



*Seeking Employment, Equality and Community for  
People with Developmental Disabilities*

**SEEC E-News**

**February 2021 | Issue Twenty-nine**

## **SEEC is Recognized as a 2021 Top Workplaces USA Winner**



Last month SEEC announced that it had earned the 2021 Top Workplaces USA award, issued by Energage, a purpose-driven organization that develops solutions to build and brand Top Workplaces. This is the inaugural year for Top Workplaces USA, built on the program's 14-year history surveying more than 20 million employees across 54 markets for the regional Top Workplaces awards. In addition to being named overall winner, SEEC was recognized amongst the Top Nonprofit industry category as well as the "Clued In Leaders" and "Communication" Culture Excellence Awards.

"We are honored to have received this award and are incredibly grateful to our amazing staff for the essential work they do every day to help improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said Karen Lee, Executive Director of SEEC.

Top Workplaces USA offers national recognition for large organizations, those with more than 150 employees, and those that may have operations in multiple markets. Several thousand organizations from across the country were invited, and more than 1,100 participated in the Top Workplaces USA survey. Winners of the Top Workplaces USA list are chosen based solely on employee feedback gathered through an employee engagement survey, issued by Energage. Results are calculated by comparing the survey's research-based statements, including 15 Culture Drivers that are proven to predict high performance against industry.

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## Black History Month

SEEC's Encouraging Change Helping Others (ECHO) team is leading the organization to ensure SEEC is a community that acknowledges our racial diversity and disparity and appropriately addresses it. As part of the efforts, the ECHO team has compiled a list of resources to assist staff and partners in addressing race and inequity.



### ECHO Resources on Race and Equity:

- [Racial Equity Tools](#) offers tools, research, tip, curricula and ideas for people who want to increase their own understanding and to help those working for racial justice at every level.
- [Learning for Justice](#) is an organization whose mission is to help teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse democracy. They provide free resources to educators, administrators, counselors, and families. (*In 2021, Teaching Tolerance changed its name to Learning for Justice to better reflect their mission. Their new name speaks to the collaborative work of learning and growing together to reach the goal of justice for all.*)
- [Talking About Race](#) is a website hosted by the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of African American History & Culture which contains numerous resources on racial justice education, self-exploration and advocacy.
- [Scaffolding Anti-Racism Resources](#) This is a resource document compiled for anti-racism work compiled by educators and updated regularly. The resources are divided by Stages of White Identity Development created by Janet Helms and includes corresponding resources and actions steps called "what to do next".
- [Showing Up For Racial Justice](#) "SURJ is a national network of groups and individuals working to undermine white supremacy and to work for racial justice." The website contains information on political education, toolkits, and other resources.
- [One Race](#) Famous social scientist Jane Elliott began her work following Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and continues today. Jane Elliott's website contains lectures, workshops and information about the studies she has conducted on racism and inequity.

### Books, Articles, Videos:

- ["Courageous conversations: Understanding Privilege and Becoming a Better Ally"](#) with Daniel Hill, author of *White Awake: An Honest Look at What it Means to be White*). [Video](#)
- Ibram X. Kendi, [How to Be An Antiracist](#)
- Austin Channing Brown: [I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness](#).
- ["Taking Steps to Eliminate Racism in the Workplace"](#) by Arlene Hirsch (SHRM).

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## The Maryland Direct Support Professional (MDDSP) Training Consortium

By Anna Oldham

The Maryland Direct Support Professional (MDDSP) Training Consortium's DSP II

program has just credentialed over 60 learners from six agencies.

As part of our plan to expand this workforce training, SEEC worked with learners from Jubilee Association of Maryland, Compass, Inc., Spring Dell Center, Ardmore Enterprises, and Arc Montgomery County. In total, the Consortium ran three separate cohorts made possible by generous support from the Maryland Department of Labor and EARN Maryland Program.

