

On Target

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Eli Lilly and Company: a role model for disability employment

Becky Snelling-Schroer was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis when she was seven years old. Recently, she celebrated nine years of employment at Eli Lilly and Company where she's an associate consultant for Global Medical Communications.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month — a great time to recognize employers who make efforts to hire people with disabilities. Lilly is one such company that provides employment and advancement opportunities to people with disabilities, including Schroer.

Lilly has 10 employee-led affinity groups that help build competencies in specific cultural areas and provide a channel for employees to connect with others within the company who share common backgrounds and experiences. Schroer played an integral part in starting the Lilly affinity group Network for Emphasizing Abilities First (NEAF), which focuses on disability awareness and education programs for all Lilly employees.

"The NEAF affinity group works with Lilly safety and facilities teams to ensure building accessibility and safe evacuation," said Schroer. "We also help the recruiting team create awareness and guidelines on how to interact with people with disabilities."

NEAF also helps the pharmaceutical company better understand certain conditions and patients who have similar disabilities. Because of her medical condition, Schroer was able to help Lilly with testing various devices for older adults, who commonly are diagnosed with arthritis.

Before joining Lilly, Schroer was a newspaper reporter and editor for the Anderson Herald-Bulletin and Noblesville Ledger, as well as worked in corporate communications for St. Vincent Hospital and USA Group. She has a degree in journalism and political science from Indiana University.

In celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Lilly has planned an event for employees featuring Josh Blue, season four winner of NBC's "Last Comic Standing." Blue is living with cerebral palsy and uses his sense of humor and likeability to overcome preconceived notions and defy stereotypes.

In 2008, Lilly received two awards for its commitment to hiring people with disabilities. The Indianapolis Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability honored the company with the Employer Access and Inclusion Award to recognize Lilly's leadership with The Employment Network, a group of 70 organizations working to increase employment and self-sufficiency for Indianapolis residents with disabilities. In September 2008, Noble of Indiana honored Lilly with its President's Award, the organization's highest honor. It is

presented only to those who demonstrate a long-term commitment to supporting Indiana residents with developmental disabilities.

Lilly has demonstrated its commitment to diversity in the workplace and serves as a great example for businesses across the state and worldwide.

For more information on National Disability Employment Awareness Month, visit www.dol.gov/odep. To learn more about Lilly's diversity policies, visit www.lilly.com/about/diversity.

Redesigned disability.gov site offers helpful tools and resources

The U.S. Department of Labor recently launched the newly redesigned www.disability.gov, a Web site that connects more than 50 million Americans with disabilities to thousands of trusted resources on disability-related issues, programs and services.

Formerly known as www.disabilityinfo.gov, the new site has been completely redesigned and updated with new social media tools, such as a blog and Twitter feed, to encourage feedback and interaction among visitors.

The new Web site is a helpful tool not only for people with disabilities, but for parents of children with disabilities, employers, workforce and human resource professionals, veterans, educators, caregivers and many others.

The site features comprehensive information from 22 federal agencies, as well as educational institutions, non-profit organizations and state and local governments. Topics covered on the site include:

- Benefits
- Civil rights
- Community life
- Education
- Emergency preparedness
- Employment
- Health
- Housing
- Technology
- Transportation

Site visitors can search by state to find resources in their area, sign up for newsletter updates, and apply for disability benefits, scholarships and government grants.

NCD releases emergency management recommendations

A report recently published by the National Council on Disability (NCD), titled “Effective Emergency Management: Making Improvements for Communities and People with Disabilities,” recommends that federal, state and local government officials make significant changes in emergency management practices for people with disabilities.

According to NCD Chairperson John R. Vaughn, “NCD’s first evaluation of government work in this area was published in a 2005 report, ‘Saving Lives: Including People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning.’ That report laid out a scenario of a major hurricane striking the Gulf Coast and outlined steps that the federal government should take to include people with disabilities in emergency preparedness, disaster relief and homeland security. Hurricane Katrina struck four months later.”

