



Partnership

May 2010

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Towards a Sustainable Culture

Excerpts from a speech given by Chris Brandt for the AtWork! fundraising breakfast, March 25, 2010.

Last week I was driving between Issaquah and Bellevue with a talk radio show playing in the background. I wasn't paying much attention because I was thinking about what I would say to you all today. I mulled over the theme sustainability and what it takes to sustain a person with disabilities in a good job and how employers benefit from including people with disabilities in a sustainable workforce. Then I started thinking about the things that make our society sustainable and the issues that continue to plague us like homelessness, hunger, poverty, illiteracy, and an unemployment rate of 75% for working age adults with disabilities.

My ears perked up, as the radio announcer said: "I'm no longer certain that America has a sustainable culture."

How often does that happen? There you are intensely reflecting and the radio host starts talking about your deepest thoughts. I was flabbergasted and started paying attention. I learned that for the radio host, a culture is only sustainable if people keep their commitments, even if the going gets rough and the culture provides an

easy escape from responsibility. He was talking about people who are upside down in their mortgages walking away and into foreclosure even though they can still afford their house payments.

The question for his listeners: "Is it ever okay to walk away from your legal commitments, your promises?" The call-ins to the show were split and those that advocated for walking away based their decisions on the circumstances of the moment.

I believe our commitment cannot be based upon the circumstances of the moment. Our commitment must be based on doing the right thing, the sustainable thing, so that the moments become days, months, a life time.

All of us must make and sustain a commitment to helping people with disabilities achieve equality and justice in our society if we are to sustain the American dream. America does not have a sustainable culture until it can unequivocally state: "With liberty and justice for **ALL**".

What is your vision of a sustainable culture? The radio host had the final say and decided that a sustainable culture expects integrity and responsibility for obligations from its citizens. I decided that day that in my vision of a sustainable culture every-



CEO Chris Brandt

one knows that they belong, that people care if they show up and notice if they don't. AtWork! helps people with disabilities find a place to belong. In my vision, everyone contributes and has purpose and meaning in their lives. AtWork! helps people with disabilities discover their talents and matches them with a business who needs their talents.

AtWork! made a commitment to leave no one behind. That means we will sustain our commitments to people with complex support needs, people that others might label as too disabled to work or unemployable. In AtWork!'s vision of a sustainable culture, my vision becomes true for everyone regardless of the severity or complexity of their disability.

AtWork! was proud to present its Supporter of the Year Award to the Dunn Lumber Company.

AtWork! Fundraising Breakfast Raises \$92,000

What a wonderful and magical morning. AtWork! welcomed over 350 guests to the ballroom at the Westin Hotel in Bellevue, Thursday morning, March 25th. Our emcee was Dennis Bounds, King 5 News Anchor and, himself, the parent of a person with disabilities. Dennis helped to introduce our speakers, Board Chair Bob Strayhan and CEO Chris Brandt.



Mark Sjolunde accepts the Supporter of the Year Award on behalf of Dunn Lumber.

AtWork! was proud to present its Supporter of the Year Award to the **Dunn Lumber Company** for its commitment to hiring people with disabilities in each of its 12 stores. The video,

which you can view on our website, profiled Darwin, a Dunn Lumber employee and AtWork! client, whose employment not only provides value to the company, but also is vital to the sustainability of his family.

A highlight of the morning was Dennis's interview with Margaret Padilla. Margaret is a new employee of Drugstore.com and very proud of her journey from working in a sheltered workshop to a job in the community.

Although she rehearsed her presentation many times, getting up in front of a large crowd almost overwhelmed her. Dennis brought out the best in her, and the audience was charmed by her excitement and enthusiasm for this new opportunity in her life.

The Reverend Kenneth Ransfer closed the morning with a very impassioned request for support. Together we raised \$94,000 for people with disabilities. We sincerely thank our Supporting Sponsors, Costco Wholesale and Russ & Gretchen Keithly, and our Contributing Sponsors, Mike & Kim

Cave, Coinstar, Inc., Paul Egly, and Xtreme Consulting Group, Inc.

AtWork! has made a commitment to leave no one behind. That means we will sustain our commitments to people with complex support needs, people whom others might label as too disabled to work or unemployable.



Margaret Padilla talks with Dennis Bounds of King 5 News about her new job at Drugstore.com.

Because of the outpouring of generosity received that morning, we will be able to fulfill that commitment.

