

## State Association Honors Two Employers

Morningside has been a member of our state trade association, Community Employment Alliance (CEA), for many years. Each October at the Annual Meeting Outstanding Employer Awards are presented. Two of our valued community partners were presented with the state-wide award for 2015.

Parent to Parent won the Non-Profit Employer of the Year Award. Parent to Parent has worked with Chris, one of our clients, for eight years. Chris has grown tremendously in his job over this period of time. Chris's responsibilities include assembling intake packets, organizing forms, filing, hole punching forms and stamping envelopes. The staff at Parent to Parent has built a strong and successful working relationship with him. We are proud of their accomplishment as CEA Outstanding Employer.



*L to R: Jim Larson, Morningside;  
Silvia Davenport, Kim Smith, Shelia  
Kavanaugh, Parent to Parent;  
Laurie Schindler, Morningside*



*L to R: Jim Larson, Morningside;  
Holly Joseph, John Hurley, George Bridges,  
Evergreen; Laurie Schindler, Morningside*

The Evergreen State College has hosted Project SEARCH for six years. The college is an excellent location for high school age individuals to try out jobs in an internship setting. From outside dirty work to clean office jobs, Evergreen has it all in terms of types and variety of work that allows students to find what they like and don't like and where their careers might lead them. Through a partnership with Aramark Food Service Project SEARCH students can even try their hand at many aspects of large scale food service jobs. Evergreen promotes hiring diversity and has hired clients as well as always supporting students and their capabilities at jobs in the community. We value our relationship with Evergreen and congratulate them on winning the CEA Outstanding Employer Award.

## Thank You!

During this season of thanksgiving Morningside would like to thank all who made this year so successful!

First employers are critical to our success and the success of our clients. We have added many employers to our list this year and thank companies who have stepped up to hire an individual with significant disabilities for the first time. Throughout our 5 offices we have more than 275 employers who have employed individuals with intellectual/developmental and other disabilities and to date we have placed over 165 clients into jobs! The commitment of our employers is what makes our mission sing – positively impacting lives forever.

Donors, including individuals, corporate and foundations, have been so important in making our 2015 Ride event successful and thereby helping high school students in Special Education become employed. Funding for the High School Transition program has historically been woefully inadequate, so we have earmarked our donation revenue to support this important program. Special Ed students between the ages of 18-21 are in programs designed to help them succeed in the community. Employment is one of the legs of the stool, but living skills programs tend to take the lion share of resources and special education teacher time. Without donor support we would be faced with closing this program which would be devastating because young people with disabilities would not have significant exposure to the work world at this pivotal time in their lives.

Staff – Morningside has the best staff in this business! Countless surveys with our clients indicate very high satisfaction with our staff. Morningside's staff are the most professional, best trained and equipped in our field. They are very passionate about our mission and zealous in making good things happen to those we serve.

Board of Trustees – Morningside is privileged to have such thoughtful leadership represented on our volunteer board. They give of their time and talents to make sure the organization is meeting its mission on behalf of the communities in which we provide service. They are diligent in their deliberations and always have the client in mind when discussions ensue during strategic or budget planning.

We are so thankful for all who have made our mission of employment for individuals with disabilities a reality.

## Welcome Back, Jonathan

Jonathan Pleger has been hired as Executive Vice President. We might say re-hired because Jonathan served as our VP Development for 5 years. He also comes to us with much experience from his work at Boy Scouts of America and most recently at the University of Puget Sound. Jonathan is well connected to both Morningside and its mission and the community. He is overseeing our strategic initiatives and the development of new lines of business.

## 2015 – Outcomes and Changes

Looking back over the past 10 months, we have achieved significant outcomes and made important changes in our programs. The most noteworthy change is eliminating the use of a special federal provision that allowed for individuals with disabilities to be paid at less than minimum wage by letting our Sub-Minimum Wage Certificate lapse. Morningside was once again the first program in the state to make such a dramatic move. We also ended offering a Group Supported Employment program because each person deserves his/her own place in the work force. For some of our group work crews we converted these sites to individual paid jobs if it was economically feasible. Both of these were significant paradigm shifts in our company. Our core business is finding and supporting individuals with disabilities in integrated, community jobs.

This was a year for our national CARF accreditation review. CARF is the Good Housekeeping Seal of best practice in our field. Once again we received the highest accreditation possible – a three-year certificate. The written report highlighted many of our strengths including our leadership in the field by constantly evolving how services are provided, including implementing minimum wage policies and eliminating the Group Supported Employment program. CARF surveyors also complimented staff for their innovation, deep knowledgeable, energy and client-focused work in support of our mission.

Our expansion into Pierce County took many unsuspected, yet positive twists. First we hired a new Program Manager, Heather Evans, a very respected colleague in our field. We closed two offices that we had opened the year before (Eatonville and downtown Tacoma at the Wells Fargo Building) and opened a single office in south Tacoma that will better meet the needs of those we serve in Pierce County. The program continues to grow in terms of clients and staff. And we found jobs in Eatonville for two people with significant disabilities.

One constant in this field is audits! This year in addition to the extensive CARF review, we passed 3 county audits with flying colors. It seemed the middle 6 months of the year were spent pulling or re-filing documents for one entity or another. Yet, as expected, all results were just fine!

Our 2015 Ride was very successful and we are very grateful for the generosity of so many businesses and agencies who signed on as sponsors. Our Development Department was helped by the addition of an AmeriCorps/Vista volunteer position and a part time staff from Evergreen who has since moved on to work in development with human services missions in the Dominican Republic.



Rachael Jensen, Job Coach and Faith Freeman

## Mantis Graphix

We recently awarded a 2015 Outstanding Employer Award to Mantis Graphix. We are thrilled at presenting this award to such a deserving company. They have gone above and beyond to include, support and encourage the individuals whom we support in this business. Thank you for your support of our client, Morningside, and our mission. Please read the full article in ThurstonTalk: <http://www.thurstontalk.com/2015/07/17/morningside-mantis-graphix/>

## High School Transition - Moving Youth from School to Jobs

Morningside's High School Transition Program is off to a great start! This year 27 students from Thurston County have the opportunity for a variety of internships through the School-To-Work program or Project SEARCH at The Evergreen State College. Morningside also facilitates a weekly Job Club at South Puget Sound Community College where students from area high schools meet to work on topics like career exploration and job search methodology, and participate in activities including mock interviews conducted by community and business volunteers. The goal of our Transition Program is to have every one of these young people employed by graduation or shortly thereafter.

Transition Programs work! If you would like partner with us in our efforts to serve these students and reach even more, consider supporting a Transition student. There are a variety of ways you can help. It costs about \$5,000 to serve a single student for a year. You can sponsor a student at any level, or "Buy an Hour to Empower" of job coaching for \$75. You can "Sponsor a Dream" with a \$50 Job Club donation, or "Bridge the Gap" with \$25 to provide necessary internship equipment like slip-resistant shoes and work permits. Contributions are welcome anytime, and particularly on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, #GivingTuesday, which we at Morningside are calling #GiveTueTransition.

December 1st is  
#GivingTuesday

Donate because  
EVERY student  
deserves a  
chance for a  
meaningful future.

#GiveTueTransition

*Morningside*

