Hot off the Press: Lane v. Brown
is a class action suit against Oregon that challenges sheltered workshops as a violation of the ADA’s integration mandate. See proposed settlement at Disability Rights Oregon.

Excerpts from “A Case for Change: From Facility Based to Community Based Settings”

Article by Roger Hassenpflug Oregon APSE Chapter Board Member, and Former Executive Director for Living Opportunities

A compelling national debate about injustice of segregated service settings and a movement towards fully integrated settings has been building for many years. National groups representing people with disabilities have adopted policy statements that call for this change, legal advocacy groups have initiated legal action to force this change and they have been joined by the federal Department of Justice in that effort. Note the following:

1. Olmstead v. L.C. 19991 held that under the ADA, unjustified segregation was prohibited as a form of discrimination based on disability and that segregation perpetuated unwanted assumptions that persons so isolated were incapable or unworthy of participating in community life.

2. Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE) called for an end to sub-minimum wage in 2009 (see APSE Employment First Statement at www.apse.org). (See article for complete list.) Continued on page 2
Hot Topic continued...

...Oregon has become party to that national debate. In addition to those references, additional activities have occurred in Oregon:

1. The Employment First Policy
2. Oregon’s Executive Orders—13-04 and 15-01
3. The state payment system was changed
4. Two Integrated Employment Plans

So, is this the same supported employment “fad” that surfaced in Oregon in the mid-1980’s and was dead by the mid-1990’s? What is different this time that would suggest this is really going to happen? ...What is different this time?

◊ A well-established national movement calling for the end of sheltered workshops and sub-minimum wages. ...
◊ The involvement of the Department of Justice to enforce what amounts to a civil rights claim against segregation ...
◊ The Governor’s Orders and deadline to close referrals to sheltered workshops, the Integrated Employment Plans with metrics to reduce segregated services and increase integrated services; and the first ever changed payment system that favors integrated supported employment in Oregon. ...

‘The change from segregated to integrated service settings is marching ahead. The choice before service providers is whether to act now to build capacity and get ahead of the curve or to wait and be forced by law and rule to transform services to integrated settings. Our experience clearly indicates that implementing supported employment strategies requires a) substantial organizational culture and structure change; b) staff with different skill sets that may result in new hires and turnover of long-term staff; c) a major staff training effort; d) investment and skill development in marketing and public relations that are atypical of most service providers; and e) a steep organizational learning curve. This effort takes significant time. Waiting will put your organization behind others that choose to act now. Waiting will also allow competitors to establish themselves in this different marketplace. Which path will you take?” ~August 2015

(Click here to read the full article.)

Did you know?

Refer to THE FOCUS, September 2014 for a comparison to the Employment First Report for July 2015. Data continues to be confusing to follow with the change in data systems. Key metrics such as increasing the number and percentage of individuals receiving employment services who are working in competitive integrated employment cannot be measured because SFY 2015 is being used as a baseline. The same is true of increasing the number and percentage of people increasing the number of hours worked per week. Note: Employment Path Community Services is not defined but data is reported. Continued on page 4
A Cool Life

~The Cool Life column showcases stories that demonstrate individuals with disabilities successfully employed by community businesses. Have a story? Send an email to: oregonapse@gmail.com

In the past year, I had the pleasure of being recruited to Team Griffin. Griffin, a young man who experiences autism, has developed Team Griffin with family, friends, and professionals. In less than 3 years’ time, Griffin has learned to read, make new friends, attend community events, prepare his own meals, and move towards personal independence. With these milestones achieved, the team had a couple more important goals; by age 23, Griffin would have a job and his own apartment in his community. At age 20, Griffin got his first job. In March, he celebrated six months of employment with a raise. He now has 11 months under his belt.

Team Griffin selected Community Access Services (CAS) to find an opportunity for him to demonstrate his skills, abilities, and interests in a meaningful job. What emerged has been ideal for both Griffin and his employer, MetroWest Ambulance.

Melissa Zimmer, Operations Manager of MetroWest, was able to immediately recognize the entry-level tasks that Griffin could take over from the Emergency Vehicle Technicians, allowing them to focus on more advanced tasks that best utilized their training and experience. Griffin has quickly mastered how to put together various medical kits for the ambulances that will actually help the EMTs save lives in the community! In addition, Griffin stocks incoming supplies, washes and folds laundry, washes ambulances, and is flexible in interaction with his coworkers. MetroWest employees have even made sure that Griffin is a fully participating employee during staff celebrations and Cookie Friday’s, and providing tickets to Blazers and Winterhawks games!

