

WorkQuest FOCUS

on Jobs for People with Disabilities

WorkQuest Newsletter LXV
October 2024

Kenneth Waites of Amplify honored with the 2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award

This year, Kenneth Waites of Amplify was recognized by WorkQuest with the 2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award. The award honors an outstanding Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) employee for leadership, dedicated service and commitment to excellence.

Waites works on a document destruction contract through the *Works Wonders* Program where he is responsible for sorting documents, operating the shredding machine, tying bales and assisting with picking up materials to be destroyed from locations throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

“Everybody deserves an opportunity to have gainful employment to support themselves and maximize their income potential,” Steven Hosea, executive director at Amplify, said. “Kenneth came to Amplify through the Fort Worth ISD work program and after he graduated, the decision was made to bring him on full-time. He’s been a valuable member ever since.”

Waites is admired and respected among his peers for his positive attitude and ability to take on multiple tasks.

“Kenny is an asset in more ways than one, he is one of my top workers,” Ben Bean, operations manager at Amplify, said. “I’ve never seen him in



2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award winner Kenny Waites, Amplify, pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).

a bad mood or with a frown on his face, he’s such a hard worker. He’s almost like a supervisor because he knows how to do everything.”

Waites’ family—who made the journey with him to Austin to receive his award—is thankful for the important role Amplify has made in his life by providing Waites with the opportunity to be productive through a meaningful job.

“He has ambitions in life, if you give him an assignment he will try to complete it to the best of his ability,” Kenneth Waites Sr., Waites’ father, said. “I believe in betterment. He can continue to grow because he has the potential and his attitude and hard work speaks for itself.”

“You never know what someone’s potential is unless you give them the opportunity, and I appreciate Amplify for giving him the opportunity and letting him show them what he is capable of doing,” Jaleesia Waites, Waites’ mother, said.

WorkQuest is proud to honor Kenneth Waites and all of the 2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees.

Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner recognizes outstanding *WorksWonders* Program employees and customers

On Sept. 23, 2024, nearly 400 attendees came together to celebrate the State Use *WorksWonders* Program and its supporters at WorkQuest's 17th annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner. The *WorksWonders* Program helps provide employment opportunities to Texans with disabilities through its partnership with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) which are based in cities throughout the state of Texas.

CRP representatives, *WorksWonders* Program employees and their families, Texas Workforce Commission representatives, and WorkQuest board members and employees came together to celebrate this year's nominees for their hard work and perseverance.



President's Award Winner Patt Bice-Archer, Beacon Lighthouse, pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).



Most Inspirational Employee Award Winner, Fred Young, Endeavors Unlimited, pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).



Most Motivational Employee Award Winner, Brendan McDuffee, Marian Moss Enterprises, pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).

Among those honored were Brendan McDuffee of Marion Moss Enterprises, who received the Most Motivational Employee Award; Wilfred Young of Endeavors Unlimited, who received the Most Inspirational Employee award; and Patti Archer of Beacon Lighthouse for the Blind, who received this year's President's Award.

WorkQuest also presented this year's Spirit of State Use Awards to Aaron Demerson, former Texas Workforce Commission's commissioner representing employers, for his steadfast commitment to providing accessible employment to individuals with disabilities, and Juanita Barker, Texas Workforce Commission, for her dedication to the expansion of the employment opportunities that are provided through the *WorksWonders* Program.

The evening's keynote address was delivered by Justin Forsett—award-winning speaker, entrepreneur and former NFL running back. Forsett spoke about his experience of overcoming obstacles to fulfill his dream of playing professional football, dealing with setbacks in his career and his ultimate lesson of greatness growing best in the shadows.

Following the keynote 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. This year, the Texas Workforce Commission was recognized for being new to the list for their purchase of services.

Throughout the event, attendees viewed videos that highlighted the evening's award winners including McDuffee, Young and Archer. Joined by his parents and brother, Kenneth Waites of Amplify took home the pinnacle award of the evening, the 2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award. Kenneth was honored for his excellent work ethic, dependability and for being a positive presence in the workplace.



