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ALTERNATIVES

Summer 1993 Vol. 1, No. 2

Timely information for employers and job seekers with disabilities

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'People can overcome any obstacle or disability when there is a dedication to learn and a willingness to work'...

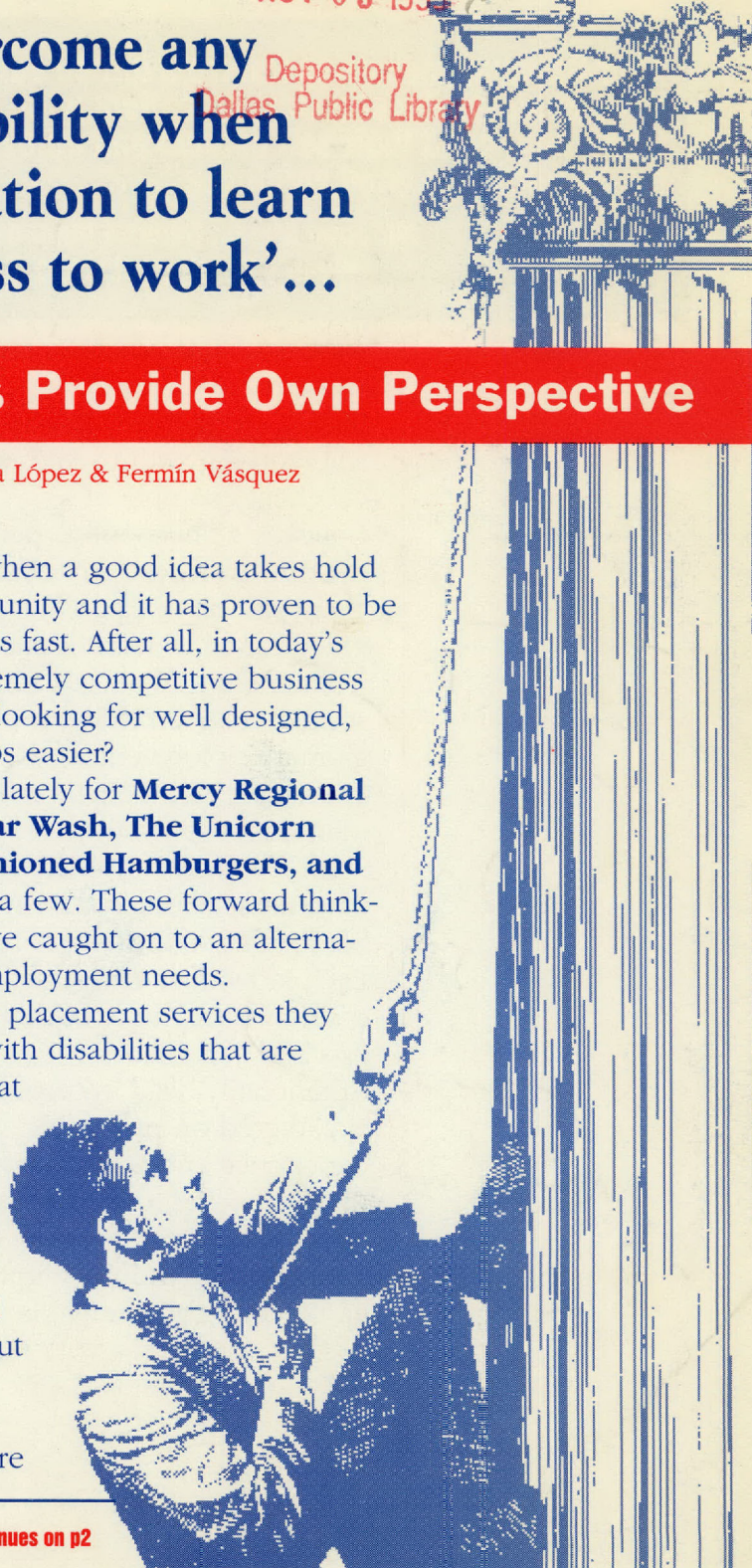
Local Employers Provide Own Perspective

by Zulema López & Fermín Vásquez

One thing is for sure, when a good idea takes hold in the business community and it has proven to be a success, word travels fast. After all, in today's complicated and extremely competitive business climate, aren't we all looking for well designed, proven methods to make our jobs easier?

Such has been the experience lately for **Mercy Regional Medical Center, Royal Treat Car Wash, The Unicorn Restaurants, Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers, and Wyatt's Cafeteria**, just to name a few. These forward thinking, innovative organizations have caught on to an alternative method for meeting their employment needs. Through Gateway Industries' job placement services they have hired capable individuals with disabilities that are backed with a support system that can dramatically increase their success ratio for new employees and, in turn, reduce turn over.

