



# Crystal Run Village, Inc.

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# News

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## **Good Jobs for Everyone**

August 11 marked 65 years since Congress approved a joint resolution designating that disability employment be celebrated annually with activities to promote the hiring of people with disabilities. However, it was only 20 years ago that our nation's disability policy was transformed by the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requiring the solutions that would acknowledge diversity and the innovations that would make inclusion in the workplace possible.

Statements by President Barack Obama and other federal officials at gala events celebrating the ADA's 20th Anniversary in July cited the landmark legislation as "one of the most comprehensive civil rights bills in the history of the country". Other remarks noted that the years since the ADA's passage have altered the landscape of employment, government services, businesses, public areas, transportation, and many other avenues of modern life – opening access for those with disabilities in the process.

In that vein, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy has unveiled the official theme for the 2010 National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October - "Talent Has No Boundaries: Workforce Diversity INCLUDES Workers With Disabilities" serves to inform the public that workers with disabilities are an integral part of the nation's 21st Century workforce. The campaign suggests that the entire national workforce cannot thrive should the rights of any one minority group be limited. However, recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals that just one in five people with disabilities are in the labor force and the unemployment rate for those with disabilities remains much higher than the national average.

As background, Public Law 176, enacted by the Congress in 1945, designated the first week in October each year as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." President Harry S. Truman designated the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities to carry out the Act. In 1962, the word "physically" was removed from the week's name to acknowledge the employment needs of all Americans with disabilities. Congress expanded the week to a month in 1988 and changed its name to "National Disability Awareness Month," which eventually evolved to its current name.

The fundamental principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): equality, access, and inclusion are practiced daily by Crystal Run Village, Inc. through its services and the actions of its staff. The Crystal Run Village Supported Employment program helps people with significant disabilities find competitive, community-based jobs by erasing the stigma of being shut out, by removing the obstacles to employment and through job coach assistance. The department also operates a separate Job Placement program for people requiring less intensive supports. The Job Placement program may serve individuals with advanced degrees or credentials who need assistance re-entering the work force due to an illness or injury. The Supported Employment Program currently provides employment services to 71 individuals.

Crystal Run Village, Inc. has been creating and providing services for the inclusion, productivity and enrichment of the lives of people with disabilities for 51 years. The human services agency supports adults and children with intellectual disabilities, autism, spectrum disorders, mental illness, and individuals dually diagnosed and their families living in Orange, Rockland and Sullivan Counties. With an operating budget of approximately \$38-million and over 850 staff people, the agency provides housing, programs for learning and self expression, opportunities for employment, community inclusion and recreation. **For information about the value and talent that people with disabilities can bring to your workplace, contact Giselle Steketee, coordinator of the Crystal Run Village Supported Employment Program at 845-695-2519.**

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