Three years ahead of his planned achievements, Griffin has community employment with growing responsibilities, hours, and pay. And by the end of this year, he will be moving into his own apartment. Congratulations Griffin on a Cool Life!

Thank you to Nicholas Von Pless, Supported Employment Manager, Community Access Services, nvp@cas-dd.org for writing this article.

~

Follow the discussion on the Oregon APSE Facebook page!
Without a succinct definition, it is unclear what is being measured so it is excluded from the data below.

1) **Consider the number of people working in competitive integrated employment that receive employment supports**, according to the March 2015 EOS reports:
   - People receiving Individual Supported Employment are 532 of 3733 unique individuals or 14.3% receive employment supports and are in competitive integrated employment. This number does not appear in any of the data charts but instead the number 577 is used which disregards the full definition of competitive integrated employment.

2) **Consider Wages**: This picture is curious. While Oregon’s minimum wage rose 1.6% from $9.10 to $9.25. The average wages of those receiving services jumped over 10% for all categories.
   - Individual Supported Employment up 11.5% from $8.58/hour to $9.57/hour
   - Group Employment up 10% from $6.46 to $7.11/hour
   - Sheltered Employment up 22% from $3.88 to $4.74/hour

3) **Consider Hours**: What are the average weekly job hours for Individuals with I/DD receiving ODDS employment services?
   - Individual Supported Employment averages 9.7 hours/week
   - Group Employment, 12.1 hours/week
   - Sheltered Employment, 10.8 hours/week
Benefits of APSE from My Perspective

I have known about APSE since approximately 1993. I would like to share my experience and the reason for my passion to be on the Oregon APSE Board of Directors.

First, I have always believed there is a job out there for anyone. Will we always have a perfect match? No, but isn't life really about our journey. I feel the opportunity for the journey is what defines us. One of my favorite questions is from David Mank — “what was your last vacation?” This requires a person to have the resources to smile and say “I just hiked Mt. Kilimanjaro.” or “I went to Germany, where my family is from.” These types of vacations require a person to save their money; and a job is helpful to save money faster.

Second, specialized skill development is needed to support some people on the job. In Oregon, as momentum moves forward, others have realized this as well. This needs to continue as public funding ebbs and flows.

A former employer of mine was an APSE member and we used our organizational membership to show Vocational Rehabilitation (Oregon and Washington) and Office of Developmental Disabilities that we had access to specialized training. This was included in our agreement to assure we could maintain our skills. Continued on page 10

Elections of Board of Directors
is happening this Fall. Nominations are being accepted by the Elections committee and voting will happen beginning at the annual meeting on September 28, 2015 in Hood River, OR. If interested, please contact: oregonapse@gmail.com.

Please keep your information up to date.

Newsletter Editors
Tara Asai, Kristi Cule, Annabel Nickles and CJ Webb
Beginning the Journey

“How do we work with our community… while making this transition?” Rita Rathkey, Executive Director

First, let’s meet Bill Dockham; he is a Hood River native. This is his community! After graduating Hood River Valley High School, he began working in a small, local grocery store. He worked there for many years.

The owners of that store had another, so Bill changed locations, and worked alongside another person who received services. However, the owners who were very supportive, and worked many years with Bill sold the store. With the new owners, Bill lost his job, and ended up at a sheltered workshop. Even though most days had work, when there was no work, Bill was frustrated. This helped Bill say he wanted regular, community employment again.

Through the guidance of his employment provider, Opportunity Connections (OC), he went to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) for assistance with finding a job. He hired an Employment Specialist who also worked at OC.

After talking and observations, it was clear that Bill liked being outdoors and moving around. He liked people but did not want too many distractions, so he could focus on the job. Bill’s job developer gave a presentation to the lo-
Nestled in the beautiful Columbia River Gorge, Opportunity Connections (OC) provides residential and vocational services to over eighty people with disabilities in Hood River, Wasco, and Klickitat counties. Founded in 1967 as the Hood River Sheltered Workshop, through the years, Opportunity Connections has undergone many changes. Over the past two years, OC has been contemplating the implications of disability rights public policy and the focus on Employment First. APSE defines Employment First as follows:

“Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability.”

As a private non-profit, Opportunity Connections is not bound to providing only publically funded services. However, like most organizations serving people with disabilities in Oregon, most of their funding is directly from state or federal sources. Under the leadership of the Board of Directors, and Rita Rathkey, Executive Director, Opportunity Connections has begun exploring becoming a different organization. The following is a glimpse into beginning that journey.

