

SPOTLIGHT ON HILLS & DALES

HIGHCO -Community Employment Services

The community employment program for Highco is made up of three distinct areas.

There are supported employment services for those individuals who work independently in the community at various jobs. There are enclaves where several individuals work in the community under the supervision of a job coach. We also offer a very active volunteer program where individuals volunteer and give back to their community with the assistance of job coaching supports. The job coaches receive training to complete their jobs and hold certification from the Department of MR/DD.

Individuals who work independently in community jobs may choose to work at Highco and a community job or just work in the community. They make that choice with the help of their interdisciplinary team. With the assistance of the Bureau of Vocational Services of Ohio individuals can receive job development services that help them find a job of their choice. Then there is funding to assist the individual to learn their chosen job within 40 hours. Highco will supply a job coach to instruct the individual on learning their job duties. Highco will also come back when the individual has become independent to retrain the person or teach new skills as needed to continue their employment. At this time there are around five individuals in community jobs.

Enclaves are made up of several individuals who work in the community with the total supervision of a job coach. Transportation to and from work is a service provided through the job coaching program. The company who has hired these individuals will pay their wages. The job coach works very closely with the employer. Job skills will be taught on the enclave site. Individuals as they gain skills may choose to find a job independently in the community. One of the enclaves is in the evening five days per week. At this time around ten individuals work in an enclave setting.

The volunteer program is made up of around seventeen individuals who volunteer at several non-profit community agencies such as senior citizens and nursing homes. Several individuals also volunteer at the various libraries. They usually volunteer one day per week. We have individuals volunteering at different agencies four days per week at the average of two to three hours daily. The job coach again will transport them to the site and back to Highco. They remain with the individuals. This has been a great success for our individuals and the friends they have made at the volunteer sites. We seek to continue this service but funding can be difficult at times. Both Highco and the non-profit agencies benefit from this program.

Community employment continues to be a very active part of the services offered by Highco. You may see individuals working independently or in a group completing janitorial services for a company named Dirt Busters, or just giving their time to help others. If you are interested in more information please call Linda Sheppard-Braley at Highco, 937-393-2891.