In addition to SEEC's, Jubilee hosted its own group of learners, and Compass and Spring Dell Center teamed up to host the third. We also welcomed 14 Front Line Supervisors into the training. Now that they are credentialed, these supervisors will help support their DSP IIs to use their many new skills in their daily practice.

The DSP II training program is a unique experience designed to create upward and lateral growth opportunities for direct support professionals through competency-based training. The training shifted to live Zoom sessions when COVID restrictions began. In addition to live classes, learners also complete online lessons and written assignments. Learners study competencies in the areas of disability history and causes, health and wellness, communication, ethics, person-centered practice, positive behavior support, risk and safety, community inclusion, advocacy, and employment.



### **Congratulations to all DSP IIs!**

Here's what one learner had to say about the training: "The training is important because as an individual, some of us don't have any experience when starting this field. The DSP II training helps improve your knowledge and capacity because you have more areas to learn. It helps the welfare of the individual because of our enhanced learning. [It also] helps deal with individual behaviors by helping to go into things in an in-depth way. It helps staff become more welcoming as it creates a better relationship between the staff and the person."

Cohort 8 of the program begins in April. If you are interested in learning more, email Anna Oldham, [aoldham@seeonline.org](mailto:aoldham@seeonline.org).

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Save the Date: Spring Gala will be on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM**

Mark your calendars for our upcoming Spring Gala happening on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 6pm!

We are working on the details but are anticipating a VIP virtual cocktail reception from 5:30-6p followed by the main event at 6pm ending with a virtual dance

party for everyone to join in on!



## Virtual Wine Tasting



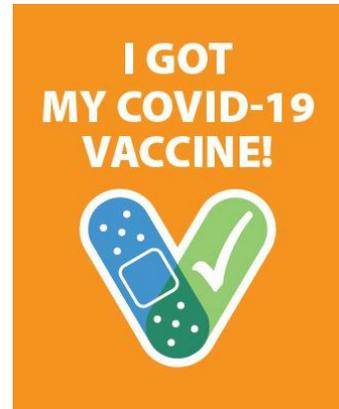
Thanks to those of you who signed up to attend our pod-friendly, socially distanced, virtual wine tasting happening on Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 5pm! Wine and Spirits Consultant at Winebow, Kristi Delovitch, will be our expert host. We are looking forward to this fun virtual event.

A reminder to those who have signed up, to pick up your wines at the SEEC offices at 8905 Fairview Rd, Silver Spring on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm.

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## First COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic was a Success!

We are pleased to report that we hosted our first COVID-19 vaccination clinic with CVS which took place on Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. Over 190 people we support and SEEC staff were vaccinated between the hours of 9-3. It was a huge effort coordinated with over 20 vaccinated SEEC staff members volunteering their time to make sure the process was a smooth one. We gained some valuable learnings that we look forward to applying to our future clinics in March. Thanks to everyone who helped make the day a success and a special shout out to Steve Blanks, Director of Partnerships, for his amazing coordination efforts behind the scenes!



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## SEEC's Employer Outreach Team (EOT) Finds New Opportunities During A Pandemic

by Pamela Toole

At the outset of 2020, the Employer Outreach Team, including Katie Smeltz, Linda Hoyt and Pamela Toole, expanded their efforts and began supporting three SEEC programs- **Employment Services, Project SEARCH and Community Engagement**. When Coronavirus began last spring, the team re-aligned their focus to increase support for SEEC's business partners and to support SEEC job seekers to navigate the new employment landscape. Like so many, the team fretted over opportunities lost, and what lay ahead. But, as the team refocused our work, new opportunities presented

themselves. We learned SEEC job seekers had skills we had not identified in the past, which was an unexpected benefit of the virtual space we were all working in.

The team continued to **network virtually** at local chambers of commerce while expanding our participation in more networking groups throughout DC and MD to include **BNI's, Disability Inclusion DC, MoCo Collaborative** and others.

