**Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services - The Road to Success Newsletter**

**Rehabilitation Services Bureau**

**January 2005**

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**Special points of interest:**

· Counseling makes the difference in employment retention.

· Employers are seeking individuals with solid soft skills.

· “Not long after graduation I can get off Social Security and make my own money by becoming employed. I am looking forward to that.” Xxxx Xxxx\*

**Happy Employers in the Council Bluffs Area Office**

Regardless of the type of business or industry that an employer manages, the most important qualities that they look for in their employees are characteristics that can make or break the company. In Atlantic, Iowa, Marguerite Colunga found that the individuals with disabilities she hired to work for ServiceMaster grasped their job responsibilities, were well prepared to perform the task they had been assigned, and all had a good work ethic. She noted that the general work force complimented the employees on their quality, timeliness, and dependability.

Marguerite isn’t alone in her assessment of hiring employees with disabilities. Indeed Cheryl Weber, Director of Volunteer Services at Alegent Health has found that persons with disabilities are hard workers, dependable and punctual. She notes that the experience gained as a volunteer can lead to employment or assist a person with a disability in developing a work history. A solid work history allows a person to demonstrate their reliability and flexibility. Margarite, owner and operator of Margarite’s Catering, cites that her experience in working with persons with disabilities has been positive and reminds listeners that working in catering requires a great deal of flexibility.

So how did all these individuals with disabilities develop these soft skills? Certainly some of them were raised with a work ethic and demonstrated the motivation and determination to be gainfully employed. However others were provided quality job keeping skills counseling and training from their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors that encouraged them to grow and become productive citizens of their communities. In those situations the Counselors worked very hard to enhance the clients’ insight into themselves and placed the clients only when they were ready to not only have a job, but to keep it. Counseling made the difference!

**VR Makes a Big Difference in xxxx xxxxxx Life**

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\*Information redacted at request of client and Rehabilitation Services Bureau.