



Welcome to HireGround!

The Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD) produces this bimonthly newsletter expressly for our VR professional audience. We hope that the stories, best practices and practical tips we share will be of use and value to you as we continue our relationship and work with participants to achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through our services, partnerships and innovation. For questions, content suggestions or comments on this newsletter, please contact Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov. Thank you for reading this information and sharing as appropriate.

Introduction

Playwright Tennessee Williams who wrote “A Streetcar Named Desire” and “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” had this to say about Ohio:

“America has only three cities: New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans. Everywhere else is Cleveland.”

I’ll add here that Williams also reminds us:

“All good art is an indiscretion.”

Williams did not spend time in the Ohio full of green fields, slate roofs and hitching posts outside the local Aldi that was mine to claim growing up in Knox County. About 20% of our state’s population is classified as rural. In fact, just six of Ohio’s cities have six-figure populations.

Small-town/rural Ohio has challenges quite different from those in larger cities, ranging from broadband access to transportation, of

particular impact on people with disabilities. On the other hand, the sense of community and closeness to the earth that many Ohioans honor in small communities speaks volumes to the way people can use creativity and sharing to make life better for themselves and for others.

In this issue, we are going to explore some of these challenges and unique ways VR professionals and consumers take them on. To quote a famous Ohioan:

“I’ve had smarter people around me all my life, but I haven’t run into one yet that can outwork me.

“And if they can’t outwork you, then smarts aren’t going to do them much good. That’s just the way it is.

“And if you believe that and live by it, you’d be surprised at how much fun you can have.”

OSU football Coach Woody Hayes 1913 - 1987

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Disability Community Opportunities/Announcements

Travel America's parks with lifetime disability pass

People with disabilities can enjoy federal recreation sites for free by requesting the free Access Pass. Documentation needed includes a physician's statement, or a document issued by a State or Federal agency like the VA, Social Security, or a VR agency. The pass gives the recipient and three adults free admission to federal recreation sites around the country, and it's good for life. For more details, or to find a recreation site, visit the National Park Service's Web site. http://www.nps.gov/fees_passes.htm

711 service reminder

For more than 20 years, Sprint Relay has helped address the communication challenges facing people with speech and/or hearing disabilities when they dial 711, using many innovative products and services. UCP is excited to partner with Sprint Relay to raise awareness about these services, which make a difference for people with disabilities with a variety of hearing and speech difficulties communicating with colleagues, friends and family. Services include Spanish and French as well as English, and all dialogue is held in strict confidence. Learn more at <http://www.ohiorelay.com/about.html>

Health information/resources

Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO) has just released a New Brief: Health and disabilities basics: Overview of health coverage, programs and services.

The first HPIO Brief has been getting a lot of attention around the state health department and other state level agencies, since it is easy to read and provides information on a variety of topics related to disability. The second brief will look at the challenges for people with disabilities in achieving optimal health and will examine current state and federal policies. [Download pdf](#)

Families USA has produced "Shared Decision Making: Engaging Patients to Improve Care." This online resource includes key questions

about how shared decision-making works, how it can improve patient care, how it fits into a more patient-centered health system, how to design a good shared decision-making program, and a list of links to other resources. <http://familiesusa2.org/assets/pdfs/health-system-reform/Shared-Decision-Making.pdf>

Farewell to OCIS; Transition to Enhanced OhioMeansJobs Platform

By Nate Fernandes

Editor's note: Don't panic when you read this article; it is meant only as an introduction. We are planning more formal training for staff on the capabilities and use of OhioMeansJobs. This training is expected to roll out in conjunction with the new Jobs related policies and procedures coming out this summer. Stay tuned! Meanwhile, here's what Nate has discovered along the way.

The Ohio Department of Education's Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) has delivered reliable, up-to-date career information for more than 30 years. OOD professionals have used this tool to assist consumers in obtaining relevant labor market information.



Nate Fernandes

On July 1, OCIS will become part of OhioMeansJobs. It is crucial for you to know that nothing saved in OCIS portfolio accounts will be accessible after June 30, 2014, so anything that is not saved outside of OCIS will be deleted at the end of June.