As a result of NCD’s work on the 2005 report, the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (H.R. 5441) — part of the 2006 Homeland Security Appropriations bill — required the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to employ a national disability coordinator and to interact, consult and coordinate with NCD on other activities.

Through ongoing research, NCD identified a major gap in the government’s homeland security knowledge base, particularly the availability and use of effective practices for community preparedness and response to the needs of people with disabilities in all types of disasters. This new report offers information and advice to assist all levels of government in their work to establish evidence-based policies, programs and practices across the life cycle of disasters.

Below are some of the recommendations for all levels of government, as well as things advocates can do on an individual level, to affect changes in emergency planning for people with disabilities.

Government at the federal level should:

- Continue strengthening efforts to enforce compliance with Federal Communications Commission policies regarding emergency broadcasting to reach people with disabilities.
- Hire disability coordinators at the FEMA regional offices.
- Involve disability organizations and people with disabilities in federal exercises, after-action reports and federally funded recovery planning.

Government at the state level should:

- Task a state official with disability and disaster issues.
- Conduct disability training for first responders.
- Strengthen code requirements for public places, including alternative warning systems and signage.

Government at the local level should:

- Create working groups to review and revise emergency operations plans, mitigation plans and recovery plans to address the issues of people with disabilities.
- Conduct cross-training on disability and disaster issues among emergency managers, first responders, voluntary agencies and disability agencies.
- Individual advocates should:
 - Accept personal responsibility for preparedness in a disaster context; where that is challenging, involve caregivers in such efforts.
 - Create contingency plans for evacuation and other protective action, living in a shelter, medical care and service animals.
 - Be alert for warnings and actively seek information on recommended responses; be prepared to take action.
 - Advocate for people with disabilities by contacting your local emergency manager.

To view the entire report, visit www.ncd.gov, click on “Publications by Year,” and the report is listed under the date Aug. 12, 2009.

To find out more about emergency management procedures in Indiana, visit the Indiana Department of Homeland Security’s Web site at www.in.gov/dhs.

Program offers community service opportunities

AmeriCorps, a federal government program, engages more than 70,000 Americans each year in meaningful service to meet community needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security and other areas.

AmeriCorps provides grant funding to state service commissions, such as the Indiana Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, which in turn award grants to nonprofit groups and agencies to recruit and monitor members.

Different from traditional volunteer programs, AmeriCorps is not about keeping participants busy, offering temporary solutions or providing free labor to organizations. The program focuses on addressing critical community issues while offering a great participant experience. Members participate in projects such as:

- Assisting crime victims
- Building homes
- Protecting and conserving the environment
- Mentoring at-risk youth
- Restoring parks
- Running after-school programs

Full-time members complete 1,700 hours of service a year, but part-time positions are also available. Members receive valuable training and experience, a living allowance (in

some cases) and an education award (\$4,725 for full-time). Thanks to the Heart Act of 2008, individuals receiving SSI and SSDI payments can accept AmeriCorps stipends without jeopardizing their Social Security benefits.

AmeriCorps was created under President Clinton in 1993. The program's community service projects are carefully planned and managed to engage participants in important tasks and teach them valuable skills. For more information, call (317) 233-4273 (voice) or visit www.in.gov/ofbci.

New campaign seeks to double employment rate

The Alliance for Full Participation (AFP), a partnership of leading organizations assisting people with developmental disabilities, has launched a new campaign — titled “Real Jobs: It’s Everybody’s Business” — aimed at doubling the employment rate of people with disabilities by 2015. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the employment rate of people with disabilities was 22 percent as of August 2009, compared to a 71.2 percent employment rate of people without disabilities.

“Setting a goal to double the employment rate for those with developmental disabilities is the only way we can move towards our actual goal of full participation for all people in community life,” said AFP Chair James F. Gardner, Ph.D.

To achieve its goals, the AFP is currently forming teams in each state to lead local efforts. These teams will include people with developmental disabilities, employers, business organizations, service providers, government officials, advocacy organizations and others.

