

WorkQuest

FOCUS

on Jobs for People with Disabilities

WorkQuest Newsletter XLVII
November 2019

Jamie Chilton of Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind honored with 2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award



Jamie Chilton, of Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind in Wichita Falls, was recognized by WorkQuest with the 2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award at its recent award dinner. The award honors an outstanding community rehabilitation program (CRP) employee for leadership, dedicated service and commitment to excellence.

Chilton, a Beacon Lighthouse employee for the past three years, works as a general operator, helping with the shovel press, drill press, sheeting slitter and other areas around the Lighthouse. With a multi-talented range of skills, she's quick to help anyone who needs assistance. Since her employment at the Lighthouse, Chilton's confidence has grown. She doesn't wait to be asked, but rather initiates action. With her infectious smile and can-do attitude, Chilton inspires her co-workers to be self-starters as well.

"Working with Jamie is like going to Disneyland," Patti Archer, Jamie's supervisor, said. "She adapts to everything and is a joy to be around."

Chilton endured many years of abuse at the hands of an ex-partner. The physical abuse led to a brain aneurysm, resulting in blindness. At first, she struggled to adjust to this new obstacle.

Her tremendous perseverance and positive outlook led her to the Lighthouse, where she found a new sense of purpose. Chilton's favorite term is, "I got this." Those she works with know the strength of her resilience.

"I feel like I've been through a war, and I've got scars," Chilton said. "However, scars don't define me. They define my past."

"Suddenly going blind is a very traumatic experience," Buddy Edgemon, president and CEO of Beacon Lighthouse, said. "Jamie went through that trauma and still works hard and helps others. She adds to our family here."

After attendees celebrated Chilton's story of determination and positivity despite adversity, her daughter joined her on stage as she accepted the 2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award amid proud tears and many hugs.

Congratulations to Jamie Chilton and to all of the 2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees for their hard work and perseverance.



Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner celebrates *WorksWonders* Program employees and customers

WorkQuest hosted nearly 400 attendees during its 12th annual Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner in Austin this September, recognizing supporters of the State Use *WorksWonders* Program, which provides employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities.

Alongside various other guests in attendance, award nominees and their families, WorkQuest board members and employees, and community rehabilitation program (CRP) representatives gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of Texas employees with disabilities—and the dedication of WorkQuest and its CRP partners.

Among those honored were Jerrell Harris of ABG Fulfillment, who received the Most Motivational Employee Award, and Edgar Contreras of Xceed Resources, who earned the Most Inspirational Employee Award.

WorkQuest also presented this year's Spirit of State Use Awards to Buddy Edgemon, president and CEO of Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind, and Lori Henning, executive director of the Texas Association of Goodwills (TAG), for their longstanding commitment to the *WorksWonders* Program. Edgemon has dedicated over three decades to aiding employment growth, retention and upward mobility of

the blind and visually impaired. Henning has served as executive director of TAG for 16 years, where she has been a tireless advocate for legislation that focuses on workforce development, job creation and skills training for people with disabilities.

The evening's keynote speaker, Jim Abbott, is a former Major League Baseball (MLB) pitcher who shared his inspirational story of achieving success despite being born without a right hand. While at the University of Michigan, Abbott became the first baseball player to win the James E. Sullivan Award as the country's top amateur athlete. He played 10 seasons for several MLB teams, including the Chicago White Sox and New York Yankees, and he even pitched a no-hitter. He now travels the world sharing his message of perseverance and creatively adapting to overcome adversity.

Following his address, WorkQuest recognized the Top 10 customers who purchase products, services and temporary employment services through the *WorksWonders* Program. These customers include multiple state, city and county agencies and organizations. Organizations that were recognized for being new to this year's lists were the Department of Family and Protective Services for its purchase of products; the Department of State Health Services for its purchase of services; and the University of Texas at Arlington for its purchase of temporary employment services.

Throughout the event, attendees viewed videos showcasing the standout employees recognized during the program, including Harris and Contreras, as well as the recipient of the pinnacle honor of the evening, the 2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award, which was presented to Jamie Chilton of Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind. She was recognized for her determination, resilience and compassionate leadership at the Lighthouse, where she's overcome several personal obstacles while excelling in her work.

Thanks to all who joined us at this year's event. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

Scenes from the Awards Dinner



A Message from President and CEO **Fred M. Weber, Jr.**



This year's Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner and Products and Services Expo were both tremendous successes. They once again showcased the benefits that the *WorksWonders* Program provides not only to the state of Texas, but most importantly to the individuals with disabilities whom it employs. I'd like to thank everyone who was able to attend those events, and I'd like to especially thank the CRPs who ensured their nominees were able to attend this year's award dinner. We were all reminded that the commitment and enthusiasm of these tremendous employees are the driving factor behind the Program's growth year after year.

