



“Hiring people with disabilities is not an act of charity, it’s good for business.”
Kevin Bradley, Director of Inclusion and Diversity, McDonald’s USA



Letter from the Managing Director

Spring is in the air, and the tulips and daffodils aren’t the only stirrings of life in Chicago. April marks the official launch of the Easter Seals disabilityworks Military Veteran Employment Initiative partnership. Our newest staff member, Ken Meuser, will serve as the Director of Marketing and Communications for the Operation Employ Veterans and Community One Source programs developed by Easter Seals in 2009. Ken will be working statewide to promote the programs.

If your company has not yet participated in the military veteran employment sensitivity session, reach out to Ken at kmeuser@easterseals.com to discuss options to have the training team come to your workplace.

For new and seasoned members, the CBLN Toolkit and Resource List has been updated and is available for download from the disabilityworks website: <http://www.disabilityworks.org/default.asp?contentID=37> The Toolkit assists in answering frequently asked questions about hiring and accommodating employees with disabilities. The Resource List is filled with local, state and national resources for accommodation and accessibility assistance, recruiting and employment, legal tools, online training, and other general information. Many of the resources are free to use, so I encourage you to download the document and disseminate it to your managers and staff.

Welcome New Members:

To date, CBLN numbers **170** members representing **110** distinct businesses. We look forward to seeing you all soon at upcoming trainings.

**New Business **New Affiliate*

- Terry Goldman, Dukane*
- Rhonda Bullard, Link Staffing*
- Patricia Aguglia, Boeing**
- Jeffrey Nowak, Fanczek Radelet*
- John Caraher, KHB Group/Midwest Mechanical Construction*

Letter from the Editor

CBLN Social Network:
LinkedIn, Blog

Welcome New Members
(170 members)

Trainings and Conferences

- Quarterly Meetings
- Brown Bag Series
- National: USBLN—
Save the Date!
- Miscellaneous Meetings

Alphabet Soup
(EEOC & DOL)

Other News: Think Beyond
the Label Campaign
(featuring Chicago’s own
Health and Disability
Advocates)

Opportunities (Mentoring
Network)

Web Accessibility Corner



A gentle reminder: the CBLN is a forum where business representatives gather to discuss matters related to disability employment. Promotion or solicitation of services is discouraged in order to maintain the integrity of the CBLN meetings and overall organizational goals.

Web Accessibility Corner

Web site accessibility tips from Job Accommodation Network (JAN) - When considering how to optimize websites for the people with disabilities, organizations should:

- Provide text alternatives for all non-text content.
- Spell out abbreviations.
- Keep a standard design (header and footer).
- Provide mechanisms to freeze objects and control volume.
- Use accessible media (open, closed, audio captions).
- Lower reliance on color and music.
- Allow keyboard navigation.
- Create accessible PowerPoint forms.
- Use relative text size.
- Display an Equal Employment Opportunity/Reasonable Accommodation (EEO/RA) statement.

For additional information and tips, please visit JAN's website at www.jan.wvu.edu



Success Stories

We encourage CBLN members to share stories of successful employment and retention strategies of employees with disabilities. Recently, leading Chicago chef **Charlie Trotter**, who is not **(yet)** a member of the CBLN, received positive press on the opportunity that he afforded a talented young chef with a seemingly “insurmountable” disability within the context of a kitchen. A December 2009 Chicago Tribune story about Le Cordon Bleu student Laura Martinez sparked **CBS Early Show**'s interest, and they brought along Charlie Trotter to evaluate her skills. Watch the story on CBS' YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBkTKU3P-eo>

Training and Conferences

CBLN Quarterly Luncheons: Past and Future

February 4th at Access Living: Universal Design

Ramesh Gulatee, CBLN member and Architect, AIA/NCARB, LifeCare Design Studio, LLC.

Marca Bristo, President and founder of Access Living hosted a gathering of 40 CBLN members and guests in the Access Living facilities that she helped design and build. Attendees came from different walks of life i.e.: corporate, business, social workers, accessibility advocacy groups, architects, educators and others. The topic was creating awareness to accommodate total accessibility for all through careful design.

This being the very first universally-designed facility in the country, Marca explained how through critical observations, sensitivity and perseverance, the project team comprised of Architects, Engineers, Builders and Product manufacturers developed innovative design solutions to accommodate a wide spectrum of disabilities found in actual working conditions.

Marca and her team demonstrated a great deal of commitment and patience to work with The City of Chicago on zoning variances, and persuaded various corporate foundations and organizations in to raise all the necessary funds to complete the project in the black.