Mr. Ray Lleverino Jr., General Manager at Wendy's Del Mar, recently had this to say about one of his employees that was referred by Gateway Industries. "Four years ago I had the pleasure



Alternatives is a quarterly newsletter published by Gateway Industries, vocational work center of the Laredo State Center/TXMHMR. The focus of this publication is to promote the hiring of persons with disabilities by employers in the community through public awareness and the continued sharing of information.

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EDITOR:
Ernesto A. Santos
Director, Gateway Industries

COLUMN EDITOR
Zulema Lopez

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Fermin Vasquez
Job Developer,
Gateway Industries

DESIGNER
Jose A. Garcia
Graphitiks Advertising Design

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of interviewing prospective employees for Wendy's Old Fashioned Hamburgers of Laredo. Some of the applicants we interviewed were referred to us by Gateway Industries. Among the per-

"Our Gateway Industries referrals turned out to be good employees. Just be patient with them, help build their self esteem and enjoy the benefits of a good employee."

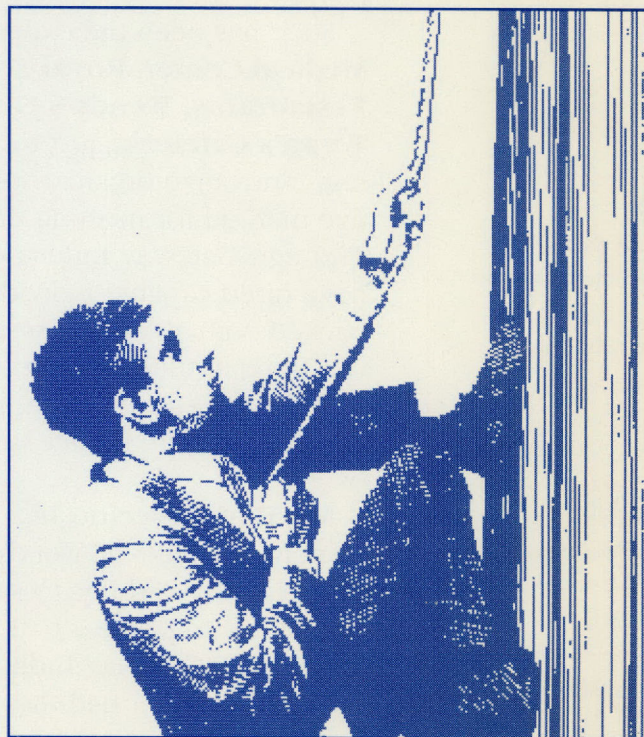
**Mr. Juan Alanís, General Manager
Wyatt's Cafeteria, Laredo, Tx.**

sons we hired was Miss Sylvia Gutierrez, a Gateway Industries referral. Sylvia is still working with us and is an excellent example of Gateway's philosophy; 'people can overcome any obstacle or disability when there is a dedication to learn and a willingness to work'... Credit should be given to the program's Employment Specialists who helped us to train this employee."

All Gateway Industries job placement referrals are eligible for this support system. Each individual is assessed to determine his/her work interests and capabilities. Additionally, vital information is gathered on past work experience and educational levels in order to make a successful job match for both the job applicant and the employer. Once the placement is

made, Gateway Industries assigns an Employment Specialist to provide "job coaching" as a method to train the new hire. This specialized trainer is there to assist the individual to learn the job and to help develop a positive relationship between the new employee and the employer.

Well, the word is out, we just wanted to make it official. Gateway Industries can link your business to a wealth of talent. Sure, sometimes it may be raw talent, but when was the last time you felt confident that the person you hired would take on their new job with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. Enthusiasm that is contagious. If you would like more information about tapping into this human resource, please call us at (210)724-5507.



Overcoming Our Fears:

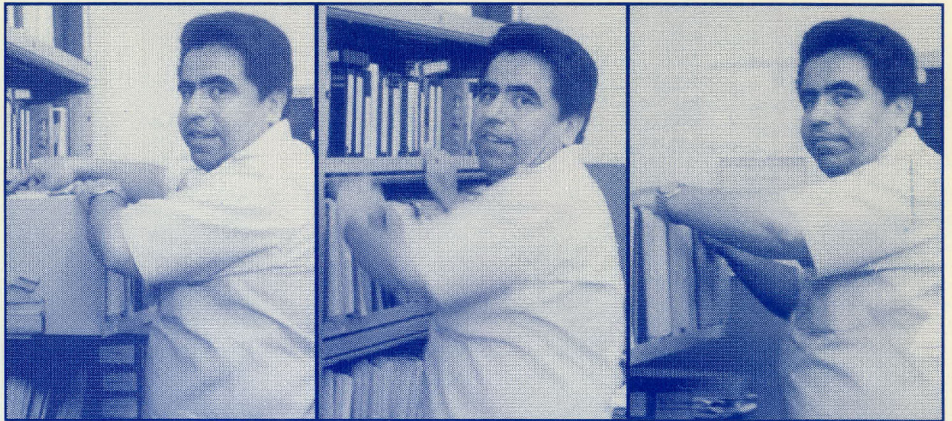
How encouragement and perserverance changed an individual's entire life

Contributions by Cheryl McClure

Herman Aloia's initial thoughts were filled with fear; fear that he would not succeed. For a long time now Herman and his family had relied on benefits from the Social Security Administration. But he wanted to work. he wanted to have that feeling of self worth we all experience when we do a job well. How could he jeopardize his family's well being, yet, how could he not take a chance in making a better life for himself and his family?