◊ **Strategic Plan.**
◊ **Survey:** People receiving services
◊ **Board challenges. Hiring.**
◊ **Staying relevant.** Daily evaluation of services and supports along with knowing what to prepare for.

Continued on page 8
Oregon APSE congratulates Opportunity Connections for taking the beginning steps for a new future. We look forward to hearing how they proceed and also how other organizations are making changes.

~

Griffin---Hammis Associates have created a useful document. (Click here for full article.)

What’s Customized About It?

Customized Employment (CE) represents a specific set of techniques and strategies that differentiate it from other forms of community employment. CE is based on the fundamental elements of Supported Employment, but differs in important ways.

CE is not “better” than other approaches, but there are circumstances when CE is a preferred option, especially when an individual faces multiple and/or complex barriers to attaining meaningful work.

In order to identify 3 correctly where Customized Employment is used, one or more of the following indicators in the CE column below is essential. In the Not CE column are some familiar approaches, but they are not necessarily CE.

The article shows the highlights of what IS Customized Employment and what is NOT Customized Employment.

~THE FOCUS Around the State column features stories from Oregon APSE members that illustrate Oregon’s pioneering spirit from various regions of the state. If you have a story, please contact us at: oregonapse@gmail.com.

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Rick Mathews at Hood River Coffee Roasters
A Vocational Profile, Career Plan, and Job Development all stem from the Findings of Discovery or Discovering Personal Genius (DPG). Care is taken not to jump to employment solutions.

Discovery/DPG begins in the person’s home and neighborhood. Specific activities are conducted that reveal Vocational Themes, tasks/skills and interests; interviews with family, friends, and business people refine potential contributions.

Skills and Tasks preferred by the person substantially inform job development. Skills and tasks that can be taught/learned correspond to the interests of the employment seeker. Self-Employment is an option.

Job Development circumvents traditional approaches. Use connections, networking, creative research and employer engagement, to establish the value of the individuals work and their fit with the company to create a job.

Informational Interviewing and job analyses contribute to the development of strategies for the new employee to address a company’s unmet needs. Interest-based negotiation brings the employer & employee together.

Discovery is not conducted correctly or involves shortcuts; Vocational Themes or Best Conditions of Employment are not identified; there is an immediate impulse to start job development or brainstorm types/places of employment.

Testing, Interest Inventories, Observation in a sheltered environment or non-individualized volunteer placements. Available jobs and/or stereotypical placements predominate. Focus is on entry-level & low skill jobs.

Job Coaching overcrowds natural support and is used to mitigate poor job match. “Job Finding” is common vs. the CE economic rationale for hiring.

Sub-minimum wages; Group placements; Pairing people of similar disabilities together as employees or business partners.

“Retail” job development is overused: going to the traditional box stores, requesting an application, etc. Not getting into the backroom operations where a skilled and often small, cohesive workforce creates new or value-added products.

Little attention to career/skill growth, or creation of unique jobs. Job descriptions are followed; hours & pay are based on deficits not potential contributions. Many people work typical jobs (fast food; janitorial) for few hours and minimal pay.

Follow the discussion on the Oregon APSE Facebook page!

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However, when serious budget cuts occurred and APSE was not providing the level of training we needed, we dropped our membership. I found out a few years later that APSE knew they needed to listen more closely to their membership and their needs.

This is why I am now even more excited to be part of APSE again. After a period of stagnation, I noticed that APSE has come back stronger than ever. Using “Employment First” in their name demonstrates their commitment to employment for all people. Without a resource that is solely dedicated to employment and employment issues regarding people with disabilities, support for necessary trainings and skill building declines. Oregon Providers and its citizens have needed APSE for many years but now even more than ever. The support and guidance provided by National APSE and the Oregon chapter has been and continues to be helpful. I am very proud to be a member of APSE and continue to advocate for multiple resources for training and assistance to all who need and require it.

Oregon APSE Board members, Liz Fox, Michelle Furman and Paula Johnson attended this year’s national APSE conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was not only an opportunity to learn about APSE but to also get to know one another.

Liz attended the Chapter Leadership meeting which she stated was her highlight. She met APSE Executive Director, Allison Wohl and said she was fantastic! It was encouraging to see how Oregon compared with other states and that we are ahead of the game in some areas.

2016 APSE National Conference
Cincinnati, OH

Save the Date! June 21-23, 2016

~