On the new website, consumers will be able to learn more about their career interests and see high-demand jobs. Additionally, they can build résumés, search for college and training programs, create a budget based on future expenses, and develop meaningful academic

and career plans, storing their information in what's called a "Backpack."

The following are some commonly asked questions regarding the OCIS platform.

Will current portfolios transfer to OhioMeansJobs?

No. Consumers/staff will need to save their information outside of OCIS and then upload and save it in their OhioMeansJobs Backpack.

In the past, OOD had to pay for OCIS. Do we need to pay now?

No! OhioMeansJobs is free to anyone.

Will there be assessments in OhioMeansJobs?

Yes. The OCIS Career Cluster Inventory is expected to be available this fall, along with an abbreviated version of the O*NET Interest Profiler. Additional assessments for college and career readiness will be available at no cost, including practice tests for ACT, Advanced Placement, and ASVAB.

How the Enhanced OhioMeansJobs platform works:

When going to <http://www.ohiomeansjobs.com>, users will be greeted with several options. In order to save activities in a backpack on the website, consumers will need to sign in. If an OhioMeansJobs account was previously created, that account is still valid.

The first thing a consumer will need to do is Register with OhioMeansJobs. The registration page asks for some basic information including name, e-mail, phone number, and address. One item staff should take note of in particular is the question "Do you require special workplace accommodations?" If the writer answers 'Yes,' he/she is asked to specify what accommodations may be needed. This may require you to have a discussion about disclosure earlier on in the VR process than may have occurred in the past.

Once consumers are registered, they will be able to save all work in their Backpack as discussed above.

What goes in the Backpack?

The Backpack contains the results of any assessments or career exploration done by a

consumer. Assessments include the following:

- Applied Mathematics Practice Test 1
- Locating Information Practice Test 1
- Reading for Information Practice Test 1
- Computer Basics 2: Personal Computer Fundamentals

This link provides a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions, plus instructions on how to print out information from OCIS.

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/Career-Development-OCIS>

Social Security Spotlight: Planning Finances for Self-Employment

By Elizabeth L. Sammons

So a farmer, a street vendor and a minister walk into this bar. What's their biggest gripe?

It's probably the double-duty tax they pay for Social Security disability/retirement and Medicare benefits, since all of them are self-employed.

These three, like anyone claiming self-employment, must report their earnings and pay their taxes directly to the IRS when filing federal income tax. Often, taxes are paid quarterly. Unlike those earning wages, our farmer, street vendor and minister pay the combined employee and employer amount, which is a 12.4 percent Social Security tax in 2014 up to \$117,000 of net earnings, and a 2.9 percent Medicare tax on entire net earnings.

But the "net" is an important part of this calculation. Beyond the standard exemptions business owners/others self-employed may claim on normal business expenses like property or transportation, those with disabilities may claim income-related work expenses (IRWE.) These range widely and cover categories including many attendant care services at home, during travel or at work. Physical therapy and medications needed to be able to work, expendable medical supplies, medical devices, child care costs, assistive technology and training, or other equipment to accommodate the disability can also be included along with service animal expenses.

Numerous other reasonable expenses may also be reduced from gross income if they directly relate to someone's disability and work as long as they have not already been claimed as business expenses in another category.

For an Impairment Related Work Expense deduction to be allowable:

- The expense must be related to an impairment treated by a healthcare provider, and
- The expense must help the self-employed person work, and
- The expense must be paid by the self-employed person, not reimbursed by another source, and
- The expense must take place within the month worked, and
- The expense must be reasonable

Sorry, a bar tab isn't part of the tax write-off, so maybe our farmer, minister and street vendor have something else to gripe about. Come to think of it, the bar owner might join in!