“State teams are evolving using existing coalitions, collaborations or from those individuals interested in achieving real and lasting change,” said Karen Flippo, AFP liaison to the state teams. “Our belief is that change can occur if there is ‘buy-in’ by the community and a shared value about competitive employment for people with developmental disabilities.”

State teams, including the Indiana team, are still seeking members. Anyone interested in participating can contact Karen Flippo at kfflippo@aol.com.

The AFP will assist state teams by hosting a series of interactive webinars, issuing informative newsletters and providing toolkits for conducting community meetings. The first webinar of the campaign, titled “Employment Today: Understanding the Current State of Employment for People with Developmental Disabilities,” took place in May and is available to view on the AFP’s Web site at www.allianceforfullparticipation.org.

CVS to improve online and store accessibility

CVS, the nation's largest retail pharmacy, recently announced plans to improve accessibility at its checkout and pharmacy counters and on its Web site. The announcement is a result of a settlement agreement that the company reached through a structured negotiation process, a dispute resolution method that seeks win-win solutions on issues of accessibility.

CVS has installed tactile keypads in all of its stores so shoppers with visual impairments do not have to disclose their PIN to a store employee when using a PIN-based debit card. All CVS stores have been equipped with a tactile device at both the front checkout counter and the pharmacy counter.

The company is also training store employees to interact appropriately with customers with visual impairments regarding the use of the new devices.

In addition, CVS plans to make its online pharmacy accessible to computer users with visual impairments who use a screen reader or magnification technology, and to individuals who use a keyboard instead of a mouse. The company hopes to implement these online enhancements by the end of the year.

Visit info.cvscaremark.com for more information.

Of Note

Time to register for the 2009 Conference!

The deadline to register for the 2009 Conference for People with Disabilities is Friday, Nov. 6. Themed "Invest in People and Share in the Profits," this year's Conference will take place Monday, Nov. 16, and Tuesday, Nov. 17, at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Indianapolis. Registration materials were mailed in September and are also available on the Governor's Council Web site at www.in.gov/gpcpd. Don't miss an opportunity to learn how you can improve your individual skills to "invest" in yourself and your community!

Scholarships to attend the Conference are provided for people receiving Social Security or TANF services, and half-price registration fees are available for people with disabilities and their family members. Visit the Council's Web site or call (317) 232-7770 (voice/TT) to learn more.

Health care reform to take center stage at 2009 Conference

Liz Savage, director of housing and health policy for the Disability Policy Collaboration in Washington, D.C., will deliver an insightful presentation at the 2009 Conference about current health care reform legislation and how it's expected to affect people with disabilities.

Called the “Mother of the ADA” by some, Savage’s rich history in disability advocacy includes significant involvement in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, for which she coordinated an advocacy coalition of 75 disability, civil rights, religious and civic organizations. In 1992, Savage, who is legally blind, was appointed special assistant attorney general for civil rights, specializing in ADA policy and enforcement, for the U.S. Department of Justice — the first person with a disability to hold so high a position with the department.

Fend off the Flue

Special Insert

With the onset of fall and cooler weather, flu season isn’t far away, and the new H1N1 flu virus is already spreading rapidly across the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5 to 20 percent of U.S. residents get some type of flu each year. Staying informed can help you avoid the flu and maintain your health year-round.

Are you armed and ready for flu season?

Influenza (flu) is a highly contagious virus that can be mild to severe — even fatal. It’s important to know best practices for protecting yourself and your family from the illness.

The common flu can infect anyone, but the elderly, young children and anyone with other health problems are at the greatest risk for developing complications, such as pneumonia. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the groups at risk for developing complications from the new H1N1 flu virus are similar to those at risk for complications from the traditional flu.

However, according to Mayo Clinic expert James Steckelberg, M.D., the H1N1 virus is new to humans, so natural immunity is limited, particularly for individuals younger than age 65.

How can I keep from getting the flu?

According to the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), more than 36,000 Americans die from influenza-related complications each year. To reduce your risk:

- Get vaccinated annually.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your elbow — not your hand — when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid close contact with people who have flu-like symptoms.