2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award Keynote Speaker, Justin Forsett, addresses the crowd at the 17th annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner.

Thank you to everyone who attended this year's event and for making the evening special for the nominees and their families! We look forward to seeing you again next year to honor another group of exceptional employees.

Scenes from the Awards Dinner



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

On behalf of WorkQuest, I want to thank everyone who was able to join us in Austin for the 17th annual Artie Lee Hinds Award Dinner and 36th Annual Products and Services Expo.

These events help us highlight the benefits that the *WorksWonders* Program provides to our Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) partners and allow us to celebrate the Texans with disabilities who are employed through the CRPs. It is because of their hard work and dependability that the *WorksWonders* Program is able to surpass expectations year after year.

I would also like to thank the CRPs who were able to join us at this year's awards dinner with their nominees and families. We feel honored to be able to celebrate not only our nominees but also the thousands of Texans with disabilities who work under the *WorksWonders* Program.

The 89th Texas Legislative Session begins in January and WorkQuest has already begun the process of monitoring for any legislation that might affect the *WorksWonders* Program and its stakeholders. As one of its primary duties, WorkQuest is happy to support and advocate for Texans with disabilities to ensure that they continue to have access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Thank you for your continued support of the *WorksWonders* Program. We look forward to working alongside our partners to continue to grow the Program and continuing to provide meaningful employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities.



Fred M. Weber, Jr.
President/CEO



2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award Nominees

1. Lazaro Aguilar, RGR Industries
2. Dave Alexander, Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth
3. Kerry Allen, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
4. Glenda Anakreh, Center for Life Resources / Janie Clements Industries
5. Laura Bendy, On Our Own Services
6. Allen Ray Bennett, A Lift for Life Outreach Center
7. Patti Bice-Archer, Beacon Lighthouse
8. Otis Boggess, David & Ivory Ministries
9. Lyle Brown, Aldersgate Enrichment Center
10. Edgar Contreras, Xceed Resources
11. Edward Fort, Camp County Service Industries
12. Elidia Gonzalez, Camino Real Community Services
13. Gilbert Gonzales, U & I Spread the Light
14. Lester Haley, MHID of Nueces County
15. Terry Hall, Travis Association for the Blind
16. Richard Hanford, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
17. James Hardy, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
18. Michael Higgins, Rising Star Resource Development Corporation
19. Luis Hinojosa, G&H Equitas
20. Jeremy Hinton, E.Q.U.I.P. Enterprises, Inc.
21. Kevin Horrigan, New Hope Academy of Fort Worth
22. David Horsky, Work Services Corporation
23. Eric Jackson, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
24. Darrell Jones, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
25. Ignacio Loera, Xceed Resources
26. Adan Lopez, Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center
27. Xuan Luong, Corpus Christi State Supported Living Center
28. Brendan McDuffee, Marian Moss Enterprises
29. Darryl Minor, The Lighthouse of Houston
30. Dewight Nelson, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
31. Bryce Phillips, Austin State Supported Living Center
32. Roger Podism, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
33. Tonja Porter, Goodwill Industries of East Texas
34. Everett Lee Probst, PCSI
35. Tanzania Pryor, Lending Helping Hands to Others
36. Bearek Reed, Relief Enterprise of Texas
37. Thomas Roberts, MHID of Nueces County
38. Lorena Rojas, Peak Performers
39. Matthew Sadowski, Envision – Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind
40. Brian Sanchez, World Technical Services, Inc.
41. Carrie Sanders, Relief Enterprise of Texas
42. Jonathan Teague, WorkQuest
43. Sarah Tolbert, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry
44. Sheila Tollison, Relief Enterprise of Texas
45. Jason Toole, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
46. Frances "Clay" Toothaker, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind
47. John Valadez, EPSI
48. Kenneth Waites, Amplify
49. Dorothy West, Center for Recovery and Wellness Resources
50. Jerry Wood, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
51. Wilfred Young, Endeavors Unlimited

WorkQuest hosts 36th annual Products and Services Expo



On September 24, 2024, WorkQuest hosted its 36th annual Products and Services Expo where Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) partners were able to connect with purchasers from all over the state of Texas. During the event, CRPs were able to display their products and provide information about the services they offer through the State Use *WorksWonders* Program—the Program that helps connect Texans with disabilities with meaningful employment opportunities.