Sidebar: for more information on this complicated topic

See list of income-related work expenses IRWEs at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0500820555>

For some details specific to the farming community including tax filing information useful to anyone self-employed who has a disability, see: http://ohioline.osu.edu/aex-fact/pdf/AEX_983_4.pdf

For an insightful blog "Five ways to keep your home-based business running smoothly" from a disability perspective, see: <http://usodep.blogs.govdelivery.com/2014/04/21/5-ways-to-keep-your-home-based-business-running-smoothly/#more-8362>

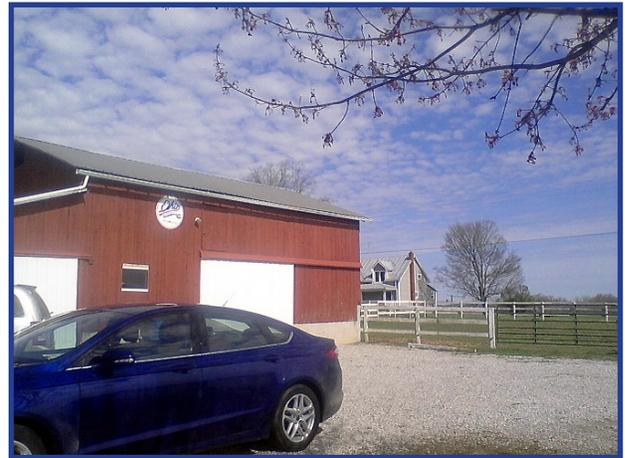
Wheeling, Dealing and Getting from Here to There

By Elizabeth L. Sammons

BSVI Canton counselor Berna King knows what it's like to be creative in getting around. "When I was growing up, we had some Amish friends a few miles away. I had a horse at the time. They did trimming the hooves and shoeing

my horse in exchange for my parents driving them to the grocery store every two weeks," she recalls. Thus began Berna's knowledge of 'Yoder Toters.'

Yoder is one of the most common Amish last names, thus symbolic of the community. And, "Yoders" need "toters" like Berna's parents to go out of buggy range for shopping, to the doctor or to work. (The reason most Amish do not own motor-powered transportation stems from their fear that such mobility would create temptations to move away from their close-knit community.)



"Yoder toters," used by the Amish community, can also be utilized by individuals with disabilities.

DDD's Susann Deatherage smiles over this title of 'Yoder Toter.' "It's a jokey kind of thing," she says, not a derogatory term, used both for a vehicle and a driver. When she moved to Knox County in 1997, she didn't anticipate driving for her Amish neighbors, as needed. "It's a ministry for me," she explains.

Counselors like Berna have explored using alternate transportation such as 'Yoder toters' for consumers they serve. Additionally, since transportation is an ongoing demand in outlying communities, consumers able to drive safely sometimes take interest in providing the service. "I encourage people to advertise at churches or with community organizations, not that that's any guarantee," Berna says.

For those seeking private personal transportation, Berna advises passengers to draw up some sort of agreement signed by both parties stipulating times, rates, and longevity. "I en-

courage people to get receipts when they pay a driver, partly because they can write it off," she adds.

In Amish counties, posting on Facebook or using an app to locate a driver isn't an option. "People in our area can't have phones, so they would leave a phone in our barn, and they'd pay for that, and they're free to go in there and call," Susann explains about the business Amish neighbors conduct, including hunting for drivers. "A list of people is something they just create. They get word of mouth of people that like to drive."



Some neighbors like Susanne provide creative places for Amish friends to make phone calls arranging transportation and other business.

For potential driver lists, people need to look at bulletin boards anywhere that Amish customers frequent -- phone booths, shops or the local post office. **Auctions are another popular means of finding contacts.** Berna considers it a good idea to visit such venues with a job developer to find or post driving leads. "It would be a good resource to have," she says, especially given that Holmes County has no public transportation at all, and Wayne County's is limited to the town of Wooster.

Drivers range from full-time U-Hauls for construction work crews, to friendly neighbors like Susann, to volunteers in their 80s looking for something social to do. Charges vary from per-mile flat fees, to trips including wait time. It's simply a deal between the customer and the driver, Susann explains.