The *WorksWonders* Program continues to be one of the most successful state use programs in the nation, continually leading other programs in terms of hours worked by individuals with disabilities and wage growth. As evidenced by the numerous employees who were introduced during the Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner, the *WorksWonders* Program employs some of the hardest working and most dedicated individuals in the state of Texas. We at WorkQuest feel privileged to have the opportunity to work with them as we continue to expand employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities across the state.

As always, we appreciate your continued support of the *WorksWonders* Program. As the close of 2019 approaches, I want to wish each of you a happy and safe holiday season. We look forward to working alongside you all as we grow the Program to be even greater in 2020.

2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award Nominees

- Norman Armstrong, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Pedro Aviles, Goodwill Industries of El Paso
- Martin Becerra, Austin Task, Inc.
- Lois Bell, Goodwill Central Texas
- Jaynee D. Boehm, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Francisco Borrego, Camino Real Community Services
- Amanda Bowen, Relief Enterprise of Texas, Inc.
- Glenn Browning, Rising Star Resource Development Corporation
- Dan Caldwell, Peak Performers
- Jamie Chilton, Beacon Lighthouse
- Albert Christianson, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities Nueces County (MHID Nueces County)
- Edgar Contreras, Xceed Resources
- Tina Flores, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Steven Foster, Fresh Start of Monroe, Inc.
- Jose Garcia, Goodwill Industries of Northeast Texas
- Donnie Harris, Goodwill Central Texas
- Jerrell Harris, ABG Fulfillment
- James Hines, David & Ivory Ministries, Inc.
- Kevin Horrigan, New Hope Academy of Fort Worth
- Brandon Scott Jackson, Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center/Woods, Etc.
- Lester Knetig, Goodwill Industries of East Texas
- Laila Lakhani, Goodwill Central Texas
- Richard Leal, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities Nueces County (MHID Nueces County)
- James Love, Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Raul Monreal, World Technical Services
- Karen Nevins, Travis Association for the Blind
- Andrew Newman, Precious Gems Services, Inc.
- Gelacio Ochoa, Xceed Resources
- Jeffrey Olivarez, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind
- Scott Patrick, EXPANCO
- Will Patton, Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
- Byron Perry, Aldersgate Enrichment Center
- Heriberto "Beto" Reyna, Jr., E.Q.U.I.P. Enterprises, Inc.
- Demetrick Riley, Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center/Woods, Etc.
- Nathaniel Robinson, On Our Own Services, Inc.
- Javier Sandoval, Endeavors Unlimited
- Brandon Sorrell, Enterprise Professional Services, Inc. (EPSI)
- Jonathan Teague, WorkQuest – Central Store
- Richard Thomas, Easter Seals Central Texas
- Margarita Torres, Professional Contract Services, Inc.
- Antonio Valadez, The Lighthouse of Houston
- Kevin Venable, Xceed Resources
- Courtnee Watson, Janie Clements Industries/Center for Life Resources
- Kim White, Jr., Marian Moss Enterprises
- Jerry Woods, Goodwill Central Texas

Spirit of State Use



Lori Henning, executive director of the Texas Association of Goodwills, was presented with a 2019 Spirit of State Use Award for her advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities.



Buddy Edgemon, president and CEO of Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind, received a 2019 Spirit of State Use Award in recognition of his decades-long commitment to the success of the *WorksWonders* Program.

WorkQuest hosts 31st annual Products and Services Expo

For more than 40 years, WorkQuest has connected state agencies with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) across Texas that supply products, services and temporary employment services through the State Use *WorksWonders* Program.

This fall, just one day after hosting its 12th annual Artie Lee Hinds Award dinner, WorkQuest assembled representatives from 26 CRPs to connect with customers and purchasers from state agencies and answer questions, discuss services and temporary employment service offerings, and display product samples at its 31st annual Products and Services Expo in Austin. Having physical samples on hand allows customers to preview products they can order from the various CRPs.

“The Expo is a good place to introduce new purchasers to the program,” Serlester Boone, a purchaser with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, said. “It’s nice to be able to pick up samples so they can see what they’ll be purchasing.”

Jose Sanchez, business service officer for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, said having the actual product is “different than looking at it in a catalog.”

“It’s helpful to be able to pick it up and feel it before you commit to buying it,” he said.