In his initial interview with Cheryl McClure, Gateway Industries' Vocational Evaluator, Mr. Aloia expressed his reluctance to undertake any type of employment. He explained that he was very nervous and felt he lacked the self confidence to embark on a new path in life. With continuous encouragement from his casemanager at Laredo State Center and his strong desire to gain his independence, Herman agreed to try working in a transitional position in Gateway Industries Client Worker Program. For ten hours a week he worked alongside Laredo State Center staff in the Personnel Department performing routine clerical tasks such as filing and making photocopies.

The first six months were a struggle for Herman. He was still dealing



“Employment has made me more open minded about things in general and has given me the confidence to take other risks in my life”.

Herman Aloia

with his fears and sometimes had trouble taking on new tasks. But he could sense a definite change in himself. He no longer had trouble getting up in the morning and getting to work on time. He noticed that he had developed an interest in his appearance and was proud to dress neatly and keep himself well groomed. He started to realize that there are so many rewards to be gained from being productive. The money earned is only one of those rewards; the others you can't even put a price on.

Then came the next big step. His six months were up. The staff at Gateway Industries had noted the progress Herman had made and recommended that he continue in the program and increase his hours to

20 a week. With the help of his supervisor, Herman quickly adjusted to the additional hours and was soon learning new tasks.

One morning Herman heard that a part time clerical position had opened up at Laredo State Center. Without hesitation he asked his supervisor about the opening and advised her that “I might just be the person for this position”. He was told that this position required additional responsibilities and higher expectations than what he was accustomed to in the Client Worker Program. This did not discourage Herman. By this point he felt he had the confidence needed to take another big step and was well

Continued on back page

Total Quality Management

by Ernesto A. Santos

With the increase in complexity in the business arena there comes a time when all organizations must take a hard look at how they do business and how they fair against the competition. Many times managers adjust the production process, change marketing strategies, or adopt new product lines, but all too often they neglect to reevaluate the company's management philosophy.

Throughout America's corporate domain the buzz term in management circles today is Total Quality Management or TQM. Although not a new concept, it is a management system that is being hailed as a proven method for maximizing the utilization of an organization's human resources. More and more companies, both large and small, are taking to heart the philosophies of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, the man

largely credited with the resurrection of Japanese industry after World War II.

The tenets of Dr. Deming point to turning the traditional corporate structure upside down and making management responsive to the needs of not only its customers but its employees as well. Then, and only then, can an organization get the most out of its people - by involving them in the decision making process and allowing them to stake a claim in the success of their company. Some of the methods that Dr. Deming has developed include:

The best solutions to problems come from employee involvement. Managers must encourage their staff to provide the answers to problems that affect their ability to get the job done.

For an organization to maintain its competitive edge it must be in a constant mode of evolution. A commitment to the continuous quality improvement of its goods and services must be attained

through constant evaluation of the system.

It is up to top management to break the bondage of fear in the organization's culture. Employees should be free to be truthful about problems in the workplace or come forward with risky ideas for improvement without fear of retaliation, losing credibility, or being fired. In Deming's words, "Drive out fear!"

Today there are many books on this subject besides the original works by Dr. Deming. If you are interested in driving out fear and achieving a high level of competitiveness in your organization you may want to check into the following titles.

OUT OF THE CRISIS, W. EDWARDS DEMING, PHD.

AMERICAN SPIRIT, LAWRENCE M. MILLER

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE, PETER B. GRAZIER

CREATING CULTURE CHANGE: THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT,

PHILIP E. ATKINSON

Herman Aloia, continued

prepared to take on this new challenge. After the interview process, Herman was greeted with the wonderful news that he had been selected for the job. We can only imagine how proud he must have felt, after all, Herman's success was due to his persistence and hard work.

At this point in his career there still remained that lingering fear of losing his Social Security benefits. Just as he had done all along, Herman faced his fears head-on and scheduled an appointment with his Social Security representative. When he met with his representative he was surprised to learn that with his new job he would actually be bringing in more income per month than

when he was not working at all.

Today Herman is well on his way to becoming a productive member of the community and has aspirations of applying for a full time position at the Center as soon as one becomes available. He also has an important message for those who have disabilities and would like to start working, "Employment has made me more open minded about things in general and has given me the confidence to take other risks in my life". For Herman Aloia those risks have paid off with a new life and renewed hope.