

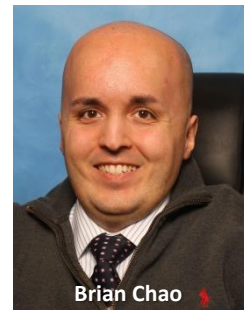
Introducing Brian Chao and James B. Frost

Brian and Jamie are just two of the many jobseekers who profited in 2014 from the **Next Big Step**, the employment program, at the Starkloff Disability Institute. Both of these young men bring significant credentials to the world of work. Brian has a Master's of Accounting degree from the Olin Business School at Washington University. Jamie is an honors graduate with a law degree from a prestigious university. One would surely predict a bright future for these men. But Jamie is deaf, and Brian has Ulrich Congenital Muscular Dystrophy. And, unfortunately, disability makes a difference in a job search. **In fact, people with disabilities with college degrees are unemployed at the rate of 55 percent, as compared with 14 percent of college-educated people without disabilities.**

Thanking those who make a Difference

While disability makes a difference, **so do you and your generous support for the Starkloff Disability Institute.** Here's what we heard recently from these two jobseekers:

This week I accepted an offer to be an Auditor at Enterprise Bank & Trust and will start during the last week of October! I want to thank you specifically for inviting me to join the Next Big Step program as it played an instrumental role in getting me to this point. I am now very comfortable with my disability in terms of seeking employment and really know how to best pitch all of my strengths. You and your team at SDI are truly doing magnificent work that is making a major difference for people with disabilities and the St. Louis community.



My participation in the Next Big Step program gave me the tools and the resources that I needed to obtain the opportunity to become a consultant to Centene's legal department. As a person who has worked for improved health care for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing for the last two years, I believe that Centene Corporation is the best position of all the Medicaid managed care companies to dramatically improve health care for individuals who are disabled. I look forward to validating your confidence in me and my ability to be a great benefit to any company that chooses to hire me.

Both men thank us for the role we played and the investment we made in their success through our annual classes for jobseekers, and that investment, of course, is your investment as well. Their thanks should, rightly, be directed to the generous donors who make our programs possible.

Brian and Jamie number among the many success stories that define the *Next Big Step*. **To date, as a result of their involvement with our program, 42 jobseekers with disabilities have found competitive employment.** We expect 85 percent of these individuals to maintain their employment status for at least six months.

In addition, a growing number of corporate partners have become active with the *Next Big Step*. Dale Carnegie Institute, Wells Fargo Advisors, World Wide Technology, and Monsanto are adding their expertise to the preparation provided for jobseekers. Express Scripts and Saint Louis University also

contribute significantly. We remain grateful to Role Model companies that have assisted us with the *Next Big Step* since its inception, including Centene, Nestlé Purina, Enterprise Holdings, and Enterprise Bank & Trust Company. The participation of these partners has allowed us to add conflict resolution and salary negotiation to a syllabus that defines **one of the best job-preparation classes available anywhere.**

Spreading the Word

Several events in 2014 furthered our goals for creating welcoming communities:

- In June, SDI hosted the **Work Ability Summit** which offered insights to employers seeking to understand recent legislation requiring businesses with federal contracts to set goals for hiring people with disabilities at the rate of 7 percent. Panelists from our Role Model Companies and other corporate partners helped our staff educate **50 professionals and disability advocates.**
- In April, we held a **Young Professionals networking event** attended by **120 people** associated with the *Next Big Step*, including corporate personnel, graduates from our classes who are successfully employed, prospective participants for future classes, and potential donors. Our goal was to level the playing field and provide a fully accessible networking environment where employers could connect with disabled professionals. The success was magic! The event fostered many new relationships and helped to generate a waiting list for our services.
- In the fall, that waiting list prompted us to add a **second class for preparing jobseekers.** Ten additional graduates now have the skills and the confidence they need to confront the job search.
- In September, SDI presented the first ever **Max Starkloff Lifetime Achievement Award** to Senator Tom Harkin (D – Iowa), who authored the ADA and other important legislation guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities. At our **Party to the Max** event, Harkin spoke to a **crowd of 230** about the history of disability rights and the contribution of our own Max Starkloff.
- In October we learned that we had been selected, through a competitive process, to receive services from the Taylor Community Consulting Program at Washington University’s Olin School of Business. A team of amazing students is already at work developing strategies for packaging, monetizing, and marketing SDI’s corporate training products and consulting services, with a goal of helping us become more financially self-sustaining.
- November 2014 saw the publication of **Max Starkloff and the Fight for Disability Rights**, written by SDI’s Board Chair, Charles E. Claggett, Jr. Described as “an extraordinary odyssey of hope and resilience,” the book is published by the Missouri History Museum. In its press release the Museum emphasizes that Max’s legacy “continues to better the lives of disabled individuals throughout the country.”



You play a major role in preserving that legacy and bettering the lives of people with disabilities through your support of the Starkloff Disability Institute. We can’t thank you enough for your investment in our work.