

Your support takes many forms at Careers Industries

LAURA SPAULDING
Careers Industries rehabilitation director

Careers Industries enriches the lives of people with developmental and similar disabilities through work, care and community. Founded in 1971, Careers serves more than 400 individuals daily at its Racine and Burlington locations. Participants come to Careers Industries to do exactly what you or I want to do every day. They want to work, they want to be with friends, they want to feel productive and they want to give back.

We have a devoted, caring and highly-trained staff that works hard every day to make the experience of our participants a very good one. But we need the community's help too – during the holiday season and year-round.

Like you and me, our participants want to celebrate the season with their friends and no holiday is complete without a party. You can help by sponsoring a table at our annual holiday celebration. We also

need contributions to our White Gift fund. For those participants without family or friends, we play Santa and purchase gifts so that they too can experience the holiday thrill of opening a present.

Even when you do your own holiday shopping, you can support our participants. Shop online at Amazon at Smile.Amazon.com and 0.5 percent of the price of your eligible purchases will be donated to Careers Industries. Click smile.amazon.com, sign into your Amazon account, click “select charity” and choose “Careers Industries, Inc.”

You can also help support Careers Industries and our participants without spending a single dollar and you can do so all year. Our Partners in Integrated Employment (PIE) program has qualified participants ready to work. But we need willing employers who understand the benefits of an inclusive workforce and value motivated employees that take pride in their jobs.

Through our partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), we can place a paid intern from Careers Industries at your business or organization. As part of that funded internship, we provide free onsite coaching and training. These internships provide a great opportunity for you



Careers Industries participants learn a variety of skills, including sewing.

to experience how Careers Industries can help you fill needed positions while offering our participants opportunities to gain job experience. Many of our interns are eventually hired for permanent positions and our retention rates for employees we've placed are among the best for agencies like ours.

Finally, we need advocates for participant choice. This means we take into account the individual wants, needs and desires of persons with disabilities; not prescribe a one size fits all approach. A participant may want to work with people of like mind or they may want the opportunity to work in the community. Whatever our participants or their families choose, that's what

we provide at Careers Industries – a full spectrum of options – and that choice must be preserved. We need our Racine-area community to be a voice for choice in an increasingly political environment that wants to limit the opportunities of the participants ours and other similar organizations serve.

Learn more about Careers Industries and what we're up to day to day by following us on Facebook, or visiting www.careersindustries.org. Whether you want to help us provide a special holiday season for our participants or stop by, contact Laura Spaulding at laura@careersindustries.com or my colleague Karen Tuinstra at karen@careersindustries.com, or call us at 262-752-4100.