



JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD
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For Immediate Release

JCBDD Beginning New Worksite Venture

STEUBENVILLE-The Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities and its Community Employment Services program are taking on a joint venture by training special needs adults in a unique setting.

Beginning in January, the CES will overtake operations of the School of Bright Promise cafeteria and utilize the space to ready developmentally disabled individuals for the workforce. CES Specialists Renee Pastre and Angela Goodrich will train two people at the worksite for up to five days a week and they will assist current employees by preparing and dishing out meals to the school's students.

This will be our own assessment site," Pastre explained. "We can assess and train individuals interested in working in the dish room, line service, food preparation and janitorial work. When we do assessments, they are usually four or five half-days or 16-20 hours and we could work with up to two people at a time."

Pastre said the move was timely since current cafeteria supervisor Bonnie Jenkins will retire after 30 years of service in December. She added that special needs adults presently work part-time in the cafeteria under the auspices of JCBDD and the new plan will ensure even more individuals can find gainful employment in the future.

"Our goal is to work with transition students from area schools as well as any referrals we receive from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. We will set this up to have as a training facility to better prepare them when they are out in the community in the workforce."

The employees will also become familiar with industrial equipment so they may work with similar items in the real world, such as restaurants. The cafeteria workers will not only be assessed on their abilities but will also earn a minimum-wage paycheck for performing their duties. Additionally, Pastre and Goodrich will alternate roles as cafeteria supervisor while also continuing to work with other clients at community businesses.

"We're excited to be a part of the school and working with students and hope it will be the beginning of something new and exciting," Pastre said.

JCBDD Superintendent Michael Zinno was equally thrilled about the new collaborative effort.

"I am proud of our CES Department for stepping forward with this idea. It should prove to be beneficial not only for our program, but for those we serve." Zinno commented. "Ultimately, we hope to provide a great work experience so that we can place individuals in the restaurant industry. In a tight labor market, it should provide our community with a much-needed labor pool."

For more information about the CES program, call (740) 266-3840, Extensions 2104 or 2105.