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HELPING TO BRIDGE THE EMPLOYMENT GAP FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

NVS & NVSU
 Employment Bridge Newsletter

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2018 – Our Year in Review
 Robert Fraser, Ph.D., CRC

Our year has been very busy! On the local scene, we completed almost 300 service requests, predominantly from the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Our client referral base is changing dramatically. In the past, only 10-15% of our clients had completed college – now, more than 40% are college graduates, often with complex conditions such as autism. We applaud our new partners, the **Microsoft Autism Program** and the **Launch Consulting Group**, who placed clients for us in the IT field and fully accommodated them. Temp-to-Perm companies such as **Express Personnel** have also been very helpful. It is a very good job market, but college level jobs are quite competitive. We remain very appreciative of the companies who've been receptive to hiring our clients, and those that provide non-paid tryouts.

Bob has been active in Atlanta, replicating a program like ours with the support of **UCB, Inc.** **Eisai** and **UCB Inc.** have been very supportive of our vocational rehabilitation efforts, and we are currently working with UCB on potential expansion plans in Western Washington.

Our Interns

Interns are the backbone of NVSU. Through their job coaching, they help clients on a one-to-one basis with such activities as résumé and cover letter writing. Many of our current employees started as interns and, currently we have three interns from the University of Washington Neurosciences Department, **Tessa Warheit-Niemi**, **Anna Lee**, and **Vy Huynh**. **Katie French** will be returning to us during school breaks from the pre-med Biology program at the University of San Diego. These are bright young pre-med students seeking to round out their academic careers with additional clinical service experiences. Our NVS foundation enables us to employ these valuable people.

Staff Updates

Dora Fung, MA, CRC, Rehabilitation Counselor, and her husband John welcomed their first child, Brielle, in July. Dora also began with us as an intern, and will be returning to NVSU in the New Year.

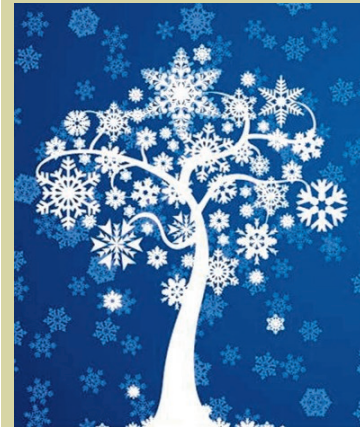
Steven Lashley, MHA, former Employment Specialist, completed his MHA from the University of Washington in 2017 and is now the Practice Manager for the Neurosurgery Department at Northwest Hospital. Steve also began his career at NVSU as an intern. He continues to work with us part-time.

Sydney McPhearson, MA, CRC, is our newest Rehabilitation Counselor. Sydney started out as an intern in 2017, with support from our NVS foundation, and completed her master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at Western Washington University in August of 2017.

David Strand, Ph.D., CRC, became a licensed psychologist in early 2018. Dr. Dave began as an intern at NVSU, and obtained his doctorate in Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is taking an excellent lead in developing our services in Tacoma.



HELPING PEOPLE WITH NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS GAIN INDEPENDENCE, ONE PERSON, ONE JOB, AT A TIME.



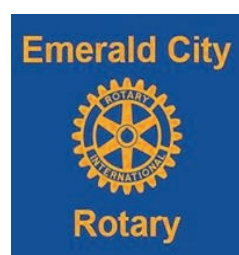
UW: Partners with Business, NVSU, provides vocational assessment, job placement and retention services to individuals with neurological conditions, helping them lead a productive life. In addition, through research, teaching and distribution of information, the unit serves as a national resource in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

Cheers for Careers Celebrates IT Employers

Each year, NVS hosts two major events. Our Annual Gala is held in the spring and our lower key, more casual event, “Cheers for Careers,” with the support of **Emerald City Rotary**, occurs in the fall. This year it took place on October 16 at Impact Hub in Pioneer Square. “Cheers” is where we recognize and honor exceptional employers with whom we’ve had the pleasure of working through the year.

In the last few years, our client base has changed. Many of our clients are college educated, some with graduate level degrees. With these changes, we have seen an influx of IT-experienced job seekers, often with an autism diagnosis. These cases are complex, as is the IT job market. At this year’s “Cheers,” we presented *Employer of the Year* awards to both the Microsoft Autism Hiring Program and to the Launch Consulting Group. Both of these extraordinary employers worked extensively in hiring and accommodating the new hires’ needs and matching their skills - clients who otherwise would have difficulty getting hired in the IT field.

