



Take Your Legislator to Work Event- A Shore Success!

This year's kick off to RI ASPE's 2017 signature event series, **Take Your Legislator to Work**, highlighted the value of employment equality and acknowledged the advocacy of a long standing member of Rhode Island's local business community.

Dozens of people gathered at Blount's Clam Shack in Warren, RI to join Senators Walter S. Felag and James A. Seveney as they celebrated the social and economic benefits of integrated employment while enjoying what are arguably the tastiest lobster rolls this side of the East Bay.

Take Your Legislator to Work Day is a national initiative that raises awareness about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and underscores the belief that access to integrated employment is a human right to be shared by all regardless of ability. This event is a powerful opportunity for workers living with disabilities to showcase their skills and talents by bringing local legislators into their workplace where they can demonstrate first-hand the impact and value their efforts bring to the organization they work for.

Blount's Clam Shack was an obvious choice to host RI-APSE's first TYLW event of 2017. Having been a contributing member of the East Bay business community since 1880, Blount's has long demonstrated a willingness to hire workers of all abilities. Pattie Gaudreau, Director of Operations for Blount Markets and the Clam Shack explained:

"By developing a relationship with workers with disabilities, we are able to build a winning team...one that consistently returns from season to season and is more like family" "

The success of this philosophy was clearly illustrated through the testimony of Mike S., Tom G., Geoffrey C. and Patrick B. who were on hand to speak to the crowd. Each worker described with pride his individual job duties and responsibilities as a member of the Blount team.



Mike S., Sen. Walter S. Felag, Jr. (Bristol, Tiverton, Warren), Kerri Zanchi (Director of DD Services at BHDDH, Sen. James A. Seveney (Bristol, Portsmouth, Tiverton) attended the event.



Mike S., Tom G., Geoffrey C. & Patrick B describe their individual jobs at Blount.

All left the event with a full stomach and a better understanding of the intrinsic value and benefit to employing workers of all abilities.

The effort to educate and support our local Legislators and business communities is an opportunity presented to all. Please consider supporting the Employment First cause through membership in RI-APSE.

Whether you are an employer looking to access a talented labor pool, a support professional interested in integrated employment, a family member or a worker living with a disability, you have a place in RI-APSE.

If you are interested in membership or showcasing a worker, please contact Kie O'Donnell at: kodonnell@fogartycenter.org.