



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

**SEEC E-News**

**October 2021 | Issue Thirty-Six**

## **October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**

The theme for NDEAM 2021, “**America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion,**” reflects the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities have full access to employment and community involvement during the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Observed each October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.

On Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, SEEC will celebrate NDEAM by hosting our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Employer Networking and Recognition Event at Brookside Gardens thanks to our host, Montgomery Parks! The event will be live streamed from 8:30-9:30AM. Tune in to hear from NDEAM speakers like Congressman Jamie Raskin and Secretary Carol Beatty! Awards will be given to employers and employees alike. Lots to celebrate so hope you'll join us by watching on Facebook Live or streaming live on our website! [Register here!](#)



Click above to watch our newest employer video about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities!

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## Introductions

### Tona Craviatto, Program Director, Employment Services



#### **Tona Craviatto, Program Director, Employment Services**

After 10 years in the financial-banking field, Tona Craviatto joined the nonprofit world in 2005. He worked as a director for three large nonprofits in the DC-MD-VA area (Washington metropolitan area), dedicated to supporting the immigrant community, people experiencing homelessness, and returning citizens with long incarceration sentences. He developed and implemented a suite of vocational and life skill trainings that uplift people and communities through the power of employment. Tona has led programs for the past 17 years that created hundreds of jobs each year, achieved a global high retention rate, and enabled 75% of employed participants to pivot from homelessness to permanent housing in which their families can thrive. He was a fellow of the Weinberg Sector Skills Academy, class of 2007 and class of 2015. Tona is an active advisory committee member of the Baltimore Journey to Jobs – aiming to make homelessness rare and improving access to employment and economic opportunity for homeless jobseekers. He is very excited to work at SEEC and most importantly to contribute to the mission and vision of the organization.

## Are You a Federal Worker or Know Someone Who Is?



*Show Some Love* to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by giving to SEEC through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). SEEC's designation number is **#36458**.

### **What is the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)?**

The CFC is the official workplace giving campaign of the federal government. The mission of the CFC is to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient, and effective in providing Federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all. The CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, with 36 CFC zones throughout the country and overseas raising millions of dollars each year.

### **How can a federal employee make a pledge through the campaign?**

Federal employees can make a pledge online via the centralized giving platform. Donors can choose a payroll deduction or a one-time or recurring monthly pledge via a credit card, debit card, or direct bank transfer.

## Project SEARCH Welcomes New Intern Cohorts

By Nancy Eaby, Program Director, Project SEARCH

Like every good relationship, the foundation of Project SEARCH is built on partnerships, and this has

never been more important for our work than right now. We are incredibly fortunate to have such strong and committed partnerships with The National Institutes of Health (NIH), Montgomery County Government, The Smithsonian Institution and Embassy Suites/Capital Hilton as well as our educational partners with Ivymount Schools and District of Columbia Public Schools. While the pandemic may have shifted all of our work, the commitment to support and continue the Project SEARCH internship program has not waived.



With strong collaborations with all of our partners, we are excited to share that we welcomed twenty-two new interns across the four programs on September 7<sup>th</sup>. This was no small undertaking with the onboarding process for each intern, development of internships and externships, travel training and getting ready for the return of in-person supports.

We were able to work closely with our Business Advisory Council members from Worksource Montgomery in Wheaton and they graciously hosted our combined cohort of NIH, Montgomery County Government and The Smithsonian Institution for the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the program. This was a great opportunity for our teams and interns to start building relationships and get to know one another before moving to the next phase of the program year with internships that are starting this month. Our Embassy Suites/Capital Hilton program in partnership with DCPS, is 100% in-person with class being held each day at the DoubleTree Hotel in Crystal City.

Given the impact of Covid on our host sites, along with the changing needs of a remote workforce, we encountered a need to develop externships outside of our program partners. This presented us with an opportunity to work closely with SEEC's Employment Outreach Team (EOT) to help develop meaningful, skill building opportunities in the community. With a focus on internal and external development, having additional resources has been critical for our goal to provide opportunities to all twenty-two new interns. This certainly has been a silver lining in the time of Covid. With more collaboration across our teams and EOT, we have been able to strengthen our community networks with large and small businesses, while also maintaining strong partnerships with our Project SEARCH sites.

We remain hopeful and have immense gratitude to SEEC's Employment Outreach Team, our host sites, educational partners, and newfound partnerships that have developed over the past year. Our Project SEARCH teams have worked extremely hard to support interns and post-hires in their employment, while also navigating the complexities of the pandemic. While there is a lot of work ahead, we are confident that with a strong foundation of dedicated team members and committed partners, along with continued cross-collaboration across SEEC departments, we will have a successful year.