With CRPs and customers located in cities throughout Texas, the Products and Services Expo gives these individuals the opportunity to connect face-to-face. The CRPs in attendance get the opportunity to display their offerings and make connections that can lead to more business.

“We only have two salespeople so we can’t go to every state agency office. The expo helps us bring awareness to what we offer,” John Moore, director of business



development at South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind, said. “Having our products combined in a group through the WorkQuest catalog lets us provide a larger offering to the state of Texas and makes us more attractive because they have one place where they can get everything.”

Participating in the *WorksWonders* Program and being included in the WorkQuest catalog helps CRPs gain more business opportunities and in turn, allows more Texans with disabilities to be employed.

“Our partnership with WorkQuest helps bring a lot of customers our way,” Heather Mills, operations manager at Rising Star Resource Development Corporation, said. “WorkQuest helps us draw in business that we wouldn’t ordinarily be able to get and in turn, we can help the individuals with disabilities gain employment. The *WorksWonders* Program is very well-rounded, and we are glad to give our employees a livable wage to help them gain independence.”

Customers who purchase products and services through the *WorksWonders* Program have a one-stop shop for their companies’ needs while helping support employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities.

This year, WorkQuest is proud to report that the Products and Services Expo brought over 450 CRP representatives and purchasers together. The *WorksWonders* Program is glad to help create mutually beneficial partnerships that benefit thousands of Texans with disabilities throughout the state.

SPIRIT OF STATE USE AWARD WINNERS



2024 Spirit of State Use Award winner, Juanita Barker, Texas Workforce Commission, pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).



2024 Spirit of State Use Award winner, Aaron Demerson, former Commissioner Representing Employers for the Texas Workforce Commission, pictured with John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).

Scenes from the Expo





2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award Nominees



Dave Alexander, Lighthouse for the Blind of Fort Worth



Kerry Allen, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry



Glenda Anakreh, Center for Life Resources / Janie Clements Industries



Laura Bendy, On Our Own Services



Allen Ray Bennett, A Lift for Life Outreach Center



Patti Bice-Archer, Beacon Lighthouse



Otis Boggess, David & Ivory Ministries



Edgar Contreras, Xceed Resources



Elidia Gonzalez, Camino Real Community Services

2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with Joe Esparza, Commissioner Representing Employers of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest left), John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Justin Forsett, Keynote Speaker (middle), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).



Lester Haley, MHID of Nueces County



Richard Hanford, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry



Michael Higgins, Rising Star Resource Development Corporation



David Horsky, Work Services Corporation



Eric Jackson, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry



Darrell Jones, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry



Ignacio Loera, Xceed Resources



Brendan McDuffee, Marian Moss Enterprises



Darryl Minor, The Lighthouse of Houston

2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with Joe Esparza, Commissioner Representing Employers of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest left), John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Justin Forsett, Keynote Speaker (middle), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).



Dewight Nelson, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas



Roger Podism, South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



Tonja Porter, Goodwill Industries of East Texas



Everett Lee Probst, PCSI



Bearek Reed, Relief Enterprise of Texas



Thomas Roberts, MHID of Nueces County



Lorena Rojas, Peak Performers



Matthew Sadowski, Envision – Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind



Carrie Sanders, Relief Enterprise of Texas

2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with Joe Esparza, Commissioner Representing Employers of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest left), John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Justin Forsett, Keynote Speaker (middle), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).



Jonathan Teague, WorkQuest



Sarah Tolbert, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry



Sheila Tollison, Relief Enterprise of Texas



Jason Toole, East Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



Frances "Clay" Toothaker, West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind



Wilfred Young, Endeavors Unlimited

Congratulations to all of the 2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees!