“Virtual” made the community reach easier to access while consequently making our reach more extensive. Stronger engagement with community groups allowed us to better understand current business needs as they shifted. Adding **virtual “lunch and learn” presentations** at targeted companies increased our ability to spread awareness about employing people with disabilities.



Internally, we got busy to help identify **external career training resources** for job seekers waiting out the pandemic in areas like pet care, trade programs, and tech training. We assisted in re-launching a **virtual Job Club** which now has more robust content with increased access to external speakers and includes new sessions on networking, goal-setting, using LinkedIn, and elevator speeches, dressing for success, and new topics continuing to be developed. Our eye on employer needs helped us to identify areas of career skill development for job seekers.

Tapping the rich resource of **SEEC’s volunteer base**, we implemented two rounds of **virtual mock interviews**, successfully reaching more job seekers and engaging more volunteers due to new virtual access. We researched what **workforce trends** our new world presented, and we identified new growth areas our job seekers might find in areas like **IT/Tech, lab work, shipping/stocking, and virtual assistant** jobs. Those job types were then integrated into virtual job club and into virtual mock interviews, enriching the preparation of SEEC job seekers across activities. We continue to pursue employment opportunities in key growth areas since the pandemic, and to follow where the jobs are now, and will be, in the future.

SEEC job seekers today are now working and interning as **(a) virtual assistants** (performing database management/data entry, social media marketing, and customer service), **(b) IT/Tech support assistants, (c) medical test kit assemblers, (d) package handlers**, and the list grows. The new experiences and competencies job seekers are developing during the pandemic are assisting to consider this set of jobs. Despite Covid-19, and with the collaborative effort across SEEC departments, we continue to build relationships and to develop employment opportunities with **The**

## We Give Thanks to Enterline Foundation

By Cathy Dirksen



The time of COVID-19 has presented many unexpected expenses for nonprofits nationwide. SEEC is no different. We have experienced many expenditures over the last ten months for COVID-related expenses to ensure we continue our vital work while keeping the health and safety of the people we support and our staff a priority. SEEC has accessed financial resources from a variety of funders to cover our costs for PPE and cleaning supplies, incentives and increased pay for staff providing in-person supports and purchasing sensory and recreational items to help the people receiving SEEC services stay calm and entertained during this prolonged crisis.

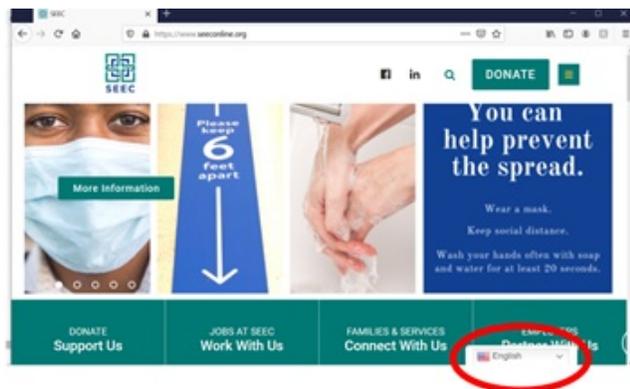
Thanks to a grant from the Enterline Foundation, we were able to secure funding to help cover our substantial investment in laptops, software, and platform licenses for our staff to work remotely as they provide virtual supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been in their homes for nearly a year.

The Enterline Foundation is a nonprofit private foundation serving the intellectually and developmentally disabled community nationwide. We are grateful for its prompt and generous response to help meet our needs. [To learn more about Enterline Foundation visit enterlinefoundation.org.](https://www.enterlinefoundation.org)

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## Website Updates!

We are pleased to announce that our website is now translated into both Spanish and French with the touch of a button. Simply go to the bottom right corner of the SEEC website ([www.seeonline.org](http://www.seeonline.org)) and click the button to select your language of choice. We are happy to include your language if it's not represented. Please reach out and let us know and we'll do what we can to accommodate!



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