## DSP Recognition Week 2021

By Audrey Metzler, Grants and Communications Writer

During DSP Recognition Week September 12-19, 2021, SEEC DSPs had an entire week where they received numerous gifts, raffle prizes, department specific festivities, shout outs on staff calls and a culminating celebration with food and drink. SEEC's DSPs also had the opportunity to share with everyone what they love about their job through a selfie taken during their daily activities with the people they support. The results are a mosaic of smiles of people enjoying their time in

the community. In this time of imposed distancing, these pictures are testimonies incredible work being done by SEEC's DSPs who have had to adapt and change the way they worked before the pandemic to protect those they support against loneliness and isolation.



## Celebrating a Successful FootGolf Event!

By Katrina Kugel, Events Manager

On Saturday, September 25th, SEEC organized its fourth annual FootGolf event with over 18 teams participating at the Sligo Creek Golf Course and 3 other teams playing from their backyards at home. The weather was beautiful and all the participants enjoyed a day of play and fun. Everyone at SEEC is grateful to the footgolf sponsors for making this event possible: **HUB**, title sponsor, **ResInnova**, promotional sponsor, **Scott Team International**, bar sponsor. Thanks to the continuous support of our sponsors and everyone who played, including the people we support, the event was a fundraising success! Check out all of the event photos on **Facebook**!



[Click here to see more photos on our Facebook page!](#)

## Recruitment and Retention of Front-Line Staff

By Ric Andrews, Training and Learning Community Manager

As subject matter experts, Karen Lee and Ric Andrews are providing a two-part consulting series to Source America, a nonprofit agency that creates employment opportunities for people with disabilities, on Retention and Recruitment. The focus of the work is "Recruitment and Retention of Front-Line Staff". As consultants, Karen and Ric start with the end in mind: Retention is the best recruiting strategy!

**The Best Recruitment  
Strategy  
Is A Retention  
Strategy**

They clearly demonstrate how identifying retention strategies and understanding retention data create a successful recruitment strategy.

## Kickoff of the Family Listening Session

By Donné Allen, Director of Projects

SEEC will hold a listening session to hear from families on October 20, 2021 from 6 – 7pm. We are seeking to reaffirm ourselves as partners with the people we support and want to hear from their families about what is important to them for collaboration and communication in the future as we re-envision our services. In the past, SEEC used to meet with a small group of families, called the Parent Think Team, that provided feedback and added their voices to issues and concerns that arose for the former Discoveries program. We want to enhance that model by adding more family voices to the conversation. This is the beginning of a more collaborative and reciprocal model of communication and connection ahead for SEEC, the people we support, and their families. This session will be led by SEEC's Director of Projects, Donné Allen and SEEC family and Board member, Leslie Eure. Leslie was also a member of the Parent Think Team. If you have not received an invitation yet or if you know family members that can be interested by this initiative, please invite them to join! [Click here for more information.](#)



The flyer features a teal background on the left with a white graphic of concentric arcs. The SEEC logo, a teal square with a white geometric pattern, is in the top right. The main text is in white on dark blue rectangular backgrounds. The text includes the event title, a tagline, and contact information.

**SEEC FAMILY**  
**LISTENING SESSION**

Where parent voices may be heard as we reinvision services.

**DATE:** OCTOBER 20, 2021  
**TIME:** 6:00 - 7:00 P.M.  
**ZOOM INFORMATION**  
MEETING ID: 662 945 6931  
PASSCODE: 123456

**CONTACT**  
Donne' Allen  
dallen@seconline.org

**FAMILY LEAD**  
Leslie Eure

## Information Sharing! (You Have a TEXT Message from SEEC!)

Exciting news! SEEC will soon offer text messaging as a means of sharing information such as newsletters, action alerts, fundraising campaigns, events, weather alerts/closings, important announcements from our Executive Director, Karen Lee, and more. You will soon receive information on how to register to receive text messages.

## Volunteer Corner

By Ethan Litvin, Volunteer Coordinator

**Ruppert Landscape Volunteer Day**

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, we had the privilege of having Ruppert Landscape, an incredible SEEC employer partner, volunteer with the people we support from Community Engagement and Employment Services. Together, they cleaned up the green areas around our building. It was a wonderful morning of landscaping, learning, and community building! This would not have been possible without the amazing collaboration and support from the entire crew at Ruppert Landscape. Thank you to everyone who was involved!



### **November Mock Interviews**

Are you interested in helping our job seekers refine their interview skills so that they can be successful in landing a job of their choosing? [Sign up here](#) to participate in our mock interviews during the first and second weeks of November!

301.576.9000 | [www.seeonline.org](http://www.seeonline.org)

