

APSE Conversations: Meet Angela (Ohio)!

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Hi this is Julie Christensen with APSE. We're excited to launch the APSE employment first employment for all podcast as a new way to connect with you. This podcast is a way to provide updates, real time advocacy alerts and information related to all things Employment First, be sure to subscribe so you don't miss an episode, and thanks for listening.

Kari Tietjen

Well, hello, welcome to the APSE podcast, this is Kari Tietjen with national APSE, and I'm really excited to be celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month, which is obviously October of every year but I know that both you and I talk about employment, and people with disabilities all year round, so I'm excited to have you Angela and hear a little bit about what you do. And you're based in Ohio, right?

Angela Pinson

Yes, We are in Jackson, Ohio. We work in Athens, Galya, hocking Jackson makes pike in Benton County.

Kari Tietjen

That's quite a few counties that most yes geographic area, I imagine, I've never been to Ohio, ever, but I am in the Midwest, and so I should try one time to get out there but that covers a lot of counties.

Angela Pinson

Yes we have quite a bit of counties. And with Buckeye community services. We have several different vocational that we, guess you could say we support. We have our simulated homes we have our group homes, we have our day hab, we have our employment first. I am the program manager for right now that they have, and Employment First, our employment first, we have really made some changes due to COVID, which were working with OOD and DODD to change how those changes. We provide now, a lot of things that we did not in the past, we do our pre-ETS services. We have started driver's training.

We also do some just support as in helping individuals with computers, maybe they've never used a computer before and help them understand, get everything set up for them so that they can use a computer and maybe do some remote job employment so job searching or job on the job and working remotely for sure there's that skills gap. Yes, we we've, we've found the changes have been amazing, that it's really helped, specially with the pre ed services. We're

seeing a lot more students coming out of high school and transitioning into employment. And we just love that. It's the perfect start for someone looking for a job.

Kari Tietjen

And that pre act so that's pre employment transition services, like you mentioned, that's really that transitional age coming out of a school system looking for employment. Yeah, What's changes have you done with those services did you provide them before COVID Or is that a new, that is a new service?

Cool. Yes, we, it started Pre-ETS started around about the same time COVID started so. But it's been still a little bit of a struggle, especially with remote services, how pre Acts was really set up was for us to go into the schools and have a group of students and teach that pre-ETS service, that because of COVID We've been doing a lot of remote or a lot of it one on one, and then working with the schools to be able to come in. It's, you know, it's been challenging, but it's, it's doable, we're doing it so. But every schedule is different when it comes to students so we try to get them during, maybe they have a study hall, and that will be the day that we scheduled to go in there and work with with Pre-ETS services, there's actually five categories that we provide. And they range from advocacy to job exploration. So there's a lot of really valuable things there for students that are transitioning out of high school.

Yeah, absolutely. That's great to hear that you get to partner with the schools and, hopefully, you know, during that time of COVID with it being more remote, it's more accessible to more students would you say?

Angela Pinson

Yeah, with we've seen now that it's been a challenge in some because of, you know, after they leave school and may have a break. A lot of our students do not have computers at home, or are unable to maneuver a computer to be able to do remote services. So, That is a struggle on that. But we usually are able to. We've even had some job developers, pick up the student at home and take them to the library and complete some of the preamps. So, Just whatever they can do, we're there.

Kari Tietjen

Yeah, absolutely. That's great to hear that you're offering different services that hopefully lead students and people in those transitional periods of their life toward potential employment in the community, yes. You also mentioned, they have Day Hab and an employment first department. Can you describe more what those departments do, and what services...?

Angela Pinson

Yes so with our Dayhab, it's changed also because of COVID. There's actually a new program called steps, and this is where a lot of the individuals that may have in the past state of the day have are leaving and going on different trips. We tried to do community inclusion. We do a lot of work sites. And at our facility is not really a facility but establishments, provide provides different jobs that want to be hired on for that or they are able to decide to go on the Steps

program so they have choices and we have some individuals who want to work and some who'd rather enjoy sightseeing and meeting others out in the community so with the day hab, we say we have around 46 clients at this time. But with COVID, we tried to make it we're certain, we have a book I have around eight group homes so we tried to have maybe two group homes. So, one week and the next week at different so that way we're trying to prevent as much as we can with COVID, and it's worked out really well. We, we've done really well with that. We are back up and running. I think before COVID We had around 52 clients so not too bad.

Kari Tietjen

Yeah, tell me more about some of the other changes that have resulted or what's happening in employment in your area of Ohio?

Angela Pinson

Yeah, um a lot, we see a lot more remote services. We've had several of our consumers find jobs with Teledoc. Some of the COVID medical area, remote so that's something new. Yeah, for us to you know, learning how okay how does this system work that they are using for Teledoc and what does our consumer need to know, how can we help, so that's something you know we hadn't seen that in the past. So we're definitely impressed with the remote services. And also we've been doing a lot of remote job, I guess you could say there's a lot, a lot of Ohio Means Jobs fairs remotely. We've done a few of those and it's been really nice and definitely different from going there and we still get to talk to everyone but it seems a bit quicker to do it online than start there. So, but they they still enjoy it. Consumers are happy with the process. So we definitely find that that, hopefully, we would like to see that continue

Kari Tietjen

With employers that virtually, if you're a job seeker looking for a job?

Angela Pinson

Yes. It seems a little bit more personal one on one. So that's what I like about that being remote with employment, we're definitely getting a lot of our consumers jobs. COVID has not stopped that. One of the good things. We have actually seen a big turnaround when it comes to our individuals getting hired. So, especially for those jobs in sanitation. We've had clients get jobs just to provide some of that sanitation by cleaning off, you know, door handles and giving people mask. So that's been, you know, a great opportunity for some of our consumers.

