**Ruderman Best of Business Award**

Over 70% of people with disabilities in the U.S. are unemployed? People with disabilities are far underrepresented in the workplace. This needs to change. The Ruderman Family Foundation, a national leader in disability inclusion, is currently accepting nominations for its annual Ruderman Best in Business Award. This award recognizes businesses that have demonstrated a history of employing people with disabilities, training and supporting them and developing innovative approaches to maximizing employee’s abilities.

In partnership with the Jewish Week Media Group, the award process highlights businesses selected through a national nomination and review process by judges from the business and disability communities, including Richard E. Marriott, Chairman of Host Hotels & Resorts and the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities and John Hockenberry, NPR journalist and four-time Emmy award winner. This year, 18 businesses from the United States and Canada will be awarded. For more information about the Ruderman Best in Business Awards and to nominate a business, please visit [http://www.thejewishweek.com/ruderman-best-in-business-2016](http://www.thejewishweek.com/ruderman-best-in-business-2016). Nominations will be accepted through May 25, 2016.

**Graduation and Achievement**

Transitions to Work celebrated its 24th class of graduates last week. The graduates from the program held at our New Bridge on the Charles training partner site join thousands of others graduating from high school, college, and graduate school who are headed on their paths to success. Our graduates are excited about opportunities for employment, something that may have seemed unobtainable before participating in the Transitions to Work program. Our Transitions graduates are poised for success and with perseverance and determination will achieve their goals. A few key quotes will remind us of the importance of this program to our students and the commitment and dedication they have demonstrated to achieve this milestone and the teamwork Transitions to Work is fortunate to have from its employer training partners who help them on their way.
“During my time here, I have learned so much. I have grown as a person by gaining independence and experience, as well as making new friends and gaining work references. I have learned what it takes to obtain and maintain a job such as the needs to always be on time, have a positive attitude, and demonstrate good personal hygiene. I have learned that it is essential to have an up-to-date resume when you go into an interview. I have also improved on my data entry skills, my customer service skills and my time management skills. I look forward to taking these skills to future my job opportunities. All of these make me feel very confident moving forward into the work world.” Alan, Transitions to Work graduate

“A few years ago I had the opportunity to participate in a Leadership Institute and was asked to take a Leadership Inventory as a way to assess my own leadership skills. In the Inventory, there are five practices of exemplary leadership identified. They are: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. When really looking at these five practices, it became clear to me that all of us, whether in leadership roles or not, have the ability to be strong leaders. This is highlighted by the work we do together here at NBOC. Students, mentors, Managers and Transitions staff are Modeling the Way by treating each other with respect, kindness and patience, and by providing an environment in which people can feel safe to learn and face their challenges. The work we do together Inspires a Shared Vision of full inclusion of people with disabilities in the community. We Challenge the Process by pushing each other to look beyond our comfort level—and to make changes in ourselves and/or our organizations based on what we have learned during the process of working together. We Enable Others to Act, by showing new employers the value of the work we do, and encouraging them to do the same. And, we Encourage the Heart when we see the confidence the participants in this program have gained and the extraordinary things they contribute to a work environment once hired.” Madeline Wenzel-Director of Disabilities/JVS

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. To learn more about Transitions to Work or view inclusive hiring tools, please visit: www.cjp.org/transitionstowork.