Transportation sidebar:

Who is liable in private ride accidents? Find advice and controversy in this recent article from the Columbus Dispatch. <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2014/03/04/whos-covered.html>

"Driving the Amish" was written by Clif Bushnell under the pen name Jim Butterfield, published in 1997 by Herald Press. The book of tips and insights for would-be drivers is available in Wayne County's library, the College of Wooster bookstore, along with The Wooster Book Company and many local gift shops. Review available at <http://www.amish-heartland.com/amish%20culture/2003/09/30/roadtrip-with-an-amish-taxi-driver>

For some fascinating trivia on Amish transportation in the Holmes County area, see: <http://www.ohiosamishcountry.com/article/amish-transportation-holmes-county-ohio-culture-about-life.html>

Partner Spotlight: AgrAbility Cultivates Fruitful Labors

By Elizabeth L. Sammons

John Zeller never has a typical workday. "Friday we are delivering a trailer mounted personal lift that will allow a farmer to lift himself into multiple pieces of equipment. That afternoon we are delivering a farm/agriculture ready mobility scooter in Green County," he emailed recently as we were scheduling our interview. When we spoke, he added, "Usually I smell different when I come home, depending on which farm I go to. It is that varied. Every time I go out I learn something. It's that great!"



OOD provided funding for this John Deer UTV to increase the mobility for this Troy, Ohio farmer.

In 2009, The Ohio State University received a grant from the US Department of Agriculture to start collaboration with farmers seeking new approaches to their tasks as age or disability shift the lay of the land on how they perform the daily tasks associated with agriculture or raising livestock. "We're working with motivated individuals. This is their lifestyle. They're not 'inside people'. That really adds to the success," explains Kent McGuire, OSU's AgrAbility Program Coordinator.

"The first thing is be safe. People cannot return to doing exactly what they did before," emphasizes John Zeller, who is Rural Rehabilitation Coordinator for Easter Seals.

"A big portion of what we do is try to prevent secondary injuries," adds Josh Svarda, Community Employment Service Manager. "OOD's contributions have ranged from automated doors and equipment modification, to more traditional supports such as computer software or training. But whether it's high- tech

table. Getting to the kitchen table's huge. It often gets the spouse or other care giver involved to add perspective," John explains his introduction to most OOD projects, where AgrAbility provides vocational assessments. Jointly with the farmer, John comes up with a plan to keep production going, including an evaluation of what skills and actions are needed. This dictates next steps and how to work with a counselor to create a plan.

AgrAbility's scope of work is not limited to OOD consumers. At the University of Dayton, a freshman engineering course lets students come up with creative designs by analyzing situations to add adaptive technology to make agricultural tasks possible. A senior-level class involves designing an accessible greenhouse for the Dayton Veterans Administration in hopes of upcoming funding and construction. For details of the plan and design, see <http://agrability.osu.edu/sites/d6-agrability.web/files/VA%20Greenhouse%20-%20Conceptual%20Design%20Presentation%5B2%5D.pdf>



Funding for livestock handling equipment, such as this tilt table, can assist farmers with a disability to complete daily care of livestock.

assistive technology solutions, or just common sense and lots of duct tape, the goal is the same, to allow people to continue farming, the only life many have ever known and loved."

"Most people that I've worked with who are counselors have never worked with a farmer. I go out and literally work on the farm. That's the way you get the farmer to trust you. If you're willing to go out there and shovel and rake with him, he's willing to talk with you at the kitchen

Additionally AgrAbility is involved with several DD service and faith communities around the state, which have projects to train people with autism and other intellectual disabilities. In collaboration with the National Science foundation, devices are being engineered and picture labels created to show not tell. This lets learners visualize their tasks instead of following written instructions on horse feeding stations and planters for urban gardening. "It was a fun project that really turned out a simple product that works," John explains.

Josh said that AgrAbility also focuses on linkages. These range from reviewing fact sheets for safety and simplicity, to cultivating peer to peer groups for farmers with special needs such as people with multiple chemical sensitivities seeking understanding doctors.

To refer current or potential consumers to AgrAbility, contact Josh Svarda at jsvarda@EasterSealsTristate.org or call him at 513-615-3255.

Insights from the desk of newly-Certified Ohio Fiscal Professional, Steve Tribbie: Budget

A frequent source of questioned cost findings during an audit or monitoring event is the purchase of goods or services not included in the budget. Every OOD contract is supported by a budget that defines the fiscal structure of the project as well as the intended



Steve Tribbie

use of funding over the life of the contract. Essentially, the budget represents all of the costs that OOD has deemed to be allowable under the contract. When partners purchase a good or service that is not included in that budget, that purchase becomes an unallowable use of funds. In most cases, the actual good or service purchased would be allowable, had it been included in the budget, and this issue is easily resolved by revising the budget with OOD's approval. Sometimes, however, the good or service purchased is prohibited by federal cost principles, or it is deemed by OOD to be an unreasonable or unnecessary use of funds and is disallowed.

