

**HELP
WANTED**

ACADEMY WORKS

Driving up employment for people with disabilities, including Veterans



Students Kick-Off Endowed Chair Campaign

Above: Angela Brown and Geraldine Billups celebrate their culinary skills after raising enough money for five chairs through their cooking!

Special thanks to Student Council, **Tom Caulfield**, **Angela Brown**, and **Geraldine Billups**. Donate today — the campaign has been extended!

This is a practical way to show support for the program by gifting a \$200 chair that can serve the learning needs of our students for the next 7 years (the average lifespan of our chairs).

**To learn more, call Emily:
215-634-2000 ext. 258**



Geraldine Billups (center) and Angela Brown pose with Janet Fiore and their hard-earned Endowed Chair proceeds.

Federal Contractors: Learn How to Become a Linkage Partner

by Michael G. Fiore, BSE, MBA, CFO, The Sierra Group, Inc.

Janet Fiore, Academy President, was a featured speaker at the 38th Annual Conference of the American Association for Affirmative Action in Washington D.C. “At last, disability issues are at the forefront of hiring officials seeking to strengthen and diversify the American workforce,” said Fiore of her recent session where she spoke about the practical ways of partnering with organizations like the Academy as “Linkage Partners” under the proposed OFCCP Rule enhancements.

The US Department of Labor’s Office of Contract Compliance is charged with ensuring that all private companies who contract with the Federal government meet certain diversity goals. Recent attention to impending regulations has caused an outpouring of inquiries from regional federal government contractors looking to

“Link” with the Academy to provide talented job seekers with disabilities. For more information ‘Save the Date’ and join us at Disability Mentoring Day on October 17th or contact Outreach Coordinator **Emily Coder** to become an Academy Linkage Partner today!



Michael Fiore, Congressman Langevin & Janet Fiore in front of The Capitol

The Sierra Group Academy Turns 1: We’ve been running the program for 365 days!

Some of you have no doubt have noticed that our logo has changed — this change reflects the new attitude and energy that our team is bringing to the program and the design includes a ramp (in the color shift) that signifies our continued effort to help people with disabilities find access to competitive employment; through skills and technology.



Making it Work: Sidney Archie, a Graduate's Journey

By Emily Coder

Imagine my joy when I went to my local **Lowe's** for a few supplies for home projects and saw former Academy student **Sidney Archie** hard at work.

While we couldn't talk long, Sidney told me how much his life has changed since he started working in his current customer service/security position.

Having left the work force in 2007 due to a serious injury, Sidney updated his training to learn the competitive skills needed to succeed with a major area employer. Sidney offered, "The Academy allowed me to restart my life by providing me the opportunity to learn. I will always be grateful for the program and staff and for the funding provided to me through my Office of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, **Jack Dankanich**."

Sidney acknowledged that the team effort of his instructors, his counselor, and the business partners of The Academy helped him complete his journey. Way to go, Sidney!

Leaders of the IT Pack: Bluewolf IT Group Supports Academy Students

by Chris Hyson, ATP

Last month, six IT professionals from **Bluewolf** spent a day with our students supplementing our classroom activities. Working alongside our teaching staff, these professionals helped the students understand how their training would be relevant in the workplace. Also, they were able to use their insight and skill to offer coaching and one-on-one supports that directly helped students master difficult Microsoft Excel lessons on macros and pivot tables. Student **Jill Crowding** offered, "Working with the Bluewolf team helped me get excited that I am learning skills that have a lot of value in the marketplace—I love when our business partners visit the program."

Janet Fiore, CEO of The Sierra Group offered, "Connecting to the business community is an imperative for every program working to help people with disabilities find competitive employment. We do this because it adds value to all parties. Bluewolf sees talent—and in fact they did interview a student while on site that is nearing completion of their

program—and the students and staff benefit from the business insight. Connections and focus make the difference and we are proud of this business partnership."

As a global agile consultancy, Bluewolf provides services across the customer life cycle, IT resourcing, managed services and training. Trusted by businesses across diverse industries, Bluewolf is translating today's unique business environment into opportunities for growth. With Bluewolf, businesses are able to deliver results that benefit the customer, the workforce, and the bottom line.

"Bluewolf is a team of people who are passionate about adding value into everything we touch," says Account Manager, Anthony Gilbert. "We enjoy reaching out to the community in places where we feel we can make a lasting difference. Working with The Academy is a privilege that gives Bluewolf the opportunity to grow, while also increasing our desire to forge valuable relationships with people that matter."



#goingsocial
bluewolf

Academy
Student **Darryl
Daniel** with
Bluewolf's
Kim Trubey

Creating Impact: Villanova Professor Motivates Academy Students

by Michael G. Fiore, BSE, MBA, CFO, The Sierra Group, Inc.

Stephen McWilliams of Villanova University teaches film and also heads the University's Disability Service Program. Recently he presented his film, which aired on ESPN, to a packed group of Academy students and staff. The film—*Coming off the DL (Disabled List)* is a motivational film that showcases stories of personal achievement for several students with disabilities currently attending Villanova. Academy students were encouraged to see the success in their own journeys as they discussed the film and its implications.

Professor McWilliams led the group in a series of productive discussions on the power of purpose and the importance of perseverance. Fighting

back tears and sniffles, **Michael Fiore**, Rehabilitation Engineer (and emotional Italian) offered, "stories of success against seemingly overwhelming odds always motivate and always inspire. This film, with its strong sports appeal, has reached a large audience on the story of ability and for this, Stephen needs to be recognized as a leader with a strong and unique voice in our industry."

Serena Dodson, a current student offered, "The movie connected to me in a strong way by letting me know that strength and purpose are keys to my future—I enjoyed the movie and appreciated the opportunity to meet such a distinguished professional—Professor McWilliams was amazing!"



Leslie Hahne
with **Aesthetiks**
Boutique owner
Khadia Conteh



Consignment for a Cause: Thank You Aesthetiks Boutique

Aesthetiks Boutique (1030 N. 2nd Street, Northern Liberties) hosted our *Consignment for a Cause* event in April and helped The Academy raise over \$500 from clothing donations offered by all of our supporters.

Thank you to all who contributed clothing and accessories to our *Consignment for a Cause* event!

Run on Purpose

Join Team Academy in a run/walk/wheel November 16-18 in the 2012 Philadelphia Marathon.

Contact teamacademy@lriacademy.org for more information.

Leading the Way for Tomorrow's Leaders



Seth Acosta (left) and **Harriet Ann Litwin**, President of the Mid-Atlantic Region of **The National Rehabilitation Association** (right), present **Janet Fiore**, CEO of The Sierra Group (center) with the Mid-Atlantic Region Award.

Janet Fiore wins Mid-Atlantic Region Award for Mentoring and Leadership

“Working to build strong professionals in a growing a vital profession stands at the core of who I am and I am honored to be recognized in this way,” offered **Janet Fiore** upon winning the award. In presenting the award, **Harriet Ann Litwin** explained that the value of mentoring has a ripple effect that can impact future generations of leaders and rehabilitation professionals and that this impact does translate to and benefit the consumers with whom we work.

Seth Acosta, MS of The Sierra Group knows first hand about Janet’s mentoring skills and that is why he was part of the nomination process. “Janet brings a passion to her work and this gets those around her excited. It’s why she can attract business partners to her programs and efforts and why she makes so many positive waves in the community—these waves carry an energy and clarity that seeks to inspire and promote all of the talent she sees in the world around her.”

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