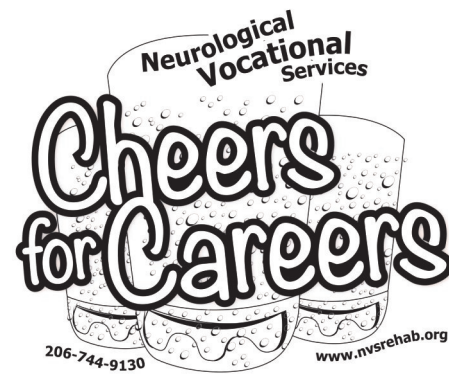
Location, location, location! This is our third year of “Cheers” at Impact Hub, located in Pioneer Square. Impact Hub is a locally rooted co-working space in a beautiful historic building. Not only has it been an easy location for our friends to get to, the folks at Impact Hub always make our event as easy as possible. Over 80 of our supporters, board members and staff members came to the event.



The beer was donated by our friends at Four Generals Brewing, Georgetown Brewing Company, and new on the Seattle scene - Lagunitas. The wine was donated by our NVS board members. We ate from an extensive buffet that was catered by the Husky Deli in West Seattle, and the evening was emceed by board member/ former staff member, **Aliza Hauser**. **Marc Menninger**, Emerald City Rotary President Elect, presented the Microsoft Employer award, accepted by **Angela Nefcy**, NVS board member and the Microsoft Channel Operations Excellence Manager. **David Strand**, NVSU staff member presented the Launch Consulting Group Employer Award to **Melynda Kite**, Director of HR of the Launch Consulting Group. This year’s activities included two raffles, Seahawks tickets and a wine basket. **Louis Lopez** procured awesome Seahawks vs. Chargers tickets for the event and the premium wine basket had over 12 sommelier-selected bottles of wine. Great fellowship and networking occurred to the fabulous music of our house band **Push4Luv** featuring **Melanie Granger** on vocals, and **Xavier Solinas** on guitar.

We sincerely appreciate the partnership of these remarkable companies, and the awards as supported by the Emerald City Rotary.

Thank you for your support and see you at next year’s “Cheers for Careers!”



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Disability, Diversity & Local Employers

NVSU has refined its business engagement efforts as our client population has changed. Many clients have located to Seattle for IT and other technical work. They have increasingly complex conditions such as autism, which can require more employer investment in employee orientation and accommodation. Two of the companies “walking the talk” of *Diversity and Inclusion* are **Microsoft** of Redmond and the **Launch Consulting Group** of Bellevue.

Client Success Story—Microsoft

We were put in touch with the Microsoft Autism Program through **Neil Barnett**, the company’s Director of Inclusive Hiring and Accessibility. Our client, Stan*, although a graduate of The Claremont Colleges, had challenges with his autism and hadn’t worked in three years. The Autism Program staff carefully screened him

and moved him through a series of very appropriate interviews leading to a most generous offer with bonus, stock options, etc. Stan gratefully accepted. He then received a very careful on-boarding process in which he was gradually introduced to his supervisors with all accommodation considerations noted. Stan is well ensconced in his new job having moved to Redmond, and now lives in a nearby apartment complex with co-workers and easy job access. He observed that there may have been “a few hiccups” along the way, but these were minor, and he fully enjoys his work as a software programmer. Microsoft allows approved community vocational rehabilitation vendors access to the campus for purposes of troubleshooting accommodations or mentoring/job coaching its employees. They are truly going the extra mile.



Client Success Story—Launch Consulting Group

Our second client is Brian*, with whom we began working in early 2018. He was attempting to return to work after experiencing an aneurysm/stroke. As a result of this incident, Brian found that he now had to contend with several cognitive, neurological, and physical concerns, to include seizures, issues with learning new information quickly, and extremely limited use of his left arm and hand. Despite these setbacks, Brian was extremely motivated in the pursuit of his return to work.

Prior to the onset of his medical conditions, Brian had started his own IT consulting business and had several IT-related certification classes under his belt. He had done work for Launch Consulting in the past, and wanted to continue working with them when he felt he was ready to return. Launch was more than receptive to this idea, and worked to find a position that was an appropriate match for his skills, yet accommodated Brian’s needs. They actively partnered with us to provide the training and supervision that would ensure Brian’s success. Once Brian completed a project, Launch again sought to find suitable, appropriate work. Through active dialogue and effort, and also because they were committed to keeping Brian, they carved out a position for him within the IT team. It represents a great fit – and a challenge – for his skills, and through our conversations with Brian, it is clear that he is excited about it, committed to it, and proud to be a part of this work. Launch Consulting is not a large company, but it has clearly shown that a smaller company can easily do “the right thing” with a big heart within a solid business model.

Hats are off to companies such as Microsoft and Launch Consulting as NVSU moves into the world of IT business engagement.

* Client names have been changed for privacy purposes