First-time attendees said it was valuable to have the opportunity to connect with CRPs who could become suppliers for their agencies. “This is our first time at the Expo, but it’s been extremely useful,” Janalee Paiz, director of administration and Texas contract developer certification (CTCD) at the Texas Office of Public Utility Counsel, said. “I saw some new products I’d like to look into. I’ll be back next year!”

The Expo also gives CRPs the chance to mingle and be encouraged by the work their counterparts around the state are doing to support employment for those with disabilities.

“At this Expo, with everyone coming together face to face, you can see for yourself what each CRP does and how proud they are of what they have to offer,” Shara Elder, manager of marketing and distribution for the Texas Department of Correctional Industries, said. “Seeing others excited about their products or services makes us more excited about ours.”

A major benefit of attending the Expo, according to many CRP representatives, is the chance to interact with current customers while introducing themselves to prospective customers. This face time is key to expanding the reach of many CRPs, which, in turn, promotes increased job creation for those with disabilities.

“The interest for me in the Expo is how it furthers sustainable employment for the blind,” John Moore, director of business development at the South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind, said. “We see sales growth each year because of the Expo and reach customers we can’t often reach.”

“This event is the best time for networking and building agency connections,” Kurt Daniels, operations director for Daniel Pest Control, added. “It’s amazing how many helpful people you can meet here.”



Scenes from the Expo

Exhibitors who attended:

- ABG Fulfillment
- Austin Task, Inc.
- Beacon Lighthouse
- Camino Real Community Services
- Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center/ Woods Etc.
- Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Daniel Pest Control and Professional Services
- East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Enterprise Professional Services, Inc.
- Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
- Goodwill Industries Central Texas
- Goodwill Industries of East Texas
- Goodwill Industries of Northeast Texas
- Goodwill Industries of San Antonio
- Goodwill Industries of South Texas
- New Hope Academy of Fort Worth
- Peak Performers
- Professional Contract Services, Inc.
- Relief Enterprise of Texas
- Rising Star Resource Development Corporation
- South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- Texas Correctional Industries
- The Lighthouse of Houston
- Travis Association for the Blind – The Austin Lighthouse
- VRC Industries
- West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
- WorkQuest – Central Store

Products included:

- Office and school supplies
- Furniture items
- Medical supplies
- Bed and bath supplies
- Food supplies
- Janitorial supplies
- Safety supplies

Services included:

- Landscape services
- Parks and grounds maintenance
- Document destruction
- Litter pick-up
- Receptionist services
- Pest control services
- Recycling services

Temporary services included:

- Accounting and clerical support
- Technology data entry





2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award Nominees



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Lois Bell, Goodwill Central Texas



Jaynee D. Boehm, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



Francisco Borrego, Camino Real Community Services



Glenn Browning, Rising Star Resource Development Corporation



Jamie Chilton, Beacon Lighthouse



Albert Christianson, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities Nueces County (MHID Nueces County).



Edgar Contreras, Xceed Resources



Tina Flores, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind

2019 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with Jim Abbott, motivational speaker and former Major League Baseball player; Edward Serna, executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission; and Gib DuTerroil, WorkQuest Board of Directors chairman.



Donnie Harris, Goodwill Central Texas



Jerrell Harris, ABG Fulfillment



James Hines, David & Ivory Ministries, Inc



Kevin Horrigan, New Hope Academy of Fort Worth



Lester Knetig, Goodwill Industries of East Texas



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**Congratulations to all of the 2019
Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees!**

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WorkQuest

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2019
Disability Employment
Awareness Month

The Right Talent,
Right Now

Colors
by Megan Redolfo

Everyone has varying strengths and weaknesses. People on the Autism Spectrum process information differently. Difficulties with social interaction and relationships led to personal reflections for Megan, which inspired her to create this piece. "Colors" she says, "is about how we as humans communicate."

With career counseling and employment assistance from Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Megan was encouraged to study a web design to reach her career goals. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media Arts and Application from Lubbock Christian University. Today, Megan is successfully employed at the Science Museum in Lubbock.

Colors was created using paint on a cardboard canvas. Megan notes, "The screen on the head represents how we make the world around us through improved and/or new technology. Communication technology. The person and screen are in black and white because what really defines us as individuals are the ideas we take in and incorporate into ourselves, and how we choose to present ourselves. Colors serves as a reminder that if we have our minds open to new and fresh ideas in the workplace together we will make the world a better place."

Learn about hiring Texans with disabilities at TexasAbilityTexasWorkforce.org

  

In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, WorkQuest would like to acknowledge the outstanding employees who participate in the *WorksWonders* Program and the contributions they make in the advancement of employment opportunities for all individuals with disabilities.

**View the WorkQuest online catalog
online at WorkQuest.com**