

Providing employment and other services to people with disabilities for over 40 years

Achiever

Building skills, careers and independence

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Newsletter of



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Hitting the big time -

Work at the Capitol!

It all started with a street light.

Brad Worcester's involvement with politics, that is. When he learned a new street light was to be installed in his neighborhood, he began attending city council meetings to find out what would be happening. He's been interested in politics and active in his local government ever since. Most recently, Worcester moved from local involvement to participation on the state level.

Worcester began work at the Minnesota State Capitol as a Fellow in the MNWorks! Capitol Internship program. He will work there through the 2011 legislative session.

He is pictured here, (second row, second from right) with other 11 Fellows chosen from throughout the state for the MNWorks! program. Read more about his job and journey inside on page 3.



Legislators tour Achieve

Two members of the Minnesota Legislature recently visited Achieve to learn more about the program. Senator Pam Wolf and Representative Tom Tillberry, both from Achieve's district, spent time at Achieve, learning about different employment opportunities available through the program.

"We had the opportunity to show them the creative employment ventures that Achieve has facilitated," said Jim Rooker, program manager. "They also learned about what our participants and families value about our services and what would happen without them." Rooker initiated the tours. "I set up the tours because I wanted the legislators to see the kind of work we do," he said. "They will be asked to make decisions that will effect our funding and I wanted them to see firsthand what that would mean."

Rooker described the visits as positive. "Both Senator Wolf and Representative Tillberry have backgrounds in education, so they were familiar with disability needs," he said. "We were happy to have the opportunity to give them a hands-on look at our program."



Senator Pam Wolf (left) and Representative Tom Tillberry (below with two Achieve participants), visited Achieve to learn about employment opportunities available through the program.



Information is POWER

Want to learn more about how government affects programs like Achieve? Wondering what you can do to have an impact? Just looking for more information? Check out these sites online:

Minnesota Legislative Reference Library - Home to all the links below and many more.
www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/links/disabled.asp

Disability Minnesota - A gateway to disability-related information and programs available across the Minnesota state government including accessibility, benefits, community life, education,

employment, housing, health, rights, technology, and transportation.
www.mndisability.gov/public/

Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities - The Council works toward assuring that people with developmental disabilities receive the necessary support to achieve independence.
www.mnddc.org/

Minnesota STAR Program - A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) provides a wealth of information about assistive technology.
www.starprogram.state.mn.us/

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Homepage - This U.S. Department of Justice site provides a variety of information on the ADA.
www.ada.gov/

Disability.gov - A comprehensive federal website of disability-related government resources.
www.disability.gov/

National Council on Disability - An independent federal agency that makes recommendations to the President and Congress on issues affecting Americans with disabilities. The NCD Bulletin and numerous NCD reports are available.
www.ncd.gov/



Achieve participant accepted to MNWorks! Capitol Internship Program.

The Minnesota Capitol – it's a place of honor, prestige, recognition and big decisions; and, it's a place that Achieve participant, Brad Worcester, will get to know very well.

Worcester is one of 12 adults with disabilities throughout Minnesota chosen to serve as a Fellow in the Minnesota Works Capital Internship Program. He was nominated for the position by Patti Beightol, Achieve training specialist, and was selected based on his demonstrated commitment to his work and his desire to explore career opportunities.

The Capital Fellowship Program was created to engage the Minnesota Senate in providing persons with disabilities opportunities to demonstrate their capacities to participate in work performed in the Minnesota Legislature and at the State Capitol.

In addition, the program seeks to mentor participants on careers of the future and provide honor and recognition to those in the disability community who have demonstrated commitment to work and exemplary performance on the job.

According to Jim Rooker, Achieve program manager, that's Worcester in a nutshell. "Brad truly does set an example for others," he said. "He was a natural nominee for the program. He has worked at Medtronic for years and the skills he has honed there will be a great resource at the Capitol."

It isn't all that surprising that Worcester is interested in the political spectrum. His family has roots in Minnesota politics as his great, great uncle, Hjalmar Peterson, served as the 23rd Governor of Minnesota

in 1936. Worcester got interested in politics himself after attending city council meetings in his home town of Columbia Heights.

During the fellowship, Worcester will spend one day a week at the State Capitol during the 2011 legislative session. Worcester will be mentored by Senator Patricia Torres Ray and Senator Kenneth S. Kelash. As part of his work, Worcester will work on prepared projects, attend senate meetings and participate in group projects with other Fellows.

The Capital Fellowship program is co-sponsored by MN Works! and Minnesota Senator, Kathy Sheran.

MN Works! Is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and implement business and marketing initiatives that provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The organization works on behalf of licensed vendors to coordinate and respond to solicitations or other requests from private and governmental units in order to increase employment support for persons with disabilities.



Achieve participant, Brad Worcester, takes a break from his work at the MN Capitol to pose in front of a painting of his great, great uncle, Hjalmar Peterson, who was the 23rd Governor of Minnesota.

Desired outcomes of the MN Works! Capitol Internship Program:

- Participating Fellows will be mentored by co-workers at the state senate and the hosting senator.
- Participating Fellows will utilize their work experience, the colleagues they have worked with and the mentors they have had the opportunity to learn with to expand their career opportunities.
- Having people with disabilities recognized for their contributions to the state's workforce will communicate the vast capabilities, scope of careers and functions people with disabilities fulfill.
- Communicate to business and industry the quality work people with disabilities can provide to their organization.

Collaboration: *Deviant Art: Dispelling Myths*

Achieve participants are no strangers to dispelling myths.

