



# Careers Industries

*Enriching the lives of people with disabilities*

## **Careers Industries 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year Will Bring New Building to Serve Community and Persons with Disabilities**

by Joe Greene, Executive Director

As Careers Industries embarks on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2011, architect Daniel Burnham's famous words, "Make no little plans," comes to mind. That's because as we plan how to continue to provide high quality, innovative care, support and services to persons with disabilities, our plan is to almost double in size.

Recently Careers Industries submitted an offer to purchase property in the Westgate Mall at the intersection of Washington Avenue and S. Ohio Street. Our hope is that this nearly 55,000 square foot building will become our new home sometime next year. After 12 years, we've outgrown our current Douglas Avenue location.

These plans reflect the success of our more than 350 participants as our staff, community partners and area businesses have enriched their lives through work, care and community. And despite these challenging economic times, we're receiving several new referrals a month. Prospective participants and their caregivers have learned that Careers Industries offers meaningful work either at our site or other employers through our Fulfillment and Partners in Employment (PIE) programs, or engaging activities through our Integrated Day Services (IDS) programs.

In recent months, our Fulfillment Services program has secured ten new contracts as area businesses recognize the cost-effective and quality service delivered by our participants. These contracts include new customers Andis Co., Cordstrap Co., Dynamic Solutions Worldwide, O&H Bakery and Putzmeister, as well as returning businesses including Aramark and Lakeland Supply. This additional work, combined with existing subcontracts, continues to provide work opportunities for 100 percent of our available program days. Our participants are paid to provide a variety of services for these companies including packaging, assembly, parts sorting, gluing, kitting and quality control.

In less than two years, our newest program, PIE, has grown to serve more than 50 participants looking for employment by helping them connect with businesses and organizations interested in hiring persons with disabilities. During recent months, our job developers have cultivated nearly 20 new work experiences, or internships, for PIE participants. Five of these internships have resulted in new jobs.

And our IDS participants have been equally busy. Their variety of activities include volunteer services to nearly 50 area organizations performing light-duty tasks that help them gain functional skills while giving back to you, the community.

In our new building, our participants and staff will find a variety of spaces including four training rooms, a teaching kitchen, larger lunch rooms, an exercise room and a covered drop-off area. Our participants suggested many of our planned improvements.

We'll also have a larger warehouse space so we can provide more storage services to local businesses. And, we plan to make our building and its various amenities available to community organizations as a meeting place.

Our new building will feature large amounts of natural and energy efficient lighting. We'll also re-energize a struggling corner of town with our 400 participants and staff, along with caregivers, coming and going daily.

The Careers Industries Support Foundation plans to launch a small capital campaign to raise funds used to help purchase the new building. This will be our first capital campaign in more than 12 years. We believe our new location will help both the Racine community and our participants fulfill their unlimited potential. I'd love to show you our new plans. Please give me a call at 262-752-4100 or stop by. In the mean time, visit our website <http://www.careersindustries.com> where we have two videos sure to move you as you learn more about what we do.

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