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BA Haller's new book



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Sunday, March 16, 2008

Forbes: Blind people in the workplace

In media terms, a significant aspect of David Paterson, who legally blind, ascending to the NY governor's job is the flurry of news and feature stories about life with blindness in general. *Forbes* looked at the business angle of blind people in the workplace in a March 14 story, talking to some corporate executives who are blind.

But the story also lays out the specifics of the high unemployment rate for blind people. The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) reports a 70% unemployment rate among blind adults of employment age. However, AFB explains in the *Forbes* story what accounts for some of this. For example, many people become blind later in life and decide to quit working because they aren't too far from retirement. "It's hard to persuade people who are newly blinded in their 50s and 60s to get back into rehabilitation and training so they can go back to work," Carl Augusto, AFB president, says in the article.

However, for young blind people the future is rosier. "The younger generation of blind workers is different than their older counterparts, says Augusto. They are employed at the same rate as sighted people. Schools are preparing them better for careers, and they're taking advantage of technology."

But discrimination against blind people in hiring still exists and accounts for the high unemployment rate. "The single largest factor is discrimination and bias," says Steven Rothstein, president of Perkins School for the Blind in Massachusetts. "There's a belief among employers that people who are blind can't do jobs."

The story also included the experiences of Barry Honig, who is blind and president of Honig International, a Manhattan-based executive search and management consulting firm, and Al Gayzagian, a blind Harvard graduate who struggled for three years to find a job, but found one as a typist and then rose to the level of senior financial officer at John Hancock.

The *Forbes* story, by Tara Weiss, does a good job of giving a nuanced report about the positive and negative aspects affecting blind people who try to obtain employment.

Posted by BA Haller at 7:36 PM



Lighthouse for the Blind - St. Louis Earns National Industries for the Blind Award for Sustaining and Increasing Employment for People Who Are Blind

We are proud to provide employment opportunities for people who are blind, said John Thompson, President of Lighthouse for the Blind-Saint Louis

ST. LOUIS, MO, January 27, 2011 /Missouri PR News/ -- Lighthouse for the Blind - St. Louis was recently honored for its efforts to increase employment retention, growth, and upward mobility for people who are blind in 2010.

The award was presented by National Industries for the Blind (NIB) in recognition of Lighthouse for the Blind - St. Louis' success and commitment to increasing employment and economic opportunities for people who are blind.

"We are proud to provide employment opportunities for people who are blind," said John Thompson, President. "Over 90% of our direct labor force, including our supervisors, are legally blind and represent a loyal, dedicated and capable workforce. We are honored to serve as an example in the community of the capabilities of people who are blind. We are pleased to provide quality products, on time and at competitive prices to the federal government as well as commercial customers."

The 2010 Employment Award winners receive cash payments from a \$1 million fund created to recognize and encourage NIB associated agencies that grow or sustain employment for people who are blind. Emphasis is also placed on efforts to increase upward mobility in the workplace and job placements.

With a 70 percent unemployment rate for working aged Americans who are blind, all efforts to create jobs for this population help to change this statistic and provide economic and personal freedom for people who are blind.

"It is an honor for me to recognize agencies such as Lighthouse for the Blind - St. Louis that are dedicated to creating jobs and high-growth career opportunities for people who are blind," said Kevin A. Lynch, president and CEO of NIB. "I truly appreciate their efforts to reduce the unemployment rate for this population."

Also known as LHB Industries, the Lighthouse was founded in 1933 and today maintains offices and manufacturing facilities that currently employ more than 60 legally blind persons at two locations in Saint Louis County.

The Lighthouse manufactures, assembles, warehouses and sells high-quality products to government and commercial customers nationwide including first aid kits, medical kits, catheters, aerosol and liquid paints, aerosol and liquid cleaning products and many others.

For more information, contact Abby Barnett at toll-free 800.542.3697, or 314.423.4333 ext.130, or visit the website <http://www.lhbindustries.com>.

At National Industries for the Blind (NIB), our mission is to enhance the opportunities for economic and personal independence of persons who are blind by creating, sustaining and improving employment opportunities. NIB and 90 associated agencies serve as the largest employer for people who are blind. These employees make and sell SKILCRAFT products and services to the federal government and Department of Defense through the AbilityOne Program, established by the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. www.NIB.org.

The Lighthouse for the Blind is a privately chartered, 501(c)3 non-profit corporation established in 1933. Through the manufacture and sale of products to various government agencies as well as commercial customers and individuals, we are able to further our mission of assisting individuals who are legally blind maintain dignity and independence by making available employment, education and support services. We are committed to providing a supportive environment where our employees can count on developing new and productive skills that will assist them in reaching amazing levels of independence. For more information, please visit us online at www.lhbindustries.com.