

# Dirkse Counseling Quarterly

Beaverton, Oregon

10 Year Anniversary

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## DCC WORKS

### VR Referrals: It's not just about a job

By Andrew Lundgren  
DCC Staff

Portland, Ore.— Peter first came to the offices of Dirkse Counseling referred by the State of Oregon Offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and as a result of many years of sequential events. Of course this had not been Peter's career choice, he was a master's degreed individual holding down solid employment. Ultimately, Peter had little to do with what brought him into first meet with Heidi Dirkse-Graw.

In childhood, Peter suffered from cancer and underwent treatment at an early age. As a result, Peter proved just how resilient children can be. He persevered and brought with him to that first meeting, a sizable resume that reflected confidence and a solid work history.

Having graduated from a top-notch undergraduate college in the Midwest, Carleton College, holding a law degree from DePaul University, and maintaining consistent employment as a legal assistant and paralegal with a large Chicago based law firm, the

average hiring professional might wonder what has kept Peter unemployed for a year and a half.

But it was not until during college that the treatment he underwent as a child started to take its toll. He soon found himself faced with adult onset hearing loss. As



someone who had to adjust to the physical ramifications of cancer treatment, Peter found himself again learning new ways to adjust to his hearing impairment.

He ended up leaving the Chicago law firm and underwent surgery to receive a cochlear implant. He moved to Portland where he would be closer to family. In a short amount of time, Peter found support through his family

and his volunteer work with the Oregon Advocacy Center and the Oregon based chapter for the American Civil Liberties Union.

The most prominent objectives DCC provided Peter, according to Peter, were mock interviews and continual feedback on his cover letters, his resume and his performance / presence in the interviews. He reported that this was the needed encouragement to keep him going.

Ultimately, the development and placement was relatively easy. Within a few weeks Peter began the interviewing process for the job he currently holds. He is now employed full-time past 90 days as a *compliance specialist* for a Portland based not-for profit corporation. Here he is able to utilize, most effectively his interpersonal skills along with his analytical, research and organizational skills. In the meantime he is able to spend what free-time he might have preparing for the Oregon Bar exam to be taken in a year or two.

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#### PLACEMENT STATISTICS

- \* 3 per month.
- \* 1/3 result of Situational Assessments
- \* 14 different job—titles ranging from job carved positions; entry-level & mid-level.

### Dirkse Counseling & Consulting New Eastside Satellite Office

Davis Business Center  
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# Strategic Planning: Commitment to Customers

By Heidi Dirkse-Graw  
DCC President

Strategic planning? What is it and why is it important to our customers? In a climate of limited resources for social and human services, one might contemplate that the act of strategic planning is of limited value and a waste of precious time and personnel; especially for small companies providing social services.

While it is true that time, commitment and use of resources are required, after 10 years of business, we, at DCC, believe that gathering data about our customers, identifying desired outcomes and continuous analysis of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities are important elements in our ability to provide effective and cost-efficient services.

The Small Business Administration offers some advice. When it comes to the necessity of strategic planning in small business, SBA resounds "only if you want to stay in business and prosper." Perhaps that is one of the reason DCC is still in existence 10 years from inception, when 60% of all small busi-



ness in the U.S. close their doors by year six. (U.S. Census Bureau's BITS)

With many counseling and vocational rehabilitation providers to choose from, DCC is a business that our customers have come to count on. Over the past year alone, DCC has listened to our customers and referral sources developing and implementing a plan to

expand accessibility to our services by opening two new satellite offices in the Portland-Vancouver Metro Area.

We have also achieved CARF Accreditation for our vocational rehabilitation programs and developed the capacity to serve the Hispanic population in our area and provide specialized services to individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Without strategic planning, these changes would not have been identified and carried out.

Why should our customers care about strategic planning? Because it is the backbone of the quality and responsiveness they have come to count on when they choose DCC.

## WORKING PEOPLE

### New Employees - New Opportunities - New Vision

By hiring Izabella Lewandowski and Frances Alonso "DCC has diversified its ability to serve clients who have traditionally been underserved,"



IZABELLA LEWANDOWSKI

says Glenn Bishop, M.S., CRC.

Izabella, DCC's Vocational Counselor for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, is a recent graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and minor in Human Development. She

ture and communicates verbally. Hired in September 2006, Izabella has found success in placing people with hearing impairment. With a desire to help others, she plans on obtaining a master's

degree in rehabilitation counseling. Frances Alonso, DCC's most recent hire. She brings specialized knowledge of the Hispanic cultures. Being bi-lingual, Frances has ex-



FRANCES ALONSO

perience in Spanish/English business translating and in teaching English as a second language. She possesses a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton. Frances is a naturalized citizen from Cuba who draws from her experience as she enthusiastically assists non-English speaking clients to secure and maintain employment.

Bishop has great plans for his new employees. He states he will, "nurture their professional growth by integrating their specialization with opportunities to learn the ins-and-outs of vocational rehabilitation."

In addition to hands-on training, DCC has enrolled Izabella and Frances in Western Washington University's Certificate Program in Providing Vocational Services to Individuals with Disabilities.

is proficient in American Sign Language and being deaf herself, has a first-hand perspective of the deaf cul-

ture and communicates verbally. Hired in September 2006, Izabella has found success in placing people with hearing impairment. With a desire to help others, she plans on obtaining a master's