For decades they've been demonstrating their abilities and proving that the myths about people with disabilities are just that: myths.

Now some talented Achieve participants are going to take their myth-destroying abilities one step further by coming to the aid of dogs that live under the shadows of unwarranted myths.


Deviant Art: Dispelling Myths will showcase the third annual celebration of 'deviant' breeds of dogs through art. Over 20 professional and emerging artists explore their craft through paint, clay, photography, jewelry and more. **This art will be on display during the Deviant Art Show on April 7 from 5 to 9 pm and April 9 from 3 to 9 pm at the Northrup King Building, gallery 332 – 1500 Jackson Street NE, – in Minneapolis.**

"There are 19 Achieve artists who could potentially have items on display. This will be our second year participating in the show," said Jim Rooker, program manager.

Rooker explained that all artwork has a tie-in to the myth-busting theme. "The show is specific to dogs, so the art has to relate to that," he said.

The event is sponsored by **A Rotta Love Plus**, an organization dedicated to finding new homes for Rottweilers and pit bulls, raising breed awareness, educating the public and advocating for the humane and equal treatment of all dogs without prejudice. For more information check out their website at www.arottalove.org.

The event has the potential to do a lot of good on a lot of levels. "The participants

benefit from having their art on display at a formal gallery," said Rooker. "In addition, we hope some pieces will sell, providing a source of income for the artist. It is also a way for artists to give back to the community, as a portion of all sales go back to A Rotta Love Plus." 



Examples of Deviant Art, which will be on display. Right: *The Golden Visitor* by Jessie Lawson.



Left: *Pit bull portraits in oil* by Sarah Thornton.


THE CANDY MAN CAN...

Achieve candy machine soon to be in multiple locations

What's not to like about candy? Apparently not much, as Achieve participant, Dave Mohler, recently found out. In a previous issue of *The Achiever*, we reported the Mohler was looking for a "home" for a coin-operated candy machine.

"We had several calls resulting from the article," said Jim Rooker, program manager. "It was really encouraging to get such a response and know that readers are willing to assist us with our ventures."

The positive response led to a problem, of sorts. "I had to work quickly to get additional machines to accommodate the need," said Rooker. "It was a good problem to have."

The first candy machine was placed at **Cottage Quilts in Elk River (16860 Hwy 10)**. "We are currently working with two other businesses to place machines there also," said Rooker. "In the meantime, there's still the machine at Achieve. It's been doing pretty good business as well," he said. 



Years of Service - Recognizing participants for longevity on the job

Each year, Achieve participants are recognized for their tenured service to the program. Twenty-three participants were honored at the 2010 Years of Service Awards at Achieve.

Receiving Awards for 5 Years of Service:

- Brian Chong Stephanie Olivier
- Debbie Gilliam Allene Pruet
- Renee Hanks Abigail Sheehy
- Stephanie Hart Renee Thompson
- Jeff Johnson

Receiving Awards for 10 Years of Service:

- Laura Glauner Kristina Svanda
- Denise Kanaly Steven Windhauser
- Dan O'Connor



Spotlight on Gary Eckhardt

Little known facts about Achieve's 35 Year's of Service Award Recipient

- Gary is a die-hard sports fan and often shows it by wearing Vikings, Twins or Minnesota Gophers clothing.
- When Brett Favre returned to football, Gary was the first to make the announcement at Achieve after hearing it on the radio.
- Gary's favorite radio station is WCCO because he loves to listen to and talk about politics (and sports).
- Gary has a pulse on current events – both locally and globally and enjoys discussing them with others.
- He likes to keep busy and has done just about every job available in Achieve's shop.
- Gary loves eating out at restaurants.

Receiving Awards for 15 Years of Service:

- Kelly McAlpin Michael Rapacke
- David Perry Barb Zimmer
- Chad Peterson

Receiving Awards for 25 Years of Service:

- Bob Boggs
- Kelli Palmer

Receiving Awards for 30 Years of Service:

- Michael Belden

Receiving Awards for 35 Years of Service:

- Gary Eckardt

Congratulations to all award recipients!

Your hard work and dedication are a tribute to Achieve. Your efforts and skills are appreciated.



"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

Theodore Roosevelt



Michael Beldon (top) and Gary Eckardt (below) received awards for 30 and 35 years of service, respectively.



Achieve fundraiser - Come for the food, stay for the laughs

"Never have I seen such a downright goofy performance and wanted more." So says the Des Moines Register about comedian, John Bush, who will provide entertainment at Achieve's Sixth Annual Fundraiser on April 16.

John's rock solid comedy show covers it all. From his childhood relocation from Hawaii to Minnesota to UFO sighting in New York, this thrill ride is filled with rich characters, spot-on impressions and even a disgruntled squirrel.

John has performed for audiences of all shapes and sizes. Whether it's opening for

Howie Mandel at Ceasars Palace or tickling some Irish ribs in Dublin, John isn't stingy when he gives out the laughs.

Join the fun with Achieve on April 16!



6TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Get on Board!



With

Saturday April 16

Majestic Oaks Golf Club

701 Bunker Lake Blvd, Ham Lake

Tickets **\$45**

- Buffet dinner
- Silent auction
- Raffle
- Cash bar

FEATURING ENTERTAINMENT BY:
JOHN BUSH COMEDY

Get your tickets online:

www.achieveservicesinc.org



Or contact Achieve:

763-783-4909

for tickets or to make a tax-deductible donation

*"Side splitting.
A knock-out performance!"
- Daily Oakland Press*

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