To learn more, visit www.flu.gov or visit the ISDH and CDC Web sites at www.in.gov/isdh and www.cdc.gov, respectively.

Flu vaccine: step one for protection

The first step to protect yourself from the flu is to be vaccinated annually. According to the ISDH, flu vaccines are remade each year to include the viruses expected to cause illness during that flu season.

Individuals who are at higher risk for contracting the flu, or live or care for someone who's at high risk, should get vaccinated annually. To learn more, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm.

What to do when the flu strikes

The flu may find you, even if you've done your best to avoid it. While there is no natural cure for the flu, there are ways to ease the symptoms while your body heals.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, ways to treat flu and cold symptoms include:

- Get plenty of rest, particularly when you have a fever.
- Drink more fluids.
- Eat a light diet.
- Take acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®) to reduce fever and relieve muscle aches.

Taking over-the-counter medications won't cure the flu, but they can help relieve symptoms. However, you should consult with your doctor before taking medications if you have other health conditions or are taking prescription drugs. In severe flu cases, doctors may prescribe antiviral medicines, which can shorten the duration of the flu.

If you become ill, stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible. Due to the H1N1 flu outbreak, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends anyone with flu-like symptoms stay home at least 24 hours after a fever is gone. If you have severe symptoms or are at high risk for flu complications, the CDC recommends seeking medical care.

Where do germs hang out?

Nearly every object we encounter is covered in germs, including our own bodies. A September 2008 report from the ABC News Medical Unit identified the 10 most germ-infested surfaces and objects:

- **Purses and wallets:** These items pick up bacteria when placed on unclean surfaces and from paper currency.
- **Remote controls:** People constantly handle their remote controls, but rarely disinfect them.
- **Laundry machines:** According to the report, there are about 100 million grams of dangerous E. coli bacteria in an average load of undergarment laundry.
- **Cutting boards:** According to the report, there are 200 times more fecal bacteria on a kitchen cutting board than an average toilet seat.
- **Telephones:** The phone gets germs from both your mouth and your hand.
- **Water fountains:** Research has shown that water fountain spigots often have twice the amount of bacteria as a toilet seat.
- **Buttons:** Push buttons, like those found on elevators and ATMs, are typically in areas that are not often cleaned.
- **Yoga mats:** Sweat and microbes can cover an exercise mat during a workout and, if not cleaned, the germs linger for days.
- **Airplane bathrooms:** Restrooms in general aren't as germ-ridden as one might think, mostly because toilets are cleaned and disinfected regularly. But airplane bathrooms must cater to a high volume of people in a short period of time, which leaves them dirty very quickly.
- **Shopping carts:** In a study mentioned in the report, traces of E. coli were found on almost half the shopping carts tested in the group.

Boost your immune system to fight illness

Our immune systems are the first lines of defense against harmful organisms that make us sick, such as allergens, bacteria and viruses. To help our bodies fight off illness, we must keep our immune systems healthy and functioning properly.

The Cleveland Clinic, a highly accredited, non-profit academic medical center based in Ohio, offers several tips for maintaining a healthy immune system:

- **Enrich your diet with antioxidants and nutrients.** Antioxidants are vitamins and minerals found in food and supplements that remove harmful oxidants from the bloodstream. Many fruits, vegetables and whole-grain foods are rich with antioxidants. In addition, nutrient deficiencies can weaken the immune system. The typical American diet is often deficient in iron, calcium, vitamin A and vitamin C, which can be obtained from certain foods or supplements. If you have health conditions or are on prescription medications, consult with your doctor before taking supplements.
- **Get active.** Exercise helps enhance the immune system's defense mechanisms. Even low levels of aerobic exercise, such as 30 minutes of brisk walking five days a week, is ideal for maintaining the immune system.

- **Reduce stress.** Mood states such as depression, anxiety and panic are harmful to the body. Consider breathing exercises or yoga to help reduce stress levels. Individuals with severe mood disorders may want to seek professional help.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, the steps above combine both physical and mental wellness to achieve the healthiest immune system possible. To learn more visit www.clevelandclinic.org.

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