

The Voc Post

February 2010 NHVC
Newsletter



Congressman John Salazar (far right) joins the Center for Independence staff and consumers at the Lion's Club Parade on February 20, 2010 in downtown Grand Junction. We were also joined by Americorps volunteers, Mesa county Commissioner Craig Meis, CU Regent Tillie Bishop, and Senator Bennet's field representative, Jerry Otero. We all had a wonderful time, and are thankful that the snow stopped falling until the parade was over!

What is the Center For Independence?

by: Heather C.

Most people aren't aware that there is an Independent Living Center located in Grand Junction, Colorado. Or that they provide services to people with disabilities in ten counties on the western slope. Some of the services provided include: helping people with housing situations, nursing home transitions, advocacy, issues with social security benefits and basic needs.

They also have specific programs that focus on the education and support of low vision issues, recreation and wellness programs, job training programs and a life skills class for young adults from the ages of 14-25.

We will be focusing on the individual services in future issues but if you would like to find out more information please call the Center For Independence at 970-241-0315.



The Center For Independence is located at 740 Gunnison Ave., Grand Junction, Co. 81501

Employment Network Coalition

presents the
2nd Annual Employer Symposium
*How to decrease your turnover with quality
workers*

Speakers from Department of Vocational
Rehabilitation, WesTAC, Mesa County
Workforce Center and the Legal Center

March 18th, 2010
8a – 12:30p
Center For Independence (CFI)
740 Gunnison Avenue
Free Brunch and Door Prizes available

Please RSVP to Cheryl Wicks by e-mail
at Cheryl.Wicks@mosaicinfo.org or
by phone at 970.245.0519 x12 by March
10th.

Successful Independence

By: Lynn J.

Many people don't know what the Center For Independence is, or what it does. So we decided to profile consumer successes and let them tell their own stories to illustrate what CFI does and the impact it has on their lives. Our first profile was provided by Heather Croas.

She first came to the center in late 2006 and worked at CFI for about six months as the Recreation Assistant under Jane Newton. Even though things didn't work out, she remained active as a client. "They helped me to secure my current housing and job." She has been involved with the New Horizon Vocational Program since it started. "Jana helped me look for a job when I was unemployed, and eventually helped secure the job I currently have at La Villa Grande Care Center, which I've held since November 4, 2008. This is the longest time I have ever maintained a job."

"I think the greatest achievement I've learned is that I am capable of living independently," Heather stated. Things were difficult for Heather when she first came to Grand Junction, especially after losing her housing. However, "through the support of some of the staff here at CFI, I was able to secure food stamps and later housing." After NHVC was founded, "I was able to find my current job, but more than that gain the confidence I needed to pursue another dream: to start my own business in photography. It is a slow going process but with CFI's help, I have been able to find venues to show my work."

"The greatest way CFI, and especially some of the staff there, have helped me is that they've shown me that I can be accepted for the person I am, not just with my job, but also with life in general." More specifically, "with my job though, Jana has been there to help advocate for me when I needed a little extra support at work. Like when I had one-on-one meetings with the administration or my immediate supervisor. I think she is also part of the reason my current supervisor has a better understanding of what I go through."

One of the other reasons for doing personal profiles is to showcase employers who support the efforts of our members of NHVC. This is what Heather shared, "I'd like to take the time to really thank my supervisor, who in all truth is a big part of my success. Gail Dutton is an awesome boss! She really cares about her employees and wants them to succeed." Heather also shared the encouragement Jana had given her leading up to this job. "Jana had been in contact with Gail prior to my applying, and at first I thought about not following through, but Jana encouraged me to give it a chance and I'm really glad I did."

"Most people aren't aware of the Center's existence, even when they may benefit from their services. The only reason I discovered it was because I applied to work there. Then later what I needed them most they were there. There really aren't a lot of places in this community where you can go for assistance with disabilities, especially hidden disabilities. The best part of CFI is they are there to help anyone with a disability so they can maintain an independent lifestyle. I really don't think I would be where I am today if it hadn't been for their assistance."



Heather proudly displays one of her photos in front of the CFI building.

NHVC hosts 2nd annual Valentine's Day dance

by: Heather C.

On February 12, the New Horizon Vocation Center held their second annual Valentine's Dance. They were able to raise 54 dollars that will be used to purchase supplies for the kitchen. Tom W. did a great job serving as the disc jockey for the dance and his services were enjoyed by all.

They also had a variety of contests during the night and a total of seven prizes were awarded. One of the contests held was the biggest heart contest where people nominated who they thought had the biggest heart. The winners were chosen by the dance committee who are members of the NHVC.

The first place winner was Shannon who nominated Stephan with this entry, "I think that Stephan as a big heart because: He's stuck by me for three years through one of the hardest battles of my life. Coping and living with schizophrenia. He's my best friend."

The second place winner was Jordan H. who nominated her mother. "I think that my mom has a big heart because: She is lovely and she can get ticked sometimes but she's my mom and I love her."