

# SPECTRUM IMPACT

Diverse-Abilities & Inclusion Newsletter, Issue 2

**ERNST & YOUNG EMPLOYS 60  
PEOPLE WITH AUTISM!**

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**700+ CEOS SUPPORT D&I  
PLEDGE**



**80% OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM ARE UNEMPLOYED.  
WE'RE ON A MISSION TO CHANGE THAT!**

This issue of our newsletter focuses on our vision and passion to change the way companies think about diversity and inclusion.



## LETTER FROM CEO

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Ann Marie Sullivan, Founder & CEO

### **“CHANGING THE PARADIGM FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM”**

Spectrum Works’ journey began in 2011 after seeing first-hand that individuals with autism have the ability to work in corporate America and hearing the amazing stories of how having a job changed their lives. I researched “autism and employment” and found an imbalance between the growing population of individuals with autism and the low percentage of those individuals that are employed and decided to do something about it.

The organization has made great strides since launching a pilot program at Green Distribution in 2013, proving that people with autism can be integrated into the workforce through education and opportunity. Our unique model not only improved the lives of individuals with autism, it also had a noticeably positive effect on the employees at Green. After seeing the impact of the pilot program, we began implementation at other companies including Rent the Runway.

Spectrum Works’ model is driving social change! It helps young adults with autism live up to their potential for stable, successful, economically self-sufficient lives and, at the same time, helps companies create neuro-diverse workforces. Our vision is to change society’s perception, work with corporations to seamlessly employ and integrate people with autism into their workplace, and to become the trusted advisor.

Spectrum Works has grown to a point where the future looks strong and the impact opportunity significant and broad. I am truly grateful for the support of our partner companies, donors, schools, parents, staff, and most importantly for all of our students who have profoundly impacted my life and inspire me every day.



## THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

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Spectrum Works has created a viable solution that helps companies build more inclusive organizations. It partners with companies to design diverse abilities and inclusion strategies, consults and advises on execution, educates company managers and employees, and implements scalable on-site programs.

Spectrum Works has built on the “trusted advisor” theme by expanding our program to include seminars, company impact events, diverse-ability ERG creation, among others (which will all ultimately be delivered through our technology Platform). This allows a much more seamless integration of people with autism into a partner company’s business operations delivering quantifiable and tangible corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives at a minimal cost to the company. If you want to make a big difference, now you can — become a partner company and change lives.



## IN THE NEWS



### Companies open doors to talent with autism

Corporations, including Microsoft and SAP have set up comprehensive, professional programs to hire, integrate and retain people with autism.

CBS News, Sunday Morning



### Ernst & Young Employs 60 People with Autism!

The EY program began about four years ago when the company was looking for new talent, new ways of thinking and ways to diversify its workforce, according to Hiren Shukla, director of the program.

Chicago Tribune, Lifestyles



### Over 700 CEOs support D&I Pledge

Building concrete action for boards and CEOs to work together to advance talent strategies that not only drive business outcomes but reinforce why inclusive workplaces are critical to achieving those goals.

Cision, CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion



### Hiring And Coaching The Neurodiverse

"Employers are increasingly finding fresh ideas and insights by recruiting workers with Autism," according to a Harvard.

Forbes, Coaches Council

## Q&A WITH GM OF GREEN DISTRIBUTION

**Q:** How many Spectrum Works students have participated in the program at Green Distribution?

**A:** Hundreds of individuals with autism have participated. As a result of the program, they learned skills that helped them gain employment at Green and other companies. Many graduated and are attending college.

**Q:** How long is the Spectrum Works employee onboarding and integration?

**A:** Students typically work at Green Distribution for over a year before graduating. At this point he/she has a good understanding of the company and expectations, so the onboarding/integration process is minimal. It works well because of the consistency of having Spectrum on site at our facility.

**Q:** Have you encountered any negative experiences?

**A:** No. However, some new neurotypical employees do not understand autism as they have never met anyone on the spectrum. Spectrum Works helped us by creating an onboarding presentation, autism seminars and an Autism Impact Day.

**Q:** What should other business owners expect from an engagement with Spectrum Works?

**A:** Well-trained students who have integrated with all employees and hands-on support from Spectrum Works staff during their employment. They should also expect an improved inclusive culture within their organization.

**Q:** Why should other businesses engage with Spectrum Works?

**A:** Businesses should engage with Spectrum Works to build a more inclusive workforce, to potentially increase company productivity and to demonstrate social responsibility. Students have an added value of attention to detail; thus, we have a lower rework rate.

**Q:** What has been the Impact on Green's neurotypical employees?

**A:** They have truly accepted all the young adults on the spectrum and have willingly taken on mentorship roles.

**Q:** How has the Spectrum Works program personally affected you?

**A:** I am amazed by their productivity, work ethic, and social interaction. One student in particular, Darnell, a savant astounded me with his ability to figure out everyone's birthday day for years in the future and brightened my day with his cheery personal hello and kindness.

# SPOTLIGHT ANDREW

## Spectrum Works Graduate

Andrew came to the program with the same motivation as many others to be given the opportunity for employment. Now at age 30, Andrew has achieved just that, along with a sense of pride and a feeling of accomplishment. He is employed at Green Distribution and a valued member of the team "everyone wants to work with him, he always steps up to the plate" – Alba, Production Mgr.

Given his love for baseball, "stepping up to the plate" seems like a very fitting way to describe Andrew and his work ethic. His passion for baseball began with his grandfather, the New York Yankee's Yogi Berra, with whom Andrew was very close as he grew up.

**"I don't know of any other organization that does this. The staff stays with the students, trains them and shows them what to do. They even work with the owner of the company to fill positions. It makes me very happy... Andrew's a proud kid and he has gained confidence. People appreciate what he is doing." - Larry Berra, parent.**

Andrew now advocates for himself, is more independent, and interacts with his coworkers. Home run Andrew!

Visit our website to read more student stories.

### Opportunity to Make a Difference

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many contributions of America's workers with disabilities. Reflecting this year's theme "The Right Talent, Right Now", partner with Spectrum Works to educate your employees on autism and disability employment issues to show your commitment to building an inclusive culture.

### Start your company on a path to inclusion!

- Schedule a consultation or customized training
- Join a Round Table Discussion
- Become a member of our Corporate Think Tank
- Join the 2020 Diverse-Abilities & Inclusion Summit in March

### What will you gain from the Diverse-Abilities & Inclusion Summit?



Knowledge of  
program planning and  
implementation



Ability to setup Diverse-  
Ability ERG, mentor  
program and support  
circle



Insights on scalable  
solutions and best  
practices



**If you want to make a difference in the lives of individuals with autism - now you can. Join us to build inclusive workforces and change lives!**



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