

Coming Attractions

Develop a service continuum: With our Youth Transition Coordinator in place we are preparing to bridge our employment services to span from teen years, to college, to adulthood. As we developed DREAM BIG, we were excited by our corporate partners' response to this program for teens. With an eye to developing the workforce of the future, they were eager to extend a welcome. Clearly, we are making progress with our goals for creating workplaces that welcome the talents of people with disabilities. This corporate response inspires us to expand our services to the people with disabilities who aspire to join the workforce, to achieve financial independence, and to contribute to the community.



Building for Equality: Experiencing the Inclusive Workplace - We are acutely aware of the stereotypes and the bias that keep people with disabilities out of the workforce. In many cases, human resource managers just don't see people with disabilities in their workplaces. To remedy this blind spot, SDI routinely welcomes corporate personnel to visit our offices, where they can see professionals with disabilities on the job, experience an inclusive workplace and see adaptive technology, often for the very first time. We have seen that the impact of these tours is transformational. Vague assumptions about what people with disabilities cannot do are dispelled, replaced by images of productive employees at work in user-friendly environments.

Given the impact of our tours, we are eager to enhance and update our built environment, using universal design to create the inclusion experience for employers. As a thought leader in disability employment, SDI must set an example. We look forward to educating more employers by showcasing a workspace that makes it possible for all employees to function optimally and safely at work.

Thank You!

With your continued support, the Starkloff Disability Institute has been able to address the problem of unemployment facing people with disabilities and to learn and grow in the process. We are so grateful for your investment in our work—an investment that has allowed us to DREAM BIG about our own potential for impacting the St. Louis community.



Because you have invested in our work, we are pleased to share the following successes achieved in 2018. With your support, we have been able to transform the Starkloff Career Academy to better serve job candidates with disabilities and to develop our brand as the **Workforce, Workplace Disability Advisor** in the St. Louis area. Thanks to you, people who are disadvantaged by disability have enhanced opportunities to thrive in a more equitable and welcoming environment.

Accomplishments in 2018

Designed and implemented a hybrid version of our Capstone Course: Instead of offering a traditional 8-week capstone, staff invested in the development of a hybrid course that combines on-line modules with face-to-face interaction with HR professionals. The hybrid involves a 4-hour in-person introduction, four weeks of regular Skype webinars, 20 hours of online activities and quizzes, and two full-days at boot camps with partner companies. Centene Corporation and Enterprise Holdings provided corporate expertise for our spring pilot. While only four candidates graduated from this first class, they celebrated their achievement with an Academy reunion with 25 former graduates and great opportunities for networking.

Offered a Boot Camp to prepare candidates for employment: This intense version of our Capstone Course occurred in conjunction with a Reverse Job-Fair held in partnership with Mercy Healthcare and other regional employment service providers. The Starkloff Career Academy provided training materials including our workbook and YouTube training videos for all fifty-five participants, so the on-line modules for the hybrid course had impact on a much larger audience. SDI candidates also received significant individual counseling to prepare for the Job Fair. **Each of the participants but one has had at least one interview since the Fair.**



Accomplishments in 2018 continued

Provided training events to prepare local corporations to hire, train, and retain professionals with disabilities:

- 30 employees at Monsanto attended an event, hosted by the Monsanto HRG Network, where SDI experts discussed best practices for recruiting and assisting people with disabilities.
- 30 HR employees from Boeing assisted job applicants at our Spring Clean-Up. This event, like the Job Fair, offers a significant opportunity for HR professionals to interact with people with disabilities as they help them polish their resumes and practice their interview skills. Learning goes both ways.
- Representatives from 20 companies attended Working Together: Deaf and Hearing People, coordinated by Starkloff Disability Workplace Advisors and presented by the National Technical Institute for the Deaf Center on Employment.
- 40 companies were represented at the Mercy Reverse Job Fair in March. While this event served candidates with disabilities who are looking for employment, it also allowed corporate professionals to interact with people with disabilities.

Integrated DREAM BIG into the on-going services of the Academy:

Following the success of the pilot in 2017, DREAM BIG was included under the umbrella of the Academy. Developed in partnership with the transition team at the Special School District, DREAM BIG helps college-bound high school students embrace their disabilities and gain confidence as they look to add their talents to the workforce. The program is centered on Career Camps that provide field trips to corporations where students find a welcome. **Nine kids**, who attended the first of three camps in the summer of 2018, were welcomed at Monsanto, Centene, Bi-State, Express Scripts, Riot Games, and Boeing, where they received behind-the-scenes tours and met industry professionals, who talked about their jobs and their preparation for professional life. A second group of **eight kids** visited the Cortex Innovation District, where they connected with Centene, Boeing Horizon X, and Microsoft. Field trips also took them to St. Louis Community College School of Culinary Arts, Boeing, Launchcode, and the Centene Claims Center in Ferguson.



During the third week **six students** visited Danforth Plant Science Center, Nestle Purina Petcare, Washington University's program in Occupational Therapy, Fleisman Hillard, and the Missouri History Museum. Clearly, there was something for everyone! DREAM BIG allows us to encounter our usual audience before rather than after college, at a time when big dreams can shape future success.

Added a Youth Transition Coordinator to our Staff:

In late May, former SDI intern Sarah Schwegel joined our staff as Youth Transition Coordinator, responsible for the DREAM BIG program and for developing our interface with universities with a goal of bridging our employment services to span from teen years to adulthood. Sarah is the perfect person for the job. A role model for the students going through DREAM BIG, she lives a full and independent life as a person with a significant disability. Sarah has a Bachelor's in Rehabilitation Services from Maryville University and Master's in Public Administration from St. Louis University.



Conducted Four-day Boot Camp for job candidates:

Starkloff Career Academy once again hosted a 4-day boot camp for job seekers looking for full-time, professional employment in preparation for the second-annual Accommodations for Success Reverse Job Fair. During this intensive boot camp, **ten** participants learned how to:

- Network successfully from a position of strength
- Use the STAR method to tell attention-grabbing stories
- Tailor resumes to match career goals
- Draft a Reverse Job Fair display
- And much more

Created a festival to celebrate all people with disabilities – The first-ever FestAbility debuted on Saturday, July 28 at the Missouri History Museum in Forest Park. This event was initiated by Starkloff Disability Institute and Paraquad leaders and planned by twelve disability organizations serving the St. Louis region with the purpose of celebrating the Americans with Disabilities Act in a fun and family-friendly way. We welcomed more than 3,000 attendees from every area of the disability community, their families, friends, and able-bodied allies. Live performances by disability groups occupied the main stage throughout the day, alongside professional DJ's and dancers from Utopia Entertainment and iHeart Radio. Activities, tours, vendors, and food trucks made the first-ever FestAbility: A Celebration of Disabilities an educational, memorable, and fun day for everyone! We are pleased to report that Festability now has its own nonprofit status, and SDI is at the forefront of the thought leadership that will continue to grow this festival into a national event that shines a new light on disability.