2024 Artie Lee Hinds Award nominees (holding awards) are pictured with Joe Esparza, Commissioner Representing Employers of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest left), John Luna, WorkQuest Board of Directors Chairman (left), Justin Forsett, Keynote Speaker (middle), Alberto Trevino III, Commissioner Representing Labor of the Texas Workforce Commission (right), and Ed Serna, Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (furthest right).

WorkQuest

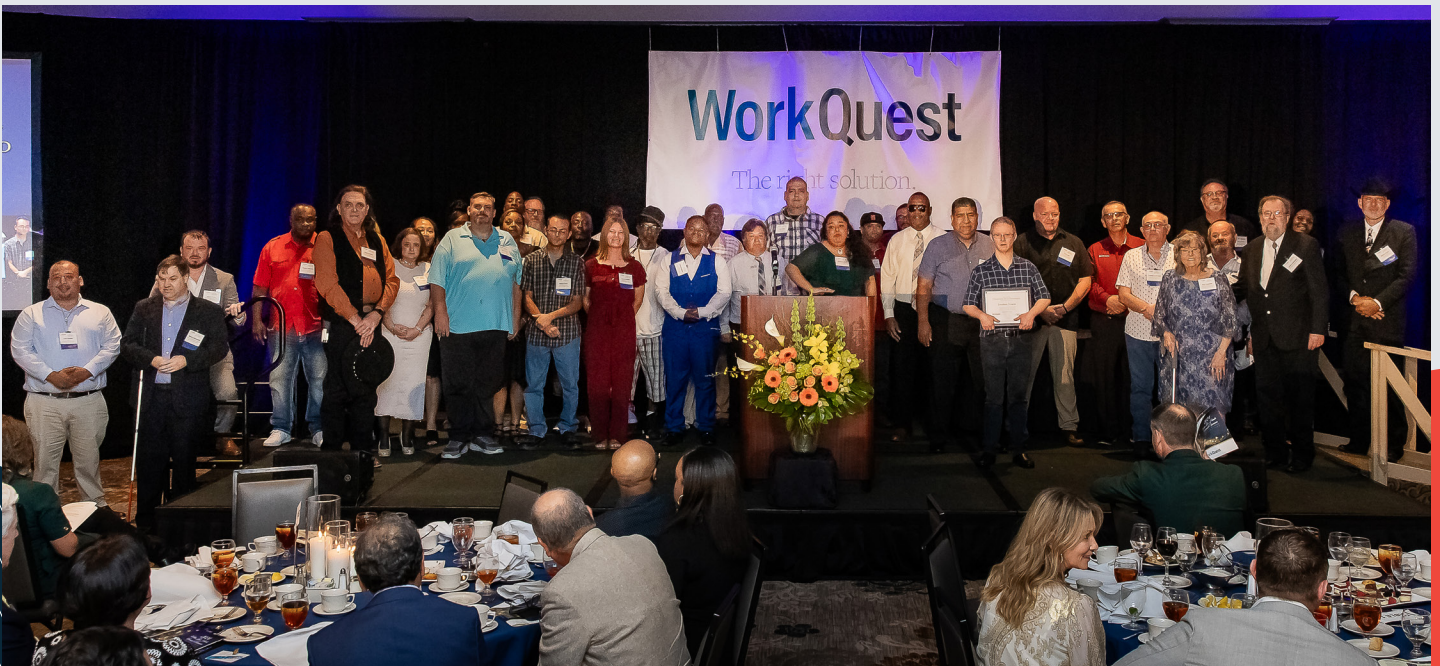
The right solution.

1011 East 53 ½ Street
Austin, Texas 78751

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Austin, TX
Permit No. 703

1011 East 53 ½ Street | Austin, Texas 78751 | P: 512-451-8145 | F: 512-451-0824 | WorkQuest.com

WorkQuest recognizes and celebrates October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.



View the WorkQuest catalog at WorkQuest.com