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From the desk of: Martha Garber

“The secret to success is the constancy to purpose.” These words, attributed to one of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, seem appropriate for the celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Opening employment doors for people with disabilities requires perseverance. Rarely does the right job emerge during our first encounter with an employer. Building good relationships which lead to quality employment outcomes happens over time with resolve. As rehabilitation professionals, we can take this opportunity to renew our spirit and determination to hold constant our purpose of workplace inclusion and sustainable employment.



ADA Amendments Act of 2008

On September 25, 2008, President Bush signed the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 into law. The new law broadens protections to a wider range of individuals with disabilities by essentially overturning several Supreme Court decisions that narrowed the definition of disability since the original ADA was passed in 1990. [Click here to read the major changes made to the ADA. The new law takes effect January 1, 2009.](#)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Every year the Texas Governor's Committee on Disabilities commissions a poster commemorating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This year's poster was created by Artist Bobby Benefield, a 14-year veteran of the Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and an accomplished artist active in the national and local art scenes.



Mr. Benefield was identified by UNTWISE as an emerging leader in the field of rehabilitation. In late summer of 2006, he was invited to participate in an experimental program that paired a community rehabilitation provider with a vocational rehabilitation counselor. The Leadership Project resulted in several collaborations between the two agencies. Two were featured in previous issues of the e-News Bulletin: a [Career Expo](#) in San Antonio, Texas, and a [Housing & Employment Resources Expo \(HERE\)](#) in

Training Schedule

October 24, 2008:
[Customized Job Development](#), Online Webinar

October 28-29, 2008:
[Supported Employment: Basic Skills Clinic](#), Arlington, TX

November 18-19, 2008:
[Supported Employment: Basic Skills Clinic](#), Baton Rouge, LA

[For a list of all of our training programs, visit our calendar!](#)

Upcoming Conferences

[2008 NRA National Training Conference](#), October 23-26, 2008, St. Louis, MO

[NCRE/RSA/CSAVR 2008 National Training Conference](#) on Rehabilitation Education, November 5-7, 2008, Arlington, VA

[CSAVR Fall](#)

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Houston, Texas. Mr. Benefield co-authored a manuscript, soon to be published as a UNTWISE Brief, describing his work in the Ft. Worth area: a job fair targeted for job seekers who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.

[Conference 2008](#),
November 16-19, 2008,
San Diego, CA

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The [Department of Labor's Office of Disability
Employment Policy](#) leads the nation's activities for
NDEAM and produces materials to promote the
theme. This year's theme, [America's People,
America's Talent, America's Strength](#), was
announced by Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao in July

[Click here to see all
conferences listed on
our website.](#)

Comments

2008.

Send your
comments and
story ideas to e-
News Bulletin
[Director &
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After High School, You Need to Pay Up!

[Reality Check](#) is a website to help young people transitioning from school-to-work get a glimpse of life in the real world. Using an interactive system, Reality Check takes users through a series of questions related to the lifestyle they intend to lead (how much will they spend for rent, food, entertainment, etc.), the salary required to attain that lifestyle (the program keeps a running total based on the users selections), and occupational choices that would meet the requirements of the chosen lifestyle. Reality Check is offered by [Texas Workforce Solutions](#).

Transitions

Congratulations to **Ralph Vigil** who was appointed Director of New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) effective September 22, 2008. Mr. Vigil has a long history with NMDVR having served the agency as a rehabilitation counselor, program manager, field operations director and most recently as Deputy Director. He replaced 26-year veteran **Gary Beene** who retired in September 19th.

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