Another common budget-related issue is the practice of charging the contract each month for one-twelfth (1/12th) of the annual budget for a given line item. While this would seem like a simple and efficient way of recovering costs from the contract, this practice is explicitly prohibited by federal cost principles. The cost principles state that all costs charged to a contract supported by federal funds must be actual costs; budget estimates, such as 1/12th of the annual budget, do not qualify as support for charges to contracts. When OOD identifies this situation during an audit, this invariably results in a finding related to internal controls. If there is any difference between the budgeted

amount and the actual cost incurred, OOD will issue a request for repayment. To avoid this situation, partners should make sure their processes and systems allow them to capture the actual costs incurred and to pass only those actual costs on to OOD.

At your Fingertips: (A Few Additional Resources and Features)

Getting around and finding services wherever you are:

This ODOT website gives legal and technical details on various forms of public transportation and funding from around the state. <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/Transit/Pages/Programs.aspx>

See this link for a comprehensive listing of Ohio 2-1-1 Community Resource Directories: <http://www.referweb.net/ohio/>

Find service animal travel guidelines, travel training programs and English and Spanish versions of "Planning for Transportation after Medical Services Pocket Guide," plus additional youth, veteran and other transportation resources at Easter Seals' Project Action: <http://www.projectaction.org/Initiatives/HealthTransportation.aspx>

Phone-based and communication services:

Keep handy this list of Disability Tech Support Hotlines from companies committed to providing some special services. <http://www.blindbargains.com/redirect.php?redirect=10693>

Investigate the FCC's Accessibility Clearinghouse, a web repository of information about accessible communications products and services including: accessibility features of mobile phones, accessibility contacts at telecommunications and advanced communications services companies, free assistive apps for various computing platforms, and organizations implementing the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP). www.fcc.gov/accessibilityclearinghouse

Finding health care in your community:

See five new issue briefs that describe what we can do to help combat obesity among people with disabilities and assist in achieving an improved quality of life. Audiences include communities, health departments, employers, schools and healthcare professionals. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/briefs.html>

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability offers an extensive website on health and fitness for people of many types of disabilities, including hundreds of program initiatives nationwide. <http://www.ncpad.org/Aboutus>

See this website for treatment and patient satisfaction comparisons among hospitals that accept Medicare, and much more. www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/search.html

Use this online resource from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to find mental health treatment facilities and programs near you. Help is available for people with limited resources who can't afford to pay for services. <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator/faces/geographicSearch.jsp>

For more information about mental and behavioral health services in your state, visit SAMHSA's Frequently Asked Questions: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator/faces/faq.jsp>

New from the *County Health Rankings report*: Some counties in the United States have one mental health provider for every 72 people, while others have as few as one for every 55,969 residents. The report examines a variety of measures that affect health, including high school graduation rates, access to healthy foods, smoking, obesity, and teen births, providing a health snapshot for nearly every county in all 50 states. See how well your county is doing on 29 factors.

Rural-specific resources:

Lancaster's Southeast Center for Independent Living is offering free information on its new

Facebook interchange on summer safety. Entries are: May 19, Beat the Heat; May 26, Severe Weather Awareness; June 2, Staying Healthy in the Summer; June 9, Water Safety. To view entries go to: www.facebook.com/socilohio/notes

See and share this USDA Development Program site with loan and grant information on housing, utilities, business development and more. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ProgramsAndOpportunities.html>

Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) offers transportation and other resources. <http://www.april-rural.org/index.php/rural-transportation>

The National Youth Leadership Network has released "Disability and Rural Communities: Making a Difference in Small Towns." This training guide includes discussion and activities on advocacy, inclusion, interdependence, networking and community involvement, supportive relationships, and leadership.

