

The Transylvania Times -

TVS Celebrates The 72nd Year Of National Disability Employment Awareness Month - Pisgah Forest, NC

At its core, [Transylvania](#) Vocational Services (TVS) is a business focused on employment opportunities for people with disabilities. As the month of October commemorates National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), TVS appreciates the recognition this month shows for its own employees, as well as all workers with disabilities.

TVS is proud of the exemplary performance of its workers all year long, but NDEAM provides a unique occasion to shine a spotlight on the achievements of workers with disabilities in addition to the demand for employment opportunities because it is a nationally recognized month supported by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

NDEAM's history traces back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law designating "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week" as the first week of October each year. Eventually, "physically" was removed as a qualifier in 1962 in an effort to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to the full month of October, naming it National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"Americans of all abilities must have access to good, safe jobs," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta in August when the Office of Disability Employment Policy announced this NDEAM's theme, Inclusion Drives Innovation. "Smart employers know that including different perspectives in problem-solving situations leads to better solutions. Hiring employees with diverse abilities strengthens their business, increases competition and drives innovation."

TVS has made inclusion a core value since its inception 50 years ago.

Expanding upon the ways in which the company honors that value, Jamie Brandenburg, CEO, said, "At TVS, we strive to promote employment opportunities for workers with disabilities, while upholding their rights to self-determination and encouraging self-sufficiency. We are honored to be a part of NDEAM, and to celebrate employment for workers with disabilities."

TVS is a working example of how a business can attain innovation through inclusion, as its mission to provide employment and job training and evaluation to adults with disabilities and employment barriers was behind its most critical transformation.

In 2001, TVS opened its own dry food blending and packaging facility with an inclusive production environment where 75 percent of the direct labor workforce has been made up of individuals with disabilities and employment barriers from the onset. A full complement of manufacturing jobs were made available, including batch preparation, machine operation, product testing, warehousing, fork truck operation and more. As a result, all TVS team members have fostered a culture of acceptance, openness and willingness to learn by bringing a wealth of diverse life experiences with them each day.

In addition to the jobs provided by its production facility, TVS has an Employment Services team devoted to matching adults with disabilities to competitive employment opportunities offered by various regional

businesses. Further-more, full-time job coaches provide personalized preparation and training with regular follow-up to ensure the placement is successful.

“At TVS, we recognize that a full array of choices and the practice of self-determination are vital drivers behind innovation and a productive workforce,” said Carla Hill, program director. “We are continuing to work with families, governments, community leaders and people with disabilities to provide the best employment prospects possible while recognizing the need for autonomy and choice.”

Learn more about TVS at <http://www.tvsinc.org>

For more information about the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy, go to [http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/index](http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/index.htm). htm.

Connect With Us

The Transylvania Times

Physical: 37 North Broad St.
Mailing: P.O. Box 32
Brevard, NC 28712
Ph: (828) 883-8156

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