Client Resumes

If you know of an opportunity where these skills and abilities are a good job match, please contact Dennis at (425) 922-4873



Ken

Skills: Meticulous, independent, productive, superior with numbers, collating

Experience: 10 yrs inventory control, packaging, assembly, print shop machines, computers

Career Goals: Office/administration, filing, recycling, computer program installs/repairs

Preferred Location: Eastside



Lajwanti

Skills: highly productive, meticulous, organized
Experience: packaging, assembly,

laundry

Career Goals: work in the hotel industry, packaging, order fulfillment

Preferred Location: I-90 corridor and Redmond



Guy

Skills: determined, conscientious, reliable, learns quickly,
Experience:

Event set-up/take-down, shredding, stocking/Merchandising, Landscape

Career Goals: Document archival, recycling, event work, receiving, stocking, landscaping

Preferred Location: Seattle, willing To travel

AtWork! and USArchive Sign Memo of Understanding

On March 5th, AtWork! and USArchive signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to create "USArchive, Powered By AtWork!". Chris Brandt, CEO of AtWork!, and Mick Plath, President and CEO of USArchive, signed the MOU, which guides the creation of a partnership to provide document management services to government and private firms who need digitized records and document destruction.

"USArchive brings the technical expertise we need to expand into this new line of business," said Brandt. "It will help us to provide job opportunities for people with disabilities well into the future."

"We have been talking about this



Present for the signing were the negotiating team (back row, left to right): Bob Thompson, CFO for AtWork!, Eric Hallberg, Director of Business Development for AtWork!, and Noreen Plath, Vice President of Business Operations for USArchive. Seated: Mick Plath President & CEO of USArchive, and Chris Brandt, CEO of AtWork!

vision for a unique partnership for a very long time," said Plath. "It is a great marriage of our technical and marketing and sales experience and AtWork!'s experience operating and managing large contracts."

USArchive is a privately held company headquartered in Redmond, Washington, and is an imaging solutions provider for government and commercial business. They provide production and business career training to the local and national community of people with disabilities through a significant revenue-generating growth model that delivers shareholder value.

Drugstore.com hires Margaret Padilla

If you were to drop in on Margaret at her workplace and watch her intently going about her tasks, you'd think she'd been doing that job for years. She is meticulous and thorough and zips around the three floors of Drugstore.com in downtown Bellevue like a pro. Margaret Padilla is an AtWork! client who has a job. It's been a 30 year journey to get to this point.



Margaret Padilla on the job in the break room at Drugstore.com

Margaret came to live with the Padilla family when she was 3 months old. She joined two other special needs children adopted by the Padilla's and was folded into the embrace of a large family full of love and support. Margaret, Stacy and Teresa are all clients of AtWork!

Margaret came to AtWork! right out of high school. She worked for many years in the workshop doing packaging and assembly. Margaret is a very caring person who has always been involved helping friends in the workshop who needed extra support. Her caring nature was a characteristic that her Employment Consultant, Ron Davids, identified, along with her eagerness for hard work, as a good fit for with her new employer. In January Margaret achieved her dream of a job in the community with this new

opportunity at Drugstore.com.

Margaret works two days a week, cleaning the two break rooms and the lunch room on each floor. She does the dishes, straightens up the chairs & tables, cleans the counters and table tops, and replenishes supplies. Her co-workers are very complimentary and tell her repeatedly how they value her work. After a period of close job coaching, Margaret is now able to perform all of her tasks on her own and goes about her tasks with support from her supervisor, without direct daily support from Ron.

AtWork! was pleased to ask Margaret to be our client representative at the March Benefit Breakfast. Thank you Margaret for your good work, for your cheerful attitude and for representing your friends from AtWork! so well.

In January

Margaret achieved her dream of a job in the community.



1935 152nd PI NE
Bellevue WA 98007-4293
Phone: 425-274-4000
Fax: 425-274-4060
E-mail: info@atworkwa.org

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Bits & Pieces

3rd Artist's Reception and Showing held at AtWork! Bellevue Headquarters on April 22nd. AtWork! was pleased to welcome artists and guests to view the newest collection of works by people with disabilities. Work by two AtWork! clients, DeDe Domenowske and George Sanislo, are included in the collection which will be on view through the end of June.

Recent Financial Support

AtWork! is grateful to a number of organizations who have recently provided support.

- The Kiwanis Club of Issaquah awarded a grant of \$4,392 to purchase adaptive technology for the client computer lab

which will allow access to the world wide web for many who have not had that opportunity before.

- Puget Sound Energy provided a grant of \$3,000. The funds will be used to develop strategies and identify support resources to assist individuals with complex needs as they pursue their opportunity for a community job.
- Issaquah Arts Commission awarded \$3,500. In cooperation with Sustainable Issaquah, the funds will be used to commission a sculptural gate for the Flat Land Garden next to AtWork!'s Issaquah facility.

Taproot Team Helps AtWork! with Brand Strategies

Over the first six months of 2010, a team of marketing and branding experts have been assisting AtWork! to tell its story by researching the attributes and characteristics that best describe the breadth and depth of its services. The team will present its findings and roll out suggested new key messages to the staff and Board of Directors in June. This in-depth professional work was made possible through a grant from the Taproot Foundation whose mission is to lead, mobilize and engage professionals in pro bono service that drives social change. The work being performed for AtWork! is valued at \$55,000.

