

FALL 2024



ON THE HORIZON



EMHORIZONS



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EMPLOYMENT HORIZONS, INC.

ALVARO RODRIGUEZ HONORED AT THE 2024 ANNUAL RECOGNITION DINNER

On the evening of October 10, 2024, Employment Horizons proudly hosted its Annual Recognition Dinner, a heartwarming event dedicated to honoring the remarkable achievements of individuals and organizations who embody the spirit of our mission. This year, we were thrilled to present the prestigious William Huber Achievement Award to Alvaro Rodriguez, an extraordinary individual whose dedication and spirit have truly shone over the past five years.

As a dining room attendant at Chick-fil-A, Alvaro is a ray of sunshine. His infectious smile and unwavering enthusiasm brighten the days of everyone who walks through the doors. His warmth and kindness create an atmosphere where guests and coworkers feel welcome.

Alvaro's commitment to excellence is evident in his genuine care for each customer. He goes above and beyond to ensure every experience is exceptional, showcasing the power of kindness and hard work. His positive energy and joyful presence inspire those around him, reminding us of one individual's impact on a community.

At the recognition dinner, Alvaro's co-workers from



Alvaro Rodriguez (left) holds his award as Drew Blind (right), the owner of Chick-fil-A of Morris Plains speaks. Photo by Sweet Dreams Studio.

Chick-fil-A of Morris Plains were there to support him and accept the Employer of the Year Award. It was really awesome to win the award and have all my friends there to see it," said Alvaro.

When Alvaro was presented with the William Huber Achievement Award, the crowd applauded and gave him a standing ovation. The Award, named in memory of a Morris County business leader and former President of the EH Board of Trustees, recognizes individuals whose outstanding accomplishments inspire others to pursue employment and acceptance in the community. Alvaro's contributions exemplify this award perfectly.

As we celebrated Alvaro's achievements, we were reminded of the importance of kindness and community. We are so incredibly proud of Alvaro's accomplishments. Employment Horizons is honored to congratulate Alvaro on this well-deserved recognition!

A MESSAGE FROM LISA MONTALBANO

This fall has been a remarkable and eventful time for Employment Horizons, marked by celebrations and significant progress in our advocacy work. I want to begin by offering my heartfelt congratulations to the award winners from our Annual Recognition Dinner. Your hard work and commitment inspire us all, and we are incredibly proud to honor your achievements. I'd also like to extend a special thank you to our development team for organizing such a memorable and enjoyable evening.

While we celebrated, we've also been deeply engaged in advocacy efforts crucial to the future of our programs and the individuals we serve. I was privileged to present at the recent ACCSES NJ STAR Conference alongside Kit Brewer, a fellow Coalition for the Preservation of Employment Choice board member. During our presentation, we addressed the ongoing importance of safeguarding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and provided tools for engaging local and federal legislators.

In October, we were honored to host representatives from the Federal Department of Labor here at Employment Horizons. Their visit provided a unique opportunity for our program participants, their families, and our staff to share our programs' positive impact. During this visit, we discussed the participants' desire to maintain support through our programs and the ongoing legislative challenges we face as an organization. It was a productive and insightful exchange that underscored the value of advocacy at both the federal and local levels and the need to protect the critical employment programs that many rely on.

Looking ahead, it's clear that advocacy will remain a central focus for Employment Horizons as we continue to push for positive change. I want to encourage every member of our community to get involved in our advocacy efforts. Your involvement is vital. Together, we can ensure that our programs remain strong and that the individuals we serve continue to have the support they need to succeed.



Lisa Montalbano
LISA MONTALBANO
Chief Executive Officer



Fulfillment Support Professional Roxane Monck has been supporting EH participants for over 25 years.

CELEBRATING DSP RECOGNITION WEEK

From September 8 to 14, 2024, EH proudly celebrated National Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week, honoring the hard work and dedication of our DSPs. Each day, our DSPs go above and beyond to ensure that individuals receive the support they need to thrive. We extend our heartfelt thanks for their unwavering dedication and the positive impact they have on the lives of those we serve. We couldn't do it without them!