The Access Living building is a prime example of accommodations extending beyond the curb to the heart and mind; the result is a facility that is eminently beautiful and yet functional for a range of employees and clients with disabilities.

Keys employees of Access for Living conducted the tour in manageable attendee groups.

Salient Features of the Access Living Facilities:

- Non intrusive/glare free general lighting.
- Color/Pattern Contrasts in Carpet to facilitate way finding
- Ample Crush space for maneuvering of wheelchair in hallways, restrooms and work areas.
- Lower workstation heights with vision glass to encourage connectivity
- Specially calibrated communication devices (A/V) in hallways and assembly areas.
- Photo Electric Light cells for lighting fixtures.
- Sedum landscaping requiring rain water runoff.
- Special Software and devices to facilitate computer work by the hearing impaired staff.
- State of the Art communicating/Alarm devices in the Elevator.
- For more information on Access Living, or to arrange a tour, contact Neil Anderson at nanderson@accessliving.org.

Thanks again to our lunch sponsors, Walgreens and Aon Corporation.

Upcoming Brown Bag Series Webinars/Audio Conferences at the Chicagoland Chamber Offices:

A limited number will be hosted at the Chamber's offices, so please check the website, www.ada-audio.org, for the complete schedule, program description, and CEUs. To register, contact Selima, sani@chicagolandchamber.org or 312-494-6726.

May 18th, 2010: Reservations Please: Ensuring Access for Customers with Disabilities

An Open Doors Organization study estimated in 2003 that diners with disabilities would spend **\$35 billion** in restaurants that year and the number was expected to grow and it has. Furthermore, The New York Times reported that spending by travelers with disabilities exceeds \$13.6 billion annually. These statistics alone make the business case for ensuring access for customers with disabilities. Join this session to hear more about what the hospitality industry is doing to serve this market and their experiences doing so. **Speaker:** (To be announced). **Guest Moderator:** Marian Vessels, Director, **DBTAC - Mid-Atlantic ADA Center**

May 12, 2010: Success Accommodations: Assistive Technology and Accessibility Working Together:

This webinar session is an overview of accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, specifically Assistive Technology. It will highlight how assistive and accessible technology work together to create a successful working environment for people with disabilities. **Speaker: David Dikter**, Executive Director of the Assistive Technology Industry Association

June 2, 2010: "Invisible Disabilities" and the ADA:

When someone does not have a visible disability, such as diabetes, epilepsy, chemical sensitivity, asthma, mental illness and HIV/AIDS, it frequently can raise unique issues for both the employer and the employee. This session will review the legal issues and court decisions when "invisible" disabilities are at issue, including pre-employment inquiries and medical examinations, workplace disclosure, reasonable accommodation issues (such as leave and modified schedules), and confidentiality. **Speaker: Barry Taylor**, JD Director of Legal Services, Equip for Equality, Chicago, Illinois.



June 22, 2010: **Connecting with the Disability Community** – Join the CBLN for a unique and active meeting which will address business outreach and engagement with the disability community as a method of mentoring current and future diverse human capital, creating and/or reinforcing a disability-friendly workplace, creating consumer demand for services and product, and other innumerable benefits. **(See below for more details)**

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Location: KPMG, 303 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601

Registration Deadline: June 8, 2010

Registration: Selima Ani sani@chicagolandchamber.org, 312-494-6726

Due to building security procedures, please bring a photo i.d.

USBLN Annual Conference

September 19th -22nd, the USBLN will make a splash at the Chicago Westin on Michigan. The 2010 Annual Conference is entitled "Aligning Disability with the Bottom Line: Talent, Market Share, and Supplier Diversity". Selima is serving on the Planning Committee, so CBLN members will be sure to hear the details as they become available.

Upcoming Brown Bag Series Webinars/Audio Conferences at the Chicagoland Chamber Offices: A limited number will be hosted at the Chamber's offices, so please check the website, www.ada-audio.org, for the complete schedule, program description, and CEUs.

Miscellaneous Meetings and Trainings

May 4th 2010: Mark your calendars for Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago's (RIC) **Spring Luncheon Training** at RIC. The featured speaker will be EEOC Investigator, Andrew Daley. Please contact Charlotte at czarymbksi@ric.com for more information.