Kari Tietjen

Yeah that's a new job opportunity that's opened up for sure because of COVID and the need for health considerations and processes for sure.

Angela Pinson

Yes, and we actually also with that when we found out that they were, you know, offering that position. We were able to find a couple online services that were allowed us to work with the consumer, and give them a certificate. When it comes to COVID and proper sanitation and

cleaning. So that was something that we could present went to their employer and that helps a lot.

Kari Tietjen

Oh, Interesting. Can you tell me more about that?

Angela Pinson

Yeah, it's just the there was a couple different ones that we use a lot of them, there's a lot of free resources out there. A lot of them are more videos, watching the videos that are discussing proper sanitation, how to properly wear a mask, how to properly take off a mask. And then at the end of it. There's a quick quiz, they complete the quiz and or receive the certificate, and very proud that they have passed it and have that, you know, those they can they not only can use that in the employment field but you know, all around so absolutely.

Kari Tietjen

Yeah, any certificate/certification that can bring to the job search showing that you're trained you recognize the importance of yeah very specific one that was around before you know you always had to do like your, your food handling ones for restaurants but even more now, specific.

Angela Pinson

We have found so many, you know, just not our consumers but just other. Some of their co workers, even employers that, you know, have found that they don't know the correct way to take off a basket, so it's been very beneficial the show and we have some printouts that we made on correct way to take off the mask, how to take off gloves properly, and actually the employers have used it in their establishment so.

Kari Tietjen

Nice you're you're providing a ton of resource to employers, and I think that's what I mean, you're not alone in that you're serving one part of Ohio but you're part of this larger network nationwide of employment support professionals that benefit of course, people with disabilities to help them find employment lawyer, job seekers that can fill roles. And it sounds like you're busy doing that side, and creating resources for employers that are not just disability specific but really aim to implement, to train to educate an entire workforce around issues that are important to more, more people than just those with disabilities.

Angela Pinson

Yes. And it makes a partnership with us and that employer and they're more eager to call and say hey I have a position open, you have anybody that would be interested, we get that a lot. So yeah.

Kari Tietjen

That's great. I've heard that from providers I'm here in Iowa. I've heard that from providers here too that this is going to be unique time where they're getting the phone calls, instead of

being the ones yeah he now. It feels like it's swapped of course during this time. So, very interesting. What have been some of the other challenges in your area to employment?

Angela Pinson

Um, our, our most challenging area would be our transportation. We do not have buses, we do not have Uber. So, you know, we really have to work with natural supports. We've also in the past worked with some churches that were interested in providing some transportation services. We really have to think when it comes to transportation, on what we're going to do a lot of times, a lot of our individuals live close to establishment, and they may be interested in working at that establishment. So if it's in walking distance. It is because that's, that is our first places we try something in walking distance and a lot of our consumers, you know or love that part but we have a lot of them who walk, and they love it. So, we haven't had anyone yet who has turned down to walk down the street at work in employed so, but it's definitely a struggle with transportation so, and I know in that season was summer youth. We had, we can, we do a summer youth every year. We are one of the providers that provide transportation. Um, some of the providers do not. So, Yeah, so we have a band that we pick up our students for summer youth, and take them to the establishment that they're working at, and transport them home and you know that's that's been wonderful, because, you know a lot of those students wouldn't be able to attend because of transportation services.

Kari Tietjen

That's very similar to the things I hear in Iowa, especially once you get into the more rural communities where a drive to the next community over, is maybe the barrier between someone getting the job and not working with families, you mentioned natural support for people and their teams, people that surround us each and every day you know my natural supports are my, my co workers. Yeah, I absolutely hear that and it's, I think probably a concern, not just in our two states, unfortunately.

Angela Pinson

We've been lucky in the, in some of the as in some of our consumers who have become employed have created some natural supports in the workplace, and then find out oh hey you live down the street from me I can pick you up we have the same ship, so we've had happen and it's been wonderful so.

Kari Tietjen

Yeah absolutely. The more that you can encourage a natural connection for that, the better benefits everyone. I think so, yes. Very cool. Well, Angela, thank you for talking about Buckeye and some of the transition services both the day hab and employment services, and just what's been going on in your part of the world. APSE is a cool organization because we get to network and talk with people from across the United States and really even internationally so I always love talking with folks and you are a CESP a certified employment support professional right Angela?

Angela Pinson

I am this, I just did my recertification this year. Congratulations. Yes, it was very easy. The website was very easy to maneuver, we have right now. Two other job specialists that are see CESP, and then we have one that's going through the process right now, so very excited.

Kari Tietjen

Very cool. Well congratulations yes on completing your recertification and for me, I mean, that means that you've been in the field at least three years, maybe longer, but, you know, during a time where we really are trying to make people aware of this field and especially during this month of October, aware of the benefits of hiring and keeping a diverse workforce. Yeah, just thank you for your work Angela and your work in APSE.

Angela Pinson

Well, thank you.

Kari Tietjen

Well, I will just wrap it up with, you know, please do make sure that you subscribe. That way you don't miss podcast episodes for anyone out there listening, and we also have some great activities happening throughout the month of October we're highlighting stories from across the US, new podcast episodes and yeah we invite people to submit their stories you can do that from our website as well. We really want to just bring awareness, and not just during this month but year round but October is a great place to start. So thanks for listening in and enjoy again thank you for joining in.

Angela Pinson

Thank you so much.

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