Jamie Osborn (left), Manager of Training and Education, and Jodie McKinny (right), School to Work Transition Specialist, attended night events to share EH's services and resources with the community.



PICTURE
THIS!

A CREATIVE JOB SAMPLE HELPS LISA RAMIREZ EXPLORE PHOTOGRAPHY CAREER

*Preparing for career success through an
immersive hands-on experience*

At Employment Horizons, we take pride in tailoring job experiences to fit the unique interests of our program participants. Recently, Lisa Ramirez, a new participant with a passion for photography, was referred to us. Her goal? To explore a career in photography, and thanks to a creative collaboration between two of our programs, she got the chance to do just that.

Employment Support Professional Lindsey Crean connected her with Cafe Horizons, our on-site cafeteria, for a job sample in food photography. This opportunity allowed Lisa to capture beautifully plated meals, giving her hands-on experience in a specialized form of photography.

Reflecting on the experience, Lisa shared that the job sample allowed “me to finally put my skills into action! This experience has been a turning point for me and the future of my career.”

This job sample stands out as one of the most innovative we’ve ever offered. It showcases how our programs can work together to create meaningful opportunities that align with our participants’ passions and goals. We look forward to following Lisa’s journey and are excited about the possibilities this experience may open up as she embarks on her job search.



Photo by Lisa Ramirez

STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS THROUGH LEGAL EDUCATION



Staff from Vocational Rehabilitation, Career Development, and Transition and Evaluation Services attended Mandelbaum Barrett PC's seminar.

Recently, Mandelbaum Barrett PC held an informative seminar for Employment Horizons' staff. Special Needs Practice Group co-chairs Richard I. Miller and Arla D. Cahill, along with Partner Jason Marx, shared their expertise on estate planning, special needs trusts, and guardianships.

The seminar provided valuable insights that enhanced our ability to support program participants and their families in making informed decisions. This event exemplified Mandelbaum Barrett PC's ongoing commitment to helping individuals with special needs navigate important legal and financial matters. They stated, "As advocates for individuals with special needs and their families, we believe in empowerment through education and are proud to partner with Employment Horizons and the incredible work that it does."

We greatly appreciate Mandelbaum Barrett PC's continued partnership and dedication to our shared goals.

MEMORIES FROM THE 2024 RECOGNITION DINNER



Sisters Sasha Harpell (left) and Juli Harpell-Elam (right) accept the Helping Hands Award on behalf of their mother Gisela Harpell. Photo by Sweet Dreams Studio.



TOP: Honorary Chair Alison Banks-Moore (left) of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey laughs with her guest. Photo by Sweet Dreams Studio.

BOTTOM: Manager of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Nancy Toolen (right) speaks about Andrew Bocchino (left), who received the Outstanding Fulfillment Employee Award. Photo by Sweet Dreams Studio.



PRESERVING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Recent media coverage has focused on Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a legal provision that allows individuals with disabilities to earn a commensurate wage, giving them the chance to work at their own pace in a supportive environment. For many, Section 14(c) programs, like Employment Horizons' Extended Employment Program, offer more than just employment; they provide a sense of purpose, community, and independence. These opportunities are essential for the well-being and daily engagement of individuals with disabilities.

Eliminating or restricting these programs could lead to unintended consequences, such as increased unemployment, social isolation, and a reduced quality of life for those who rely on them. Without Section 14(c) programs, many

individuals with disabilities may find themselves without meaningful work options or a path toward independence. With ongoing legislative discussions, it's more important than ever to actively support the continuation of these programs.

By sharing personal stories and experiences with local, state, and national legislators, we can highlight the positive impact these programs have on individuals with disabilities and underscore the importance of keeping them intact. Employment Horizons remains committed to the belief that Section 14(c) programs play a vital role in providing meaningful work and fostering independence for individuals with disabilities. Your involvement can make a significant difference in preserving these essential employment opportunities for all.



Make A Difference



Call your legislator



**Share your story with
your family, friends, &
community**



**Write a letter to
your legislator**

OUR MISSION

Employment Horizons is dedicated to assisting people with barriers to employment to achieve their individual vocational objectives and establish self-sufficiency in the community.

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