<http://www.nyln.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DisabilityandRuralCommunitiesGuideFinal.pdf>

The Rural Assistance Center online library is updated daily with news, resources and funding/opportunities from a variety of online sources. <http://www.raconline.org/library/>

Calendar of Disability Community Events

June 13: **Job Coach Academy** from Norwich Consulting Services, Quest Business Center/ Polaris, Columbus, OH. Specifically for Job Coaches, Employment Specialists, Enclave Supervisors, and Work Crew Supervisors. \$119 per person and includes training materials and lunch. See www.norwichcs.com Events Page to register.

June 23-24: **ADA Title I Training** from The Center For Disability Empowerment, Dublin Recreation Center 5600 Post Rd. Dublin. \$100 per person for both days. Deadline to register, June 16. Contact Derek Mortland by email to register or for questions. Mortland.cde@gmail.com

June 23-26: **American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 138th Annual Meeting**, Orlando, FL <http://www.responsetrack.net/lnk/org/1vh4z/?1AIGF02M2E0>

June 25: **Agging Eye Summit: Putting Pressure on Glaucoma**, Northeast Ohio Medical University, Rootstown, OH. CEU's available. For details and to register: <http://ohio.preventblindness.org/aging-eye-summit-putting-pressure-glaucoma>

June 26: **Conference Celebrating Inclusion: 15 Years of the Olmstead Decision**, Corporate College East, 4400 Richmond Road, Warrensville Hts., OH 44128. Limited scholarships are available. For more information, please contact Laura lgold@sil-oh.org or (216) 731-1529 (Voice/TTY).

June 30–July 1: **Ohio's 5th annual Opiate Conference: "Don't Get Me Started,"** Hyatt Regency, Columbus, OH http://www.oacbha.org/ohios_2014_opiate_conference.php

July 1: 8:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m., Contemporary Issues in Rehabilitation and Education for the Blind **13th ANNUAL REHABILITATION AND ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY CONFERENCE**, Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL. Reduced registration fee until June 15. To register: <https://nbpcb.org/members/er.php?eid=192>
For questions or special arrangements, contact Dianne Reed at 318-257-4554, or dreed@latech.edu.

July 1-5: **52nd Biennial National Association of the Deaf Conference**, National Association of the Deaf, Atlanta, GA <http://nad.org/sites/all/modules/civCRM/extern/url.php?u=19344&qid=2455172>

July 1-6: **National Federation of the Blind annual convention**, Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL <http://nfb.org/national-convention>

July 11-19: **American Council of the Blind national conference**, Riviera Casino and Hotel, Las Vegas, NV <http://acb.org/node/1487>

July 14–19: **AHEAD: Association on Higher Education and Disability annual conference**, "Access Always In All Ways," Sacramento, CA <http://ahead.org/meet/conferences/2014>

July 16-18: **39th Annual Rural Social Work Caucus National Institute on Social Work and Human Services in Rural Areas**, Silver City, NM <http://www.ruralsocialwork.org/>

July 28-31: **NCIL Annual Conference on Independent Living**, Grand Hyatt, Washington, D.C. <http://t.e2ma.net/click/v5vhg/riz59c/njdaib>

September 9: **Web Accessibility Training Day: National Federation of the Blind**, Jernigan Institute, Baltimore, MD <https://nfb.org/web-accessibility-day>

September 16-17: **Ohio's 12th Annual MI/DD Conference** sponsored by NADD (formerly the National Association for Dual Diagnosis), Crowne Plaza Columbus/North, Columbus, OH <http://thenadd.org/cfp-ohio/>

September 30–October 2: **The Arc's 2014 National Convention**, New Orleans, LA <http://convention.thearc.org/home>

Thanks, so long, and what's coming up?

I want to thank each person interviewed for these articles, all of whom voluntarily gave of their time and wisdom. Our next HireGround issue is slated to address the many, sometimes silent, partners we should know about as VR professionals. If you have suggestions, a success story or best practice from your work in this sphere, please contact me by email at Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov.

Elizabeth L. Sammons
HireGround coordinator

Interviewees, authors and OOD contributors:

Susann Deatherage
Nate Fernandes
Berna King
Diane Koren
Brigid Krane with logo design
Kent McGuire
Josh Svarda
Steve Tribbie
John Zeller