

## TRANSITIONS TO WORK

Creating Employment for All Abilities



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### Mass Auto Dealers Association-Spreading the Word

Thank you to the MSADA for publishing this article on Transitions to Work in its March AUTO magazine for members. The print and on line publication reaches over 700 members. We appreciate MSADA support spreading the word about hiring individuals of all abilities.

## Transitions to Work

### *Business Opportunity to Hire Individuals of all Abilities*

By Beth Tauro-Business Community Liaison-Combined Jewish Philanthropies

What was your first job? For some getting hired is an easier process than for others. Individuals with disabilities are talented, skilled, qualified applicants who are incredibly able, dedicated and successful colleagues, yet getting hired is a high hurdle. The unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is roughly twice as high as the general population. **Transitions to Work** aims to create transformative change in hiring practices and engage the corporate and business community to employ individuals with disabilities.

**Transitions to Work** is a high quality supported employment program for young adults with disabilities and is based on an intensive training and internship cycle. **Transitions to Work** is focused on training participants to meet and exceed the needs and requirements of an employer. Current employer partners include: Prime Motor Group, The New England Aquarium, CVS Caremark, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Hebrew Senior Life's NewBridge on the Charles, Legal Sea Foods, Panera Cares, Reebok, Anton's Cleaners, Reebok, Kappy's Fine Wine & Spirits, Destination XL, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Star Market, and The Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center. Job responsibilities include; auto dealer customer service greeter and maintenance, restaurant host, data finance entry, office clerk, food preparation/ server/wait staff, health club locker room attendant, cashier, mailroom, organizing clothes, housekeeping, café manager, and stockroom. Approximately 78% of graduates have earned jobs and there is an 89% retention rate.

Our employer partners hire **Transitions to Work** graduates because it is good for business. Their stories exemplify the benefits hiring **Transitions to Work** graduates has brought to their companies.

Many have hired multiple candidates.

- Prime Motor Group has hired three **Transitions to Work** graduates throughout its dealerships. Owner David Rosenberg was an early supporter and introduced **Transitions to Work** to all of his General Managers. Mike Brown, General Manager, Prime-Toyota, quickly recognized the opportunity to hire talented candidates and also make a difference. Mike is thrilled to have Isaac Varon as part of his team. Isaac is responsible for keeping the dealership looking like new inside and outside. As Isaac finishes one task, he is planning on how to execute another. Mike reports that Isaac exceeds all of his expectations and is a model employee. Mike admires Isaac's commitment and dedication. Despite his 1.5 hour commute, Isaac is on time and always ready to work. Mike sums it up by saying, "everyone loves Isaac-he is like the mayor."
- Destination XL Senior Vice President Human Resources Walter Sprague's philosophy is to build a good team and to hire individuals who add value and continue to grow in their roles. Mark Burgess, Administrative Assistant for Destination XL and **Transitions to Work** graduate continues to do this. Hired to handle basic office administrative tasks to support the Human Resources, Payroll and Benefits groups, Mark dove right in. Mark reorganizes and brands files, manages labeling and mailings, updates job application status and profiles of applicants, edits requisitions and handles other computer tasks. Jennifer McClaren, Human Resources Generalist and Mark's supervisor, describes Mark's work ethic and skills. "Mark is always ready to take on extra challenges. He asks questions and is great at time management. He has even taught me a few things on the computer! "

Corporate commitment is the cornerstone to creating and implementing inclusive hiring. Benefits to a company with inclusive hiring practices include:

- **Higher Productivity** - Employees with disabilities typically exhibit higher loyalty, lower turnover, and contribute to the collegiality of the workplace.
- **Increased Market Share** - Individuals with disabilities and their families reflect an expanding customer base and are loyal patrons of companies that support inclusive hiring.
- **Expanded Talent Pool** - Individuals with disabilities are an underused pool of talented, skilled, and qualified applicants.
- **Public Relations** - Inclusive hiring positively impacts a company's image.
- **Diversity and Morale** - All employees report a higher degree of workplace satisfaction when working in integrated teams.

**Transitions to Work** is a collaboration among Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Jewish Vocational Service, and the Ruderman Family Foundation. Funding is provided by the Ruderman Family Foundation and a grant through The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

## Spreading the Word-Inclusion Discussion

The Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project invites you to celebrate the diversity and abilities of the whole Jewish community on May 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.. The event will feature speaker Judith Heumann, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, U.S. State Department and an opportunity to connect with three local synagogue communities who are exploring new ways of including people of all abilities. The event will be held at Hebrew College. There is no charge to attend this event but **space is limited**, so please let us know if you are able to join us. You can register at <http://bit.ly/Celebrating-Inclusion-Event> or contact Emalie at [emaliec@cjp.org](mailto:emaliec@cjp.org) or call 617-457-8824 for more information. This event is mobility accessible. ASL interpreter available upon request.



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*Transitions to Work* continues to connect with new employers to educate on inclusive hiring and build employer partnerships. Please let us know if you or someone you know might be interested in exploring *Transitions to Work* as a fit for your or their company. We appreciate the leadership of our employer partners in hiring individuals of all abilities for employment opportunities. Please support these companies and spread the word by joining *Transitions to Work* on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/transitionstoworkboston](http://www.facebook.com/transitionstoworkboston). To learn more about *Transitions to Work* or view inclusive hiring tools, please visit: [www.cjp.org/transitionstowork](http://www.cjp.org/transitionstowork).