. She also worked on assembling DNA Suspect Control Kits and TBTA boom gate covers. She is now involved with quality control on the kit contracts with the NYS Division of Criminal Justice, a critical PWI contract.

Sadly, Roberta’s husband of 24 years passed away in 2007, but she made it through this difficult time with the support of her caring friends and family. A true friend to all who has helped several co-workers deal with their own difficult personal challenges, Roberta has achieved genuine happiness in all aspects of her life. She is a proud grandmother to Aiden, Donald and Dillon. She enjoys camping and four-wheeling in her leisure time.

Roberta was humbled when told of her nomination for the William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Awards Program. Her struggle to overcome poverty, prejudice and limited access to the resources that most of us take for granted is compelling. The NYSID Preferred Source Program provides more than a paycheck; it offers dignity, increased self-confidence and the opportunity for Roberta and countless others to earn their own way.
Robert Wells  
Gateway Community Industries, Inc.

Robert has confronted a variety of challenges, including a developmental disability, a mood disorder and scoliosis over his 47 years. Joining Gateway Community Industries 20 years ago, he was unable to read, use public transportation or handle money, and was limited by poor stress tolerance, limited work endurance and a need for constant supervision. His experiences working on NYSID Preferred Source contracts over the years have helped him develop skills, access natural supports and overcome barriers. Today, he manages the performance, interpersonal and intrapersonal expectations of the workplace, to live an integrated, fulfilling life.

“I am happy that my years of hard work have been recognized. This award is the highest honor I have ever received. Nothing can top this!”

Mike Miles  
Oswego Industries, Inc.

Mike's fundamental core values and character attributes formed the basis for his exceptional employment success at Oswego Industries, despite challenges with emotional/mental health disabilities. An integral part of a 12-person custodial crew working at a local DDSO building, Mike has an excellent rapport with the customer and has been commended by staff many times. This job success has allowed him to move to independent living in his community where his life philosophy and personal conduct enriches the lives of others in numerous ways.

“Anyone with a disability can achieve accomplishments. If you can work, you should because it helps make you feel important.”
Linda Rollins  
Rochester Rehabilitation Center

Linda came to Rochester’s janitorial division, after physical and emotional rehabilitation for injuries from a devastating house fire. A supervisor and a job coach worked closely with her, teaching Linda how to use her hands to open garbage bag liners, clean restrooms, and mop floors. She was eventually hired for the evening cleaning crew on the NYSID Preferred Source contract with Finger Lakes DDSO Monroe Development. Linda continues to improve, has obtained a driver’s license and car, and is active in the Phoenix Society, an international group that assists burn survivors.

“Receiving this award made me feel special. I feel really good about myself. I like my job and my co-workers, and my job helps me feel responsible and independent.”

Frank Lange  
Steuben County Chapter NYSARC, Inc.

A member of the shipping and receiving department since 2001, Frank is proficient in every aspect of distributing NYSID Preferred Source apparel products to customers like the NYS Office of Parks & Recreation and its renowned Empire State Games program, and other state entities. His leadership abilities and determination to succeed are evidenced by his serving on the agency’s Workers’ Advisory Council, being an agency fire safety trainer, and giving to the local community as a volunteer firefighter.

“I felt special...I can’t believe I took the whole state of New York!”
Mark Daube
Genesee County Chapter NYSARC, Inc.

A full-time employee at the agency’s Recycling Center, Mark is an extremely reliable and congenial team member, who has been recognized on several occasions as Employee of the Month. He also works hard to advocate for changes in the workplace to benefit his co-workers. Mark gives back to his local community by helping deliver Entenmann’s Bakery products to the Salvation Army, soup kitchens and local churches for the good of the Genesee County area community.

“I like having this award, even if I was speechless when my name was announced.”

Matthew Maxwell
Continuing Developmental Services/Unistel

A willing but once uncertain worker, Matt steadily increased the quality and speed of his job performance, becoming a self-motivated employee who completes tasks efficiently and looks for more to do. An ordained deacon, Matt gives back to his community in countless ways. His dedication, hard work, humility, and sense of service are an inspiration.

“Even though I was very nervous, I was honored to be recognized for my good work. Thank you to everyone at Unistel and to my family for helping me to win this award.”
2004
Joslin Outstanding Performance Award

Kasey Knott
Allegany County Chapter NYSARC, Inc.,/PWI

Kasey’s inspirational story of growth and independence personified the inception of NYSID’s new Joslin Awards Program: to recognize the diverse abilities and accomplishments of New Yorkers with disabilities. Through Preferred Source employment opportunity, she developed impressive vocational skills and a strong work ethic, helping her to move from dependence to a life in the community full of choices.

“I was very surprised and pleased to be awarded the Joslin Award... it made me feel like a movie star.”