May 7, 2010 Chicagoland Inclusion and Diversity Association (CIDA) presents The **Business Case for Diversity and the ROI for Diversity** – 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon. McDonald's Hamburger University, Room 222, Oak Brook. Hosted by Kevin Bradley, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at McDonald's. Contact Kevin for details and registration: Kevin.Bradley@us.mcd.com

May 12 and June 9 (Ongoing) Easter Seals presents Operation Employ Veterans A five-module, interactive train-the-trainer program designed to outline the vast benefits veterans bring to an organization, while providing human resource managers and intermediate supervisors training on the perceptions veterans face in the workplace around issues such as PTSD, TBI, and veterans with disabilities. Each module is designed to stand alone, as a drop-in that can be added to any diversity training program, or as a comprehensive program designed to address individuals that may need workplace accommodations. The course is complemented by the addition of a resource guide for additional information on various topics. For information or registration, contact Christopher Dillon at 312-551-7242 or cdillon@easterseals.com.

CBLN Network News

Remember to visit the CBLN blog for disability related news items or up-to-the-minute coverage on CBLN events past and upcoming at: <http://disabilityworksblnchicago.blogspot.com>

CBLN LinkedIn Group is growing with 72 members! It was created for all members to connect between the quarterly luncheons and other various meetings. Please seek out the group, and share your stories and questions with the CBLN community! CBLN members can be one another's best resource for successfully navigating the world of employing and marketing to persons with disabilities.

Alphabet Soup: ADA, DOL, ODEP, and EEOC updates

ODEP: Have you seen *Diversifying Your Workforce, A Four-Step Reference Guide to Recruiting, Hiring, & Retaining Employees with Disabilities?* It is a flipbook of valuable resources to provide answers to your critical questions about the employment of persons with disabilities:

**Retaining Valued Employees
Achieving Workplace Success**

**Incentives & ROI
Interviewing & Hiring**

The *Guide's* compact, 5x8 size belies the wealth of information it contains. With its spiral bound assembly and the accompanying, accessible format mini-CD, you have everything needed to help you start and keep you going. Also, because the *Guide* is mirrored on the **ODEP website** (http://www.dol.gov/odep/documents/Flip%20Guide_FINAL_3%2030_508%20compliant2.pdf), you can be assured that your information is always up-to-date. This is ODEP's most popular product and stock is moving quickly. Be sure to order yours today. Just [click here](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/rc/odep.htm) (<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/rc/odep.htm>) to access our easy to use, online ordering system.

Other News:

Think Beyond the Label – In February, Chicago's own Health & Disability Advocates (HDA) launched a clever and to-the-point ad campaign aiming to change perceptions about hiring people with disabilities. An article in *Workforce Management's* February issue discussed the campaign, its target audience and included an interview with HDA Executive Director, Barb Otto. (<http://www.workforce.com/section/09/feature/27/07/97/index.html>).

The humorous ad can be viewed on You Tube, (<http://www.youtube.com/thinkbeyondthelabel>), and to make the pledge to "Think Beyond the Label", visit the website at www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com which also includes employment resources.

Opportunities

Mentoring Network – Similar to last newsletter's call for nominations for a CBLN Speaker's Bureau, we are recruiting volunteer members who are interested in providing peer-to-peer support on issues regarding the employment of individuals with a disability. The network should not serve as a substitute for legal advice, rather, it is for company representatives looking to other businesses to how they are utilizing existing resources in the Chicagoland region. Please contact Selima, sani@chicagolandchamber.org if you are interested in volunteering.



The Chicagoland Business Leadership Network (CBLN)

disabilityworks

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Disabilities at Work

Contributions to the newsletter are encouraged and welcome – success stories, innovative solutions, editorials, you name it! The newsletter is published every other month. I look forward to hearing from each of you and seeing you at an upcoming training!

Selima Ani
M.D.C.B.L.N.

The Chicagoland Business Leadership Network (CBLN), managed by Selima Ani, is Chicago's local chapter of the USBLN. The CBLN is one of three components of disabilityworks: a joint initiative of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, disabilityworks' primary funder. The CBLN is a forum where business representatives gather to discuss matters related to disability employment matters. Promotion or solicitation of services is discouraged in order to maintain the integrity of the meetings and overall organization

Mission

The CBLN mission is to allow employers to understand and benefit from people with disabilities in both the labor and consumer markets.

We are a business-to-business consortium dedicated to helping businesses learn from each other how disability can enhance diversity initiatives.

Vision

Our vision is to become Chicagoland's premier resource for businesses that seek to benefit from people with disabilities in the workforce.

Values

In pursuit of our mission and vision, we have identified four core organizational values. As such, all of our activities will be: ethical, business-oriented, educational and place an importance on open, honest communication.

We will provide a forum, model and structure for employers to share